

Guide to the Arna Bontemps Collection

JWJ MSS 6



by Beinecke Staff

August 1996

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Processing Information	4
ARNA BONTEMPS (1902-1973)	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	5
Series I: Correspondence, 1942-45, n.d.	5
Series II: Writings	7
<i>Black Thunder</i>	7
<i>Bubber Joins the Band</i>	7
<i>Drums at Dusk</i>	7
<i>The Fast Sooner Hound</i>	7
<i>Father of the Blues</i>	7
<i>God Sends Sunday</i>	7
<i>Poor Frizzly Chicken</i>	7
<i>Purple Island</i>	7
<i>St. Louis Woman</i>	7
<i>Slappy Hooper</i>	8
<i>The Story of the Negro</i>	8
<i>They Seek A City</i>	8
Tom-Tom Treasures	8
"The Two Harlems"	8
"Remarks in Presenting..."	8
<i>We Have Tomorrow</i>	9
<i>You Can't Pet a Possum</i>	9
"White Haitians"	9
Selected Search Terms	11

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: JWJ MSS 6

CREATOR: Bontemps, Arna, 1902-1973

TITLE: Arna Bontemps Collection

DATES: 1934-1957

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Arna Bontemps Collections contains writings and correspondence presented to the James Weldon Johnson Collection by Mr. Bontemps.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.bontemps>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.bontemps>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Arna Bontemps Collection contains items presented to the James Weldon Johnson Collection by Mr. Bontemps.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Arna Bontemps Collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Arna Bontemps Collection. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

This finding aid was produced from a previously existing manuscripts inventory. All pertinent information has been retained. Former call number: JWJ MSS Small Collections.

ARNA BONTEMPS (1902-1973)

Arna Bontemps was a teacher and writer whose novel *God Sends Sunday* appeared at the end of the Harlem Renaissance in 1931. He continued writing and editing anthologies and served as librarian at Fisk University.

Scope and Contents

The papers contains materials documenting the life of Arna Bontemps, including [Series I, Correspondence](#), and [Series II, Writings](#).

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1942-45, n.d.

b. 1, f. 1	Blount, Mildred E. Includes letter from Ruby Bontemps and two autobiographical sketches To: 6 / From: 1	1942-45, n.d.
b. 1, f. 2	Butain, Anne M. To: 2 / From: 0	1945
b. 1, f. 3	Cambell, E. Simms To: 2 / From: 1	1944-45
b. 1, f. 4	Cayton, Horace R. To: 1 / From: 0	1944
b. 1, f. 5	Collins, Leslie Includes notes on interview of Mrs. Jelliffe To: 1 / From: 0	1944 Oct 19
b. 1, f. 6	Conroy, Jack Correspondence re: <i>They Seek A City</i> To: 21 / From: 9	c. 1944
b. 1, f. 7	Conroy, Jack Correspondence re: <i>They Seek A City</i> To: 25 / From: 26	c. 1944
b. 1, f. 8	Conroy, Jack Correspondence re: <i>Slappy Hooper</i> To: 3 / From: 0	n.d.
b. 1, f. 9	Dabney, Wendell P. To: 5 / From: 0	1944
b. 1, f. 10	Davis, Benjamin O. Sr. Fragment To: 1 / From: 0	n.d.
b. 1, f. 11	Davis, Mrs. Benjamin O. Jr. To: 4 / From: 2	1944, n.d.
b. 1, f. 12	Dixon, Dean Includes short description of the Dixon counting method. To: 2 / From: 1	1944
b. 1, f. 13	Henry, Algernon P. To: 1 / From: 1	1944
b. 1, f. 14	Houghton Mifflin Co. To: 1 / From: 0	1945
b. 1, f. 15	Hughes, Langston Carbon of letter to Guggenheim Foundation re: AWB	1949
b. 1, f. 16	Jackman, Harold Original AWB letters To: 0 / From: 6	1934-42

b. 1, f. 17	Lem and Ed Correspondence re: <i>St. Louis Woman</i> To: 1 / From: 1	n.d.
b. 1, f. 18	LuValle, James E. To: 2 / From: 2	1944
b. 1, f. 19	May, Mrs. Emmett To: 3 / From: 2	1944
b. 1, f. 20	Moore, Alfred D. To: 21 / From: 1	1944-45, n.d.
b. 1, f. 21	Palfi, Marion To: 3 / From: 2	1944
b. 1, f. 22	Frederick A. Stokes Company Letter to Maxim Lieber re: AWB	1936
b. 1, f. 23	Trammell, Guy R. To: 3 / From: 0	1945
b. 1, f. 24	Van Vechten, Carl To: 3 / From: 0	1941-47
b. 1, f. 25	Walker, Margaret To: 0 / From: 1	1944
b. 1, f. 26	Walters, Vernon N. To: 2 / From: 0	1945
b. 1, f. 27	Watkins, Sylvestre To: 2 / From: 2	1942, 1944
b. 1, f. 28	Watson, Douglas C. To: 1 / From: 0	1944
b. 1, f. 29	Young, P. Bernard Jr. To: 3 / From: 0	1944

