Hoffman, Richard.

Richard Hoffman - Lorraine Hansberry collection
1959-1986

Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 508
Title: Richard Hoffman - Lorraine Hansberry collection
Inclusive Dates: 1959-1986
Extent: .3 linear feet (1 box)
Language: Materials in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 508, Richard Hoffman - Lorraine Hansberry collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch)
Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/
Source: Purchase, August 2005.
Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.
Terms Governing Use and Reproduction: Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library, http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi
Biographical Notes

Richard Hoffman

Brooklyn-based theater collector and book dealer Richard Hoffman built a number of literary collections around American playwrights over a period of many years. Hoffman has said that he entered the United States Army in the 1950s as an actor and left as a writer. His military experience led to an assignment to create a television program titled "Your Army in View," which consisted of interviews and live drama. After his discharge from the service in 1955, Hoffman taught in the drama department of The City University of New York. During this period he was awarded a Eugene O'Neill fellowship for playwriting. He also began to seriously collect rare books and first editions of contemporary American dramatists, notably the playwrights Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Neil Simon. Hoffman's interest in collecting first editions led to his career as an antiquarian book dealer.

Lorraine Hansberry

American playwright Lorainne Hansberry (1930-1965) was born in Chicago, Illinois. She studied drama and stage design at the University of Wisconsin from 1948 to 1950 and then moved to New York to write for the Freedom newspaper. She was politically active in the Civil Rights movement by promoting social change and speaking against the oppression of African-Americans. In 1953, she married Robert Nemiroff, an aspiring writer whom she met on a picket line at New York University. Hansberry's play, A Raisin in the Sun, opened on Broadway in 1959 and won the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award, making her the youngest American, the first woman, and the first African-American to win the award.

In 1960, Hansberry wrote two screenplays of A Raisin in the Sun that were not produced without significant alteration because they were deemed controversial. Her other plays include The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window, which opened on Broadway in 1964, Les Blancs, The Drinking Gourd, and What Use Are Flowers?, all published posthumously in 1972 under the title Les Blancs: The Collected Last Plays of Lorraine Hansberry.

In 1964, Hansberry and Nemiroff divorced, though they remained close and he became her literary executor when she succumbed to cancer in January 1965.

Sources:

Scope and Content Note

The Richard Hoffman - Lorraine Hansberry collection spans the dates between 1959 and 1986 and comprises 17 items, including photographs, playbills, programs, a screenplay for *A Raisin in the Sun*, and articles related to *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*. 
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names


Topical Terms

American drama--20th century.

American drama--African American authors--20th century.

Form/Genre Terms

Photographs.

Playbills.

Theater programs.

Correspondence.

Screenplays.

Occupation

Playwrights.

Personal Contributors


Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 484 Richard Hoffman - Neil Simon collection
MSS 485 Richard Hoffman - Arthur Miller collection
MSS 490 Richard Hoffman - David Rabe Collection
MSS 496 Richard Hoffman - David Mamet Collection
MSS 505 Richard Hoffman - John Guare Collection
MSS 510 Richard Hoffman - August Wilson Collection
Arrangement

I. A Raisin in the Sun screenplay
II. Theater programs
III. Photographs
IV. Miscellaneous
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. *A Raisin in the Sun* screenplay, undated

This series consists of the original version of Hansberry's screenplay of *A Raisin in the Sun* that was altered significantly in order to be used for the 1961 Columbia studios film production. The title bears the autograph note in an unknown hand: "Unfilmed original screenplay by Hansberry. Different from published version."

Screenplay, undated [Box 1 F1]

Series II. Theater Programs, 1959-1974

This series comprises theater programs from several stage and screen productions of *A Raisin in the Sun* and one musical adaptation, dating between 1959 and 1974.

*Playbill* New York, Vol. 3, No. 11. (copy 1), 1959 March 16 [Box 1 F2]


*Playbill* New York, Vol. 3, No. 11. (copy 2), 1959 March 16 [Box 1 F2]


Souvenir program, 1959 [Box 1 F2]

Inside cover bears note "Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 6/20/59, NY." Includes biographies of the cast, the producers Philip Rose and David J. Cogan, and director Lloyd Richards. Also includes feature article about Hansberry, "A Playwright, A Promise" by Faye Hammel, reprinted courtesy of *Cue Magazine* [1959].

Washington, D.C.: National Theater. [playbill], 1961 [Box 1 F2]


*Raisin*: The New Musical based on Lorraine Hansberry's "*A Raisin in the Sun."

New York: 46th Street Theatre [handbill], 1974 [Box 1 F2]

*A Raisin in the Sun*. S.1.: Columbia Pictures [program], 1961 [Box 1 F2]
Columbia Pictures presents Sidney Poitier … with Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee. Screenplay by Lorraine Hansberry from her play … produced by David Susskind and Philip Rose. Directed by Daniel Petrie.

**Series III. Photographs, circa 1959-1960**

Series III. contains 4 black-and-white photographs of cast members from various stage productions of *A Raisin in the Sun*, including several from the original 1959 production.

Claudia McNeil and Diana Sands from original production, [circa 1959] [Box 1 F3]

On verso, "R102 - Please credit photo Friedman—Abeles 351 West 54th Street."

Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Claudia McNeil, Glynn Turman and John Fiedler from original production, [circa 1959] [Box 1 F3]

On verso, "R219 - Please credit photo Friedman—Abeles 351 West 54th Street."

Claudia McNeil and Ossie Davis (who replaced Sidney Poitier), [1959-1960] [Box 1 F3]

On verso, "R211 - Please credit photo Friedman—Abeles 351 West 54th Street." Autographed "Ossie Davis to Joseph." Handwritten note on verso "6/2/86—Black Film Festival Party."

Diana Sands, Frances Foster, Claudia McNeil, [1959-1960] [Box 1 F3]

Autographed by all three actresses. On verso: "Rec'd 1-17-61. *A Raisin in the Sun*"

**Series IV. Miscellaneous, 1962-1967**

Series IV. consists of material relating to Lorraine Hansberry's literary reception and career, including a card autographed by Hansberry, clippings, and two letters from Hansberry's ex-husband and literary executor, Robert Nemiroff, addressed to Morris Schappes of *Jewish Currents* magazine.

Card signed by Lorraine Hansberry, 1962 [Box 1 F4]

With certificate of authenticity.

"No Men are Strangers: At Least, a Medal," by Joseph North. *The Worker* [newsclipping], 1964 December 13 [Box 1 F4]

Regarding Hansberry's play *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*.

"Crusader of Genius: an editorial." *The Worker* [newsclipping], 1965 January 17 [Box 1 F4]

Editorial appreciation on the death of Hansberry.
"Simone Signoret … to the Paris stage in Lorraine Hansberry's *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window.*" 
*New York Post.* [newscutting], 1965 October 26 [Box 1 F4]

"Strategy Meeting." *New Yorker,* p. 49-51, 1964 December 5 [Box 1 F4]

Regarding Hansberry's play *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window.*

Correspondence, 1965, 1967 [Box 1 F4]