FATHER DIVINE.
Father Divine papers, circa 1930-1996

Emory University
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-6887
rose.library@emory.edu

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Father Divine.
Title: Father Divine papers, circa 1930-1996
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 840
Extent: 8 linear feet (16 boxes), 3 oversized papers folders (OP), 3 extra-oversized papers (XOP), 7 oversized bound volumes (OBV), and AV Masters: .25 linear feet (1 box)
Abstract: Papers relating to African American evangelist Father Divine and the Peace Mission Movement including correspondence, writings, photographs, printed material, and memorabilia.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Special restrictions apply: Due to preservation concerns, some of the scrapbooks (OBV1-4) are closed to researchers.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Separated Material
Pamphlets, monographs and periodicals included in the collection have been cataloged separately. These materials may be located in the Emory University online catalog by searching for: Father Divine.

Source
Purchase, 1997, with subsequent additions.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Father Divine papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

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**Processing**
Processed by Susan Potts McDonald, April 2011

In 2014, Emory Libraries conservation staff cleaned, repaired, and reformatted the scrapbooks numbered OBV1 and OBV2 as part of the National Parks Service funded Save America's Treasures grant to preserve African American scrapbooks in the Rose Library's holdings. The original substrate pages of OBV2 were too fragile to bear mending, so the newspaper clippings in that scrapbook were completely removed. When the Rose Library acquired the scrapbook it was not bound and the pages were not in any discernible order, so conservators reorganized the newspaper clippings chronologically to enhance access. Detailed conservation reports are available from the repository upon request.

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**Collection Description**

**Biographical Note**
Father Divine, formerly known as George Baker Jr., is believed to have been born around 1879 in Rockville, Maryland. While the early life of his father, George Baker Sr., is unclear, his mother, Nancy, had previously been a slave. After leaving Rockville around 1899, he noticed that African American churches were often not socially active and decided that the influence of the church could be used to enact social change. After years as an itinerate preacher, he settled in New York during World War I and eventually founded The Peace Mission Movement, which provided relief to the poor and sought to break down segregation by eliminating among followers all use of words related to race or color. He also taught his followers to reject the idea of an afterlife. Instead, Father Divine encouraged his followers to strive for eternal life on Earth by finding unity with God's internal spirit. The Peace Mission was and is a celibate community and followers strive to live pure lives in harmony with one another. He and his followers believe that he is the Messiah and Savior of humankind.

His first wife Peninniah, better known as Mother Divine, died in 1943, but Father Divine saw her as reincarnated in Edna Rose Ritchings whom he married in 1946. In 1965, Father Divine died; however, his followers believe that he "laid his body down" as a judgment on humankind for ignoring his teachings. Mother Divine and many followers believe that his spirituality is still present and that he made the supreme sacrifice for humans and will eventually resurrect himself.

**Scope and Content Note**
The collection consists of materials relating to Father Divine and the Peace Mission Movement from circa 1930-1996. The collection includes correspondence, printed material by and about Father Divine, photographs, ephemera, financial ledgers of the Divine Hotel Riviera (Newark, New Jersey), scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials.

The correspondence includes letters to and from Father Divine and his many followers from 1935-1971. The printed material consists of a variety of materials including brochures; postcards; International Peace Cards (which many of Father Divine's followers carried with them for protection); anniversary announcements; and programs from Peace Mission Movement events. The photographs contain images mostly of Father Divine, Mother Divine and their home, Woodmont (Gladwyne, Pennsylvania).
Ephemera includes mostly handmade objects created by Father Divine's Rosebuds including booklets and notebooks containing his teachings, buttons, banners, pennants, and some art work. The financial ledgers of the Divine Hotel Riviera located in Newark, New Jersey, contain a list of lodgers and the rates they paid; as well as expenses incurred by the hotel from 1950-1954. The scrapbooks contain clippings from *The New Day* (1934-1935, 1951-1955) and the *New York News* (1933-1935); message cards; and The New Day Reading Class of Unity Mission Church Bible Institute, Excerpt Book, September 24, 1963. The audiovisual material includes cassette recordings of the "Word of GOD Revealed" program read by Mother Divine and songs by the Rosebud Choir and a phonographic recording of "Father Divine Praise Medley" and "Excerpts from Righteous Government Meeting, November 9, 1939."