Series II: Writings

<i>Black Thunder</i>		
b. 1, f. 30	Typescript, corrected of unfinished rewrite of book, with revisions and explanatory note by AWB	n.d.
b. 1, f. 31	Dramatization by Roland Mulhauser, typescript, corrected Includes: explanatory note by AWB	1937
<i>Bubber Joins the Band</i>		
b. 1, f. 32	Typescript, carbon Unpublished children's story with explanatory note by AWB	[ca. 1932-33]
<i>Drums at Dusk</i> See: Purple Island, Box 1, folder 36		
<i>The Fast Sooner Hound</i>		
b. 1, f. 33	Typescript corrected First version of children's story By AWB and Jack Conroy with explanatory note by AWB	1942
<i>Father of the Blues</i>		
b. 1, f. 34	Typescript carbon Part of AWB's version of W. C. Handy's autobiography with explanatory notes by AWB	n.d.
<i>God Sends Sunday</i> See: St. Louis Woman, Box 2, folder 37		
<i>Poor Frizzly Chicken</i>		
b. 1, f. 35	Typescript carbon Unpublished children's story, original unrevised version, with illustrations and explanatory note by AWB	1934
<i>Purple Island</i>		
b. 1, f. 36	Typescript, corrected First draft of book <i>Drums at Dusk</i> with explanatory note by AWB	n.d.
<i>St. Louis Woman</i>		
b. 2, f. 37	Typescript carbon Play by AWB and Countée Cullen with revisions, an explanatory note by AWB, and inscription by Countée Cullen	n.d.
b. 2, f. 38	Mixture of typescript and carbon versions, corrected	n.d.
b. 2, f. 39	Typescript carbon, corrected	n.d.
b. 2, f. 40	Typescript carbon, corrected With new Prologue by Langston Hughes	n.d.

St. Louis Woman (continued)

b. 2, f. 41	Holograph notes for revision	n.d.
b. 2, f. 42-45	Holograph and typescript revisions and rewrites	n.d.
b. 2, f. 46	"How 'St. Louis Woman' Was Born" handwritten draft of publicity statement	1946 Jan 31
b. 2, f. 47	Theatre programs	1945-52, n.d.
<i>Slappy Hooper</i>		
b. 2, f. 48	Typescript, corrected Children's story by AWB and Jack Conroy	n.d.
b. 2, f. 49	Typescript and carbon revisions	n.d.
<i>The Story of the Negro</i>		
b. 2, f. 50	Typescript, corrected	n.d.
b. 3, f. 51-52	Typescript, corrected	n.d.
b. 3, f. 53	Index (on 3 x 5 cards) with corrections	n.d.
b. 3, f. 54	Galley proofs, corrected	1947-48
<i>They Seek A City</i>		
b. 3, f. 55	Notes, drafts, outlines, etc.	1945, n.d.
b. 3, f. 56-58	First draft, typescript, corrected Includes: second versions of some chapters	n.d.
b. 4, f. 59-61	First draft, typescript, corrected Includes: second versions of some chapters	n.d.
b. 4, f. 62-66	Final draft, typescript, corrected With printer's notes and author's notes	1945
b. 4, f. 67	Bibliography and index, corrected	n.d.
	Galley proofs, corrected Stored in: Oversize, Box 6, folder 81	n.d.
<i>Tom-Tom Treasures</i>		
b. 5, f. 69	Typescript, corrected Unpublished children's story	1938
<i>"The Two Harlems"</i>		
b. 5, f. 70	Typescript carbon article for <i>American Scholar</i>	n.d.
<i>"Remarks in Presenting..."</i> Full title: "Remarks in Presenting American Library Association's Liberty and Justice Award in Imaginative Literature to James Thurber"		

"Remarks in Presenting..." (continued)

b. 5, f. 71	Typescript carbon	1957
<i>We Have Tomorrow</i>		
b. 5, f. 72	Research notes, clippings, and typed manuscript of biographical sketch of Dean Dixon	n.d.
b. 5, f. 73-74	First draft, typescript, corrected Includes: biographical sketches of Benjamin Davis, E. Simms Campbell, Mildred E. Blount, Emmett M. May, Algernon R. Henry, Hazel Scott, Mildred Blount, Dean Dixon, Benjamin Davis, Horace Cayton and Revels Cayton, Jimmy LuValle, Douglas Watson, Sylvestre C. Watkins, and Beatrice Johnson Trammell.	n.d.
b. 5, f. 75	Second draft, typescript, corrected	n.d.
b. 5, f. 76-77	Setting typescript, corrected	n.d.
b. 5, f. 78	Galley proofs	n.d.
<i>You Can't Pet a Possum</i>		
b. 5, f. 79	Typescript, corrected First version of children's story (original title <i>Shine Boy</i>) with revisions and explanatory notes by AWB	n.d.
<i>"White Haitians"</i>		
b. 5, f. 80	Typescript, corrected, of unpublished article	n.d.

Oversize

b. 6, f. 81

[Galley proof for They Seek a City](#)

n.d.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

African American authors -- 20th Century --
Archives
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

Names

Bontemps, Arna, 1902-1973