
Guide to the Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn Papers

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Collection number: MS 13

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn papers

Dates: 1915-1979

Collection number: MS 13

Collection Size: .25 linear feet (1 box)

Repository: African American Museum and Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)
Oakland, CA 94612

Abstract: The Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn Papers include clippings, correspondence, certificates, photographs, and programs relating to the lives and careers of Maxine Blackburn and her brother, Roy C. Blackburn.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

Access Restrictions

Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

Publication Rights

Permission to publish from the Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn Papers must be obtained from the African American Museum and Library at Oakland.

Preferred Citation

Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn papers, MS 13, African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library, Oakland, California.

Acquisition Information

Part of the collection of the Center for Afro-American History and Life.

Custodial History

Part of the collection of the Center for Afro-American History and Life.

Biography / Administrative History

Maxine Blackburn

Born in Oakland and the sister of Roy, Sidney, and Gretchen Blackburn, Maxine Blackburn became a well-known musician in Oakland, California. As a child, she studied piano with Elmer F. Keeton and then went on to study at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She received an appointment as organist and choir director at Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church, a post she held for many years.

Maxine participated in the formation and direction of many different musical groups in Oakland. In partnership with Beatrice Leacock, she performed in a piano duo program on the lunchtime concert program of radio station KLS. She also performed in an octet at the Women's City Club. In addition, Maxine helped to organize the United Choirs of Oakland and San Francisco, which gave monthly concerts at churches in the Bay Area. She also organized the Gospel Singers' Fellowship Circle on March 19, 1943 at St. Paul's AME church in Berkeley. Designed to establish links between church choirs, this group also gave performances throughout the Bay Area.

Maxine Blackburn died on September 25, 1975.

Roy C. Blackburn

An Oakland native, Roy C. Blackburn attended the University of California at Berkeley. During the early 1930s, he worked as Langston Hughes's secretary. He became a clerk and worked for the State Relief Administration and was appointed Director of Negro Publicity for the World's Fair in Los Angeles. After fulfilling this post, Blackburn began serving as the Pacific Coast Manager for the African-American tenor, Roland Hayes. He joined the Oakland Police Department in 1943 and worked as an administrator in the jail division for 27 years. In 1968, he won a special award for streamlining the bail-out process. He retired from the Oakland police force in 1970.

Blackburn participated in many different political, charitable, and religious organizations in Oakland. He served as a member of the Republican State Convention in 1936 and as a leader of the Young Republican Movement in the East Bay. In addition, he was very active in the Alameda County Central Committee of the Republican Party. Blackburn also devoted many years of service to the Board of Trustees of First AME Church and to the Board of Directors of the Fannie Wall Children's Home, serving as president of the board for fifteen years.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn Papers include clippings, correspondence, certificates, photographs, and programs relating to the lives and careers of Maxine Blackburn and her brother, Roy C. Blackburn. Maxine's accomplishments as a pianist, organist, and choral director are documented in clippings and programs about various local concerts she participated in or organized. Roy's civic activities as a member of the Republican party and as a member of the Oakland Police Department are documented in newspaper clippings and pamphlets. The papers include correspondence received from Roland Hayes while he worked as his Pacific Coast Manager. Newspaper clippings also document Roy's role as Director of Negro Publicity for the 1939 World's Fair and as a clerk for the State Relief Administration in the late 1930s. A majority of the photographs are family and friends of the Blackburn family.

Arrangement

Series I. Maxine Blackburn Series II. Roy C. Blackburn Series III. Photographs

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Blackburn, Maxine, 1908-1975.

Blackburn, Roy C., 1912-2000.

Hayes, Roland, 1877-1977.

African Americans--Music--1900-1940.

Separated Material

The New National Baptist Hymnal (1977), with the hymn Lead Me, Guide Me arranged by Maxine Blackburn, was placed in the African American Museum and Library at Oakland's library collection.

Maxine Blackburn

Physical Description: 2 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

Contains clippings and programs which provide biographical information, as well as documentation of Maxine's musical activities.

Arrangement

Arranged by subject and thereafter by date.

