Langston Hughes Papers: Finding Aid


The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
© 2010
The Huntington Library. All rights reserved.
Overview of the Collection
Title: Langston Hughes Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1910-1976
Bulk dates: 1932-1934
Collection Number: mssHM 64070-64101, mssHM 68429-68442, mssHM73900-73977
Extent: 124 pieces in 4 boxes.
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: The collection consists mainly of manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and ephemera to, by, and about African-American writer Langston Hughes (1910-1976). The bulk of the material dates between 1932 and 1934, the years that Langston Hughes traveled to and from the Soviet Union and Mexico. There are also correspondence and photographs to and about Hughes's friend African-American lawyer Loren Miller (1903-1967) and the Miller family.
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
There are no restrictions on access except for the Hughes Pocket Diary, HM 64076. It is too fragile to be handled and has been permanently retired. A high-quality facsimile is available for use.
Publication Rights
The Huntington Library does not require that researchers request permission to quote from or publish images of this material, nor does it charge fees for such activities. The responsibility for identifying the copyright holder, if there is one, and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Langston Hughes Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
The items in Part I were purchased from Edward and Angela Miller in June 2002 (acquisition number 2244).
Part II is made up of two groups of material:
• Photographs of the Miller family, lent to the Huntington Library in November 2002 by Halvor Miller, Jr., cousin of Edward and Loren Miller, Jr., were copied and the originals returned to Halvor Miller.
• Another notebook kept in Russia by Hughes was purchased from Edward and Angela Miller in November 2003 (acquisition number 2319)
Part III includes three groups of material, correspondence, ephemera, and photographs. These items were acquired from Edward Miller in October 2006 (acquisition number 2402).
Biographical Note
African-American author (James) Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was born on February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri, to James Nathaniel and Carrie Mercer (Langston) Hughes. Throughout his career as a writer, Hughes lived in several countries around the world including a year in the Soviet Union (1932-1933). He is well known for such works as Weary Blues (1926), The Big Sea (1940), the Simple series including Simple Speaks His Mind (1950), and other works. Hughes died on May 22, 1967.
African-American attorney, judge and civil rights activist Loren Miller (1903-1967) was born on January 20, 1903, in Pender, Nebraska, to John Bird and Nora (Herbaugh) Miller. He married Juanita Ellsworth on February 19, 1933, and they had two sons Loren, Jr. and Edward Ellsworth. He practiced private law in Kansas from 1928-1929 before moving to California and opening a practice in 1933. Miller was a reporter for the California News from 1929-1933 and the publisher of the California Eagle from 1934-1964. He was a Municipal Court judge for Los Angeles from 1964 until his death. He was a member of the California Advisory Commission on Civil Rights and the vice president of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing. Miller died on July 16, 1967.
Langston Hughes was close friends with both Loren and Juanita Miller. Loren Miller, Hughes, and a troupe of African-American actors, students and writers traveled to the Soviet Union in 1932 aboard the ship Europa. They had planned to make a film called “Black and White,” about African-American life in America. The movie was never filmed due to funding. While Hughes remained on the Soviet Union and Asia, Miller returned home and married Juanita Ellsworth. Over the years, Miller acted on several occasions as legal counsel for Hughes.

Scope and Content

The collection consists mainly of manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and ephemera to, by, and about African-American writer Langston Hughes. The bulk of the material dates between 1932 and 1934, the years that Langston Hughes traveled to and from the Soviet Union and Mexico. There are also correspondence and photographs to and about Hughes's friend African-American lawyer Loren Miller and the Miller family.

This collection is arranged in three parts reflecting three different acquisitions. Part I consists of a pocket diary kept while Hughes was in China and Japan in 1933 (HM 64076), manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and ephemera to, by, and about Langston Hughes. Part II consists of photograph reproductions and another pocket notebook (HM 68429), kept by Hughes while in the Soviet Union, dating from 1932-1933. Part III consists of letters, ephemera and photographs primarily by Loren Miller and related to the 1932 Soviet Union trip. Langston Hughes was a close friend of Loren and Juanita Miller. Hughes and Miller traveled to the Soviet Union in 1932 with 19 other African-Americans onboard the ship Europa for a film project that never materialized. There are two photographs from onboard the Europa including a group photograph of 20 of the 22 who traveled to the Soviet Union (HM 64100).