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**Arrangement Note**
Arranged by record type.
## Container List

### Correspondence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<td>Incoming, 1946 July-December</td>
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<td>Outgoing, 1948 May-December</td>
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<td>Outgoing, 1950-1958</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Outgoing, 1966, 1971</td>
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### Printed material by and about Father Divine

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Article, Divine, M.J., &quot;Blessed are the Pure of Heart,&quot; <em>Metaphysical News</em>, February 1, 1933</td>
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<td>Article, &quot;Father Divine in Los Angeles, Southern California Parade, April 21, 1936</td>
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<td>Article, &quot;Father Divine Newspapers Refuses to Print the Truth,&quot; <em>The Iconoclast</em>, June 1, 1937</td>
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<td>Article, Lanyon, Walker, &quot;Father Divine,&quot; <em>The Rally</em>, June 1934</td>
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<td>Bill of Rights, no date</td>
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<td>Booklet, includes &quot;The Rosebud's Creed,&quot; the &quot;Lily-Bud's Creed,&quot; and the &quot;Crusaders' Self-Discipline,&quot; no date</td>
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<td>Booklet, includes &quot;A Rosebud's Prayer&quot; and other verses</td>
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<td>Broadside, Patriotic Outing, Demonstration and Mass Meeting, Divine Greenkill Park (Kingston, New York), October 12, 1941</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>Brochures, Father Divine</td>
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<td>Brochures, Father Divine's Science Class, circa 1974 and 1975</td>
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<td>Brochure, Unity Mission Church Home and Training School (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 100th Anniversary, 1893-1993</td>
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<td>3.12</td>
<td>Brochures, Woodmont</td>
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<td>3.13</td>
<td>Business card, Reverend M.J. Divine</td>
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<td>Business card, Peace Movement Mission followers</td>
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<td>By-Laws, United Peace Mission Nurses, no date</td>
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<td>Calendar, 1948</td>
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<td>Calendar (date book), 1975</td>
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<td>Calendar, 1978</td>
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<td>3.19</td>
<td>Calendar, Divine Lorraine Hotel (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 1962</td>
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<td>Certificate, Completing the Reading of the Old Testament, Sister's Bible Class, January 24, 1959</td>
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<td>3.22</td>
<td>Certificate, United States Treasury Department, War Finance Program, 1945</td>
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<td>Christmas cards, Divine Fairmont Hotel (Jersey City, New Jersey), no dates</td>
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<td>Christmas and New Year cards, Father and Mother Divine</td>
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<td>Constitution and By-Laws, Circle Mission, Church Discipline, no date</td>
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<td>Constitution and By-Laws, Peace Center, Church Discipline, no date</td>
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<td>Feathers of Woodmont (2)</td>
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<td>3.28</td>
<td>First day covers addressed to Mother Divine, 1969-1972</td>
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<td>Flowers of Woodmont (6)</td>
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<td>Flyer, &quot;Mottoes Given in Sayville,&quot; no date</td>
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<td>Flyer, &quot;Short Talk by Rev. M. H. Divine,&quot; no date</td>
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<td>Invitation, Independence Day Luncheon, Woodmont, July 4, 1976</td>
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<td>Invitations, Wedding anniversary, 1950-1996</td>
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<td>Invitations, Woodmont Celebration, September 10-13, 1970 [includes a map of Peace Mission properties around Philadelphia]</td>
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<td>Letter, Facsimile of President Lyndon Johnson's letter to Father Divine regarding the Voting Rights Address, March 26, 1965</td>
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<td>Letterhead, includes Father Divine (2), Circle Mission Church of Philadelphia and Training School, Divine Tracy Hotel (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and Unity Mission Church, Home and Training School, Inc. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)</td>
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<td>Menu, Circle Mission Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 27th Anniversary Banquet, April 28, 1974</td>
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<td>Menu, International Peach Banquet, 1953</td>
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<td>Menu, United Mission Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 28th Anniversary Banquet, April 29, 1974</td>
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<td>Menu, United Mission Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 31st Anniversary Banquet, April 29, 1977</td>
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<td>Menu, United Mission Church Home and Training School (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Review Celebration of the Anniversary of Father and Mother Divine, April 30, 1970</td>
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<td><em>The New Day</em>, Vol. III, 1939 (covers only)</td>
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<td><em>The New Day</em>, Vol. VI, 1942 (covers only)</td>
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5 21 The New Day, Vol. VII, 1943 (covers only)
5 22 The New Day, no date (back covers only)
5 23 Newspaper clippings, 1935-1952
6 1 Placards, no date [1]
OP6 - Placards, no date [2]
6 2 Poem, "The New Creation"
6 3 Postcards, Divine Tracy Hotel (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
6 5 Postcards, Father and Mother Divine
6 6 Postcards, Woodmont
6 7 Proclamations, International Universal Interracial Holiday, April 29, 1948
6 8 Program, Father Divine's International Peace Mission Schools, 1961-1978
6 9 Program, Father Divine's Nazareth Mission Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), September 27, 1952
6 10 Program, International Youth Day, August 20, 1950
6 11 Program, Righteous Government Convention (New York, New York), January 10-12, 1936
6 12 Program, Unity Mission Church, Home and Training School, Bible Institute, February 15, 1947
6 13 Receipts, United States Savings Bonds [Father Divine follower Love of Matthew]. 1934, 1943
6 15 Resolution, Circle Mission Church congratulates Eisenhower upon his election as President, January 21, 1953
6 17 Signs
6 18 Song, "Father Divine's Greetings to the Universe," no date
6 19 Song, "Now We Have a Righteous Government, 1936
6 20 Song, "Songs Celebrating the Holy Marriage of Father Divine to His Spotless Virgin Bride, April 29, 1946"
6 21 Stamps, Peace Mission Movement
OP1 1 Stamps, Peace Mission Movement