Box 1:1	Obituaries 1975
	Musical activities
Box 1:2	Oakland Tribune photo/article Miss Blackburn directing youth on parade concert undated
Box 1:2	Handwritten poem undated
Box 1:2	Reid Cochran, voice teacher, business card undated
Box 1:2	Fantasia eleganza program 1950
Box 1:2	Fellowship of Choirs, Piano, and Voice concert program 1948
Box 1:2	California State Association of Colored Women presents piano and voice concert program [photocopy] 1940

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- Box 1:2 **Handwritten music, America sings 1953**
Box 1:2 **Souvenir program, 80th anniversary First A.M.E. Church 1938**
Box 1:2 **Souvenir program, dedication and relocation service First A.M.E. Church 1954**
- Roy C. Blackburn**
Physical Description: 5 folders
Series Scope and Content Summary
Consists of three subseries biographical material, civic activities, and Roland Hayes correspondence.
Arrangement
Arranged by subseries and thereafter by date.
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Biographical

- Box 1:3 **Marriage certificate, John Blackburn and Florence Jackson [photocopy] undated**
Box 1:4 **Newspaper clippings 1937-1968**
Box 1:5-6 **Certificates 1928-1931**
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Civic activities

- Box 1:6 **Raising Day program, Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery 1979**
Box 1:6 **Delegate credentials, Republican State Convention 1936**
Box 1:6 **Delegate credentials, Republican State Convention 1936**
Box 1:6 **Certificate of election, Republican Party Central County Committee 1936**
Box 1:6 **Jerome Keithley, Oakland city manager, awarding \$100 suggestions prize 1967**

Box 1:7

Roland Hayes correspondence 1935-1954

Photographs

- Physical Description:** 20 photographs
Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes family photos, as well as publicity photos of both Maxine and Roy C. Blackburn.
- Box 1:8 **Portrait of Austide Blufie Martin [001] undated**
Box 1:9 **Austide Blufie Martin standing in backyard [002] circa 1940s**
Box 1:10 **Emelda Martin Mitchell, daughter of Austide Blufie Martin, in wedding dress [003] circa 1915**
Box 1:11 **Portrait of Emelda Martin Mitchell [004] circa 1915**
Box 1:12 **Portrait of Emelda Martin Mitchell [005] 1965**
Box 1:13 **Portrait of Luther Mitchell [006] undated**
Box 1:14 **Portrait of Luther Mitchell in military uniform [007] circa 1910s**
Box 1:15 **Group photograph, 1st birthday of Philip Lee Drisdale (left to right) Mildred Parks Johnson and daughter Helene, June Pankey and son Ronald, Doris Drisdale and son Philip (honoree), Adele Mitchell Taylor and daughter Adele(Theodora), Madeline Desmongles, Beulah Woods Moody and son, Mary Towns Bagby and son Dennis, Marie Mitchell Blackburn, Minerva Gaskin holding niece [008] 1941**
Box 1:16 **Class portrait, Jefferson School, Oakland, California [009] 1923**
Box 1:17 **Portrait of Marie and Roy C. Blackburn [010] 1937**
Box 1:18 **Portrait of Roy C. Blackburn [011] undated**
Box 1:19 **Portrait of Marie and Roy C. Blackburn on wedding day standing next to maid of honor, Doris Mitchell, and best man, Sidney Blackburn [012] 1937**
Box 1:20 **Group photograph, Mem. Day, 1st church [013] 1957**
Box 1:21 **Photograph of exterior of Pioneer Memorial Methodist Church [014] undated**
Box 1:22 **Class photograph, Clawson School, Oakland, California, 1928 [015] 1965**
Box 1:23 **Portrait of John C. Blackburn [reproduction] [016] circa 1899**
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Box 1:24 **Church organ, 1st A.M.E. Church [021] 1961**
Box 1:25 **Photograph of Ethel Brooks, Sidney Blackburn, Gretchen Blackburn, Roy Blackburn, and Mayme C. Netherland at railroad station in route to Pinehurst Sunday School picnic [reproduction] [031] circa 1922**
Box 1:26 **Church organ, 1st A.M.E. Church [038] circa 1960s**
Box 1:27 **Church organ, 1st A.M.E. Church [039] circa 1960s**
Box 1:27 **Photograph of exterior of 1st A.M.E. Church [040] undated**
Box 1:27 **Photograph of exterior of 1st A.M.E. Church [041] undated**
Box 1:27 **Photograph of exterior of 1st A.M.E. Church [042] undated**
Box 1:28 **James Hart at book signing of *A Companion to California* undated**
Box 1:29 **Group portrait (left to right) Sydney, Maxine, Florence, Roy, and Gretchen Blackburn circa 1920**