Correspondence in Part I consists of: 5 letters from Langston Hughes to Loren Miller (HM 64082-64086); 1 letter to Juanita Miller (HM 64081); 2 letters from Si-lan Chen Leyda to Langston Hughes (HM 64088-64089); 5 letters from Maxim Lieber to Langston Hughes about selling some of Hughes' short stories (HM 64090-64094); and 4 letters to Langston Hughes from Josephine De Witt (HM 64070), L.B. (Lidiì’a Borisovna) Filatova (HM 64071), Jozsef Rem’enyi (HM 64097), and Agnes Smedley (HM 64097). There are 3 letters to Loren Miller from Bill Jordan (HM 64087); Helen O. (HM 64095); and Kenneth P. O’Donnell (HM 64096) inviting Miller to a civil rights meeting with President Kennedy in 1963. There is also 1 letter to Maxim Lieber from Elsie Weil about a Hughes’ short story (HM 64099). Correspondence in Part III is primarily from Loren Miller to Juanita Miller and Nora Miller, with a few letters to and from other friends and family.

Manuscripts (in Part I) consist of Mother and Child [one-act play] (HM 64072); The Need for Heroes [essay] (HM 64073); "Once again..." (HM 64074); Oyster's Son [short story] (HM 64075); Professor [short story] (HM 64077); Reno Possess Only Negro Weather Man [essay] (HM 64078); The Sailor and the Steward [short story] (HM 64079); and "Wise Men" [poem] (HM 64080).

- Hughes, Langston. Big Sur: [poem], 1941_ (Call number: mssHM 63815)
- Hughes, Langston. Declaration: [poem, 6 drafts] : autograph manuscript, 1939_ (Call number: mssHM 63816 (a-f))
- Hughes, Langston. Uncle Tom: [poem, 7 drafts] : autograph manuscript, 1941_ (Call number: mssHM 63819 (a-g))
- Hughes, Langston. Langston Hughes: [autobiographical sketch], 1941_ (Call number: mssHM 63817)
- Langston Hughes letter to Beulah May, 1883-1941_ (Call number: mssHM 63818)
- Langston Hughes letters to Isabella M. Brown, 1963-1966_ (Call number: mssHM 80590-80595)
- Loren Miller papers, 1876-2003 (bulk dates 1932-1966)

C. E. S. Wood papers, 1829-1980 (bulk 1870-1940) (Call number: mssWD) includes:

  - WD Box 154 (5) "Let America Be America Again" [poem], November 16, 1935, Cleveland, Ohio, MS.S. 2p. 4to. typewritten. Enclosed in: Letter from Hughes to Wood, WD Box 154 (7).
  - WD Box 154 (6) Telegram from Langston Hughes to Charles Erskine Scott Wood, February 21, 1942, Chicago, 1 p. obl. 8vo. Also: Transcription of telegram in handwriting of Nancy (Honeyman) Robinson.

Removed or Separated Material

The material in Part I included two books inscribed by Langston Hughes to Loren and Juanita Miller. They were transferred to the Rare Books Department in August 2002. These books are:

- One-Way Ticket  (Call number: 606889)
- Simple Speaks His Mind  (Call number: 606888)

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in three parts, reflecting the three different acquisitions of the material.

- Part I (HM 64070-64101): Correspondence, Manuscripts, Photographs, and Ephemera (Box 1)
- Part II (HM 68429-68442): Pocket diary and Photographs (Box 2)
- Part III (HM 73900-73977): Correspondence (Box 3) and Ephemera and Photographs (Box 4)

Within each part, manuscripts and correspondence arranged alphabetically, followed by photographs and ephemera, which are arranged chronologically.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](#).

**Subjects**

Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967 -- Archives.
Lieber, Maxim, 1897- -- Correspondence.
Miller, Loren -- Correspondence.
African American authors -- Archives.

**Forms/Genres**

Manuscripts for publication -- United States -- 20th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 20th century.
Photographs -- United States -- 20th century.
Ephemera -- United States -- 20th century.

**Additional Contributors**

Lieber, Maxim, 1897-.
Miller, Loren.

Box 1

Part I (HM 64070-64101)


Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967. Mother and Child: [one-act play], [ca. 1934], Carbon copy (MS., typewritten: 8 p.). Handwritten note by Langston Hughes below the cast list. HM 64072.


Access Information

Use facsimile reproduction. Original available by special permission only.


Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967. Reno Possess Only Negro Weather Man: [short story], [1934, not before Nov. 5 and not after Nov. 15], Carbon copy (MS., typewritten: 1 p.). Handwritten notes on verso. One note is signed “Juanita” addressed to “Loren.” The other note could be in Loren Miller’s handwriting. HM 64078.


Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967. 5 letters (1930-1933) to Loren Miller. HM 64082-64086.


Leyda, Si-lan Chen. 2 letters (1934) to Langston Hughes, 1902-1967. HM 64088-64089.