Photographs
7 1 Father Divine, no date
7 2 Father Divine, 1930s-1940s
Father Divine, 1950s-1970 (8 x 10)
Father Divine, 1950s-1970s (small)
Father Divine, oversized
Father Divine, oversized
Mother Divine (Peninniah), no date
Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), no date
Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1950s
Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1960s
Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1970s
Father and Mother Divine (Peninniah), 1930s
Father and Mother Divine (Peninniah), oversized
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), no date (1 of 2)
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), no date (2 of 2)
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1940s
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1950s-1960s (8 x 10)
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1960-1962
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1963-1966
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), 1971-1974
Father and Mother Divine (Edna Rose Ritchings), oversized
People, Followers of Father Divine protesting ruling of New York County Judge Benedict D. Dineen, 1940
People, International
People, Others
People, Rosebuds
Places, Circle Mission Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
Places, Circle Mission Church Home and Training School of California (Los Angeles, California)
Places, Divine Lorraine Hotel (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
Places, Divine Peace Mission Hotel (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
Places, Father Divine’s Peace Mission (New York, New York)
Places, Holy Communion Table, various locations
Places, New York County Courthouse, 1935
Places, New York County Courthouse, 1937
Places, New York County Courthouse, Divine followers protesting ruling of Judge Benedict D. Dineen, March 1940
Places, Sayville, New York
Places, Sayville, New York residence, 76 Macon Street
8  20  Places, Sorority Peace Mission Democratic Evangelical Home (Newark, New Jersey)
8  21  Places, Ulster County (New York), 1929
8  22  Places, Woodmont (Gladwyne, Pennsylvania), exterior
8  23  Places, Woodmont (Gladwyne, Pennsylvania), interior
8  24  Places, Woodmont - Shrine to Life (Gladwyne, Pennsylvania)
8  25  Places, Unknown
8  26  Photograph album: Charles O'Reggio, Buffalo, New York, 1935
16  1  Printing plates, undated

**Ephemera**

| OP2 | 2     | Banner, "Peace, Virtue, Remember Thy Creator, Father Divine, in the Days of Thy Youth, Rosebuds"
| 9   | 1     | Booklets, etc. (made by Rosebuds) [1 of 3]
| 9   | 2     | Booklets, etc. (made by Rosebuds) [2 of 3]
| 9   | 3     | Booklets, etc. (made by Rosebuds) [3 of 3]
| 9   | 4     | Buttons: (1) Project Positive and (2) Father and Mother Divine
| 9   | 5     | Buttons: Woodmont Centennial, 1892-1992
| 9   | 6     | Collages of Father Divine
| 9   | 7     | Notebook 1, "Father Divine's Cabinet Post Graduate Bible Class"
| 10  | 1     | Notebook 2, "Father Divine's Crusaders"
| 10  | 2     | Notebook 3, "Index to the Sermon on the Mount, Rosebud Creeds, Lilly-Buds Creeds, and Crusaders' Self-Discipline, 1969-1974"
| 10  | 3     | Notebook 4, Notes on various religions including the Peace Mission Movement
| 10  | 4     | Notebook 5, Father Divine messages
| 10  | 5     | Notebook 6, Father Divine messages, March 10-May 12, 1934
| 10  | 6     | Notebook 7, Unattributed quotes and religious quotes
| 10  | 7     | Ornaments
| OP2 | 3     | Pennant, 12th Anniversary, Peace, It's Wonderful
| OP2 | 4     | Pennants (11)
| OP3 | 1     | Poster of Father Divine
| OP3 | 1     | Poster: "American Youth," no date
| OP3 | 1     | Poster: "Chester R. Thomas for Councilman," no date
| XOP1|       | Poster: "Crusaders for righteousness," no date
| OP3 | 1     | Poster: "Divine Lorraine hotel delegates," no date
| OP3 | 1     | Poster: "Divine miracle proves the greatest virtue," no date
| OP3 | 2     | Poster: "Elevate your mind, escalate Divine," no date
| OP3 | 2     | Poster: "Father Divine is He who was to come," no date
| OP5 |       | Poster: "Father Divine's Crusaders," no date
| OP5 |       | Poster: "Father is marching on!" no date
OP5  - Poster: "