
Guide to the Black Women Stirring the Waters Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Black Women Stirring the Waters Collection

Dates: 1982-1997

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1994-1997)

Collection number: MS 152

Creator: Black Women Stirring the Waters (Oakland, Calif.)

Creator: Butler, Mary Ellen, 1940-

Collection Size: .75 linear feet(2 boxes)

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

Abstract: The Black Women Stirring the Waters Collection includes contributing authors' manuscripts and correspondence, history and records of the group, and audio recordings. The collection documents the creation of the organization's 1997 publication, *Black Women Stirring the Waters* .

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 Black Women Stirring the Waters Collection must be obtained from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

Preferred Citation

Black Women Stirring the Waters collection, MS 152, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library. Oakland, California.

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the African American Museum & Library at Oakland on February 23, 2004 by Mary Ellen Butler.

Processing Information

Processed by Jennifer Pickens, May 21, 2014.

Biography / Administrative History

Black Women Stirring the Waters is a black women's discussion group founded in 1984 in the San Francisco Bay Area. The group was conceived by Clara Stanton Jones, the first African American to head the public library of a major city and the first African American president of the American Library Association, and Aileen Clarke Hernandez, activist, and former President of the National Organization for Women (NOW). The group was organized with no formal structure, no taboo subjects, and no requirements for membership other than an interest in the dialog. Black Women Stirring the Waters takes

its name from a quote attributed to the 19th century abolitionist, Sojourner Truth. The group has a large roster of members from six Bay Area counties ranging in age from mid-twenties to mid-nineties; bi-monthly meetings are held to discuss the perspectives of black women on a multitude of subjects. In 1997, forty-four members of the group published a collection of autobiographical memoirs discussing ways they have dealt with obstacles and have grown in their lives and careers.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Black Women Stirring the Waters Collection includes contributing authors' manuscripts and correspondence, history and records of the group, and audio recordings. The collection documents the creation of the organization's 1997 publication, *Black Women Stirring the Waters*. Records include each author's original manuscript and drafts for the publication, including any correspondence between the authors and Mary Ellen Butler, compiler and editor of the book. Documents include a conference agenda from the group's inception and newspaper clippings publicizing the book's release. The collection is arranged into four series: 1) Author manuscripts and correspondence, 2) organization history and records, 3) audiocassettes, and 4) published material.

Arrangement

Series I. Author manuscripts and correspondence Series II. Organization history and records Series III. Audiocassettes Series IV. Published material

Indexing Terms

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

African American women--California--History.

African American women--Societies and clubs.

African Americans--California--History.

African American authors--Biography.

African American women--Biography.

Butler, Mary Ellen. 1997. Black Women Stirring the Waters. Oakland, Calif: Marcus Books.

Authors manuscripts and correspondence

Physical Description: 43 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

Includes manuscripts and drafts, Permission to Publish forms, correspondence, and biographical information.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Box 1:1	Alexander, Gaynelle 1996-1997
Box 1:2	Bennett, Celestine C. T. 1994-1997
Box 1:3	Broussard, Maybelle 1994-1997
Box 1:4	Butler, Mary Ellen 1994-1997
Box 1:5	Cannon, Barbara E. M. 1994-1997
Box 1:6	Catlett, Frances Dunham 1985, 1996-1997
Box 1:7	Crossley, Elaine Sherman 1994-1997
Box 1:8	Davis, Wanda 1994-1997
Box 1:9	Dones, Inez 1994
Box 1:10	Ford, Marcella 1994-1997
Box 1:11	French, Barbara Louis Carlisle 1997
Box 1:12	Furlow, Julia Savage 1994-1997
Box 1:13	Green, Phyllis Strong 1996-1997
Box 1:14	Goddard, Nettie 1989, 1997
Box 1:15	Hernandez, Aileen Clarke 1994-1997
Box 1:16	Irvin, Dona 1994-1997
Box 1:17	Johnson, Eloise McKinney 1997
Box 1:18	Johnson, Irma 1994-1997
Box 1:19	Jones, Clara Stanton 1996-1997
Box 1:20	Lampley, Norma Mosley 1994-1997

Box 1:21	Ludlow, Susie Nickens 1994-1997
Box 1:22	Martin, Morrelle Lyles 1994-1997
Box 1:23	Mixon, Portia 1996-1997
Box 1:24	Morris, Effie Lee 1992, 1996-1997
Box 1:25	O'Brien, Thelma V. 1995-1997
Box 1:26	Patterson, Dorothy 1994-1997
Box 1:27	Patterson, Tracy 1994-1997
Box 1:28	Payne, Zenobia K. 1995-1997
Box 1:29	Pierce, Marie Turner 1994-1997
Box 1:30	Pitts, Dorothy Waller 1994-1997
Box 1:31	Roberson, Ruby Jean 1996-1997
Box 1:32	Robinson, Audrey 1997
Box 1:33	Robinson, Josephine 1994-1997
Box 1:34	Rose, Virginia Craft 1994-1997
Box 1:35	Royal, Alice 1994-1997
Box 1:36	Semmons, Dena Hurst 1994-1997
Box 1:37	Thornton, Dr. Shirley A. 1997
Box 1:38	Traylor, Margaret 1994-1997
Box 1:39	Washington, Alice 1994-1997
Box 1:40	Washington, Mary Parks 1997
Box 1:41	Williams, Sadie 1997
Box 1:42	Williams, Valena Minor 1997
Box 1:43	Wilson, Lucy Wood 1994

Organizational history and records

Physical Description: Five folders + diskettes

Series Scope and Content Summary

Historical documentation of the creation of *Black Women Stirring the Waters*, including a written manuscript of the book's front matter, newspaper clippings, correspondence, conference agenda, ephemera, and diskettes.

Arrangement

Arranged by format.

History

Box 2:1	Manuscript and drafts of <i>Black Women Stirring the Waters: A Brief History</i> 1997
Box 2:1	Meeting minutes 1995
Box 2:1	Blank membership survey 1995
Box 2:1	Meeting guidelines undated
Box 2:2	Newspaper clippings 1998
Box 2:4	Press releases circa 1997
Box 2:4	Lists of contributors and project committee 1997

Correspondence

Box 2:3	Permission to publish contract undated
Box 2:3	Letter of understanding between Mary Ellen Butler and Valena Minor Williams 1997
Box 2:1	Note from Aileen to Valena regarding edits undated
Box 2:3	Letters about book layout 1997
Box 2:3	Letters about writing the history statement 1997
Box 2:3	Publication announcement to distributor 1997
Box 2:3	Grant request 1996

Ephemera

Ephemera

Box 2:5 **Notes and receipts undated**
Box 2:1 **Promotional flyer undated**
Box 2 **Conference agenda 1982**

Diskettes

Box 2 **Backup of files undated**
Audiocassettes
Physical Description: Three audiocassettes
Series Scope and Content Summary
Oral history interviews of Portia Mixon and Audrey Gibson Robinson. Recording of a church service at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church in Oakland, CA with a sermon by Reverend Marie Pierce.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically

Box 2 **Mixon, Portia circa 1994**
Box 2 **Pierce, Reverend Marie 1994**
Box 2 **Robinson, Audrey Gibson 1994**
Box 2 **Published material 1997**
Physical Description: One volume
Series Scope and Content Summary
Signed copy of *Black Women Stirring the Waters*