Lieber, Maxim, 1897-. 5 letters (1934) to Langston Hughes, 1902-1967. Enclosure: Weil, Elsie. To Maxim Lieber, 1897-, Nov. 9, 1934, cataloged separately as HM 64099. HM 64090-64094.

O, Helen. 1 letter to Loren Miller, A.L.S. (incomplete: 1 p.), [Approximately 1933-1934]. HM 64095


----- Photograph of Mildred Jones onboard the ship Europa, [Approximately 1932], Nov. 1. HM 64101

Ephemera: 2 clippings. Includes a newspaper clipping about the acting troupe traveling to the Soviet Union on the Europa.

Ephemera: 2 Printed items.

Ephemera: 6 Miscellaneous handwritten notes.

Ephemera: 7 Miscellaneous envelopes.

Ephemera: Commemorative Stamps for Langston Hughes' 100th birthday, 2002.

Box 2

Part II (HM 68429-68442)

Note

The photographs in Part II are copies. In November 2002, photographs of the Miller family were loaned to the Huntington Library by Halvor Miller, Jr., to be copied and returned.


----- Photograph copy of a photograph of Loren and Cloyd Miller, [191-]. HM 68430.

----- Photograph copy of a photograph of Loren Miller and his graduation class of Highland High School, Highland, Kansas, 1920. HM 68431.

----- Photograph copy of a photograph of a page from the journal The Crisis picturing Loren Miller, [not before 1926]. HM 68432.

----- Photograph copy of a photograph of Leon H. Washington, Jr. and his god child, Jane Marie Miller, [193-]. Leon H. Washington, Jr. was the founder and publisher of The Los Angeles Sentinel. He was a cousin of Loren Miller. They were as close as brothers. HM 68433.

----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Loren Miller, [193-]. HM 68434.

----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Juanita Miller, [193-]. HM 68435.

----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Juanita and Loren Miller and an unidentified woman, [194-]. HM 68436.

----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Loren Miller “In Action,” [1940s or 1950s]. HM 68437.


----- Photographic copy of a photograph of (l-r): Halvor Miller; Helen Addison; Nora Herbaugh Miller; Roland Miller; and Loren Miller, [Approximately 1953]. HM 68439.


----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Loren Miller, [not after 1964]. HM 68441.

----- Photographic copy of a photograph of Loren Miller, Jr. and Halvor Miller, Jr. at Judicial Swearing Ceremony, Los Angeles County Courthouse, 1976. HM 68442.

Box 3

Part III: Correspondence (HM 73900-73939)


Miller, Loren. Letter to Calme? Ellsworth. A.N.S. on a postcard, 1932, June 19, On board Europa. Note: This is Juanita (Ellsworth) Miller's address. HM 73904.


Miller, Loren. Letter to Juanita (Ellsworth) Miller. A.N.S. on a postcard, 1932, June 25, Helsingfors [Helsinki], Finland. HM 73907.


[-----], Mary. To Cloyd Miller. A.N.S. on a postcard (2p.), 1910, Nov. 26, Elwood, Kan. HM 73938.

Box 4

Part III: Ephemera and Photographs (HM 73940-73977)

Ephemera: printed material (Bank ticket from Norway). 1 item. HM 73940.
Ephemera: printed material (Loren Miller’s business card). Topeka, Kan. 1 item. HM 73942.
Ephemera: printed material (Washburn College Commencement Program). 1928, June 5. Topeka, Kan. 3 items. HM 73945.
Ephemera: postcards (Valentine card with young African American boy). Pender, Neb. 1 item. HM 73946.
Ephemera: postcards (black and white scenes of Moscow). Moscow. 18 items. HM 73947.
Ephemera: envelopes. 9 items. HM 73953.
-----, Photograph of 3 Turkmen peasants. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73954.
-----, Photograph of 2 Turkmen cotton growers. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73955.
-----, Photograph of a group of Kolhoz farmers on horse. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73956.
-----. Photograph of men shipping grain using camels. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73957.
-----. Photograph of ocean shoreline in Odessa, Ukraine. [pre-1933]. Odessa, Ukraine. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73958.
-----. Photograph of people baling cotton. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73960.
-----. Photograph of 2 Turkmen Women. [1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73962.
-----. Photograph of Park of Culture and Rest-Reading room. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73963.
-----. Photograph of a man wearing a turban. 1930. HM 73964.
-----. Photograph of men in a small mountain village. [pre-1933]. HM 73965.
-----. Photograph of a man selling charms. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73969.
-----. Photograph of a man making pottery. [pre-1933]. On verso: autograph note by Loren Miller. HM 73970.
-----. Photograph of two Iliiskii fishermen. [pre-1933]. HM 73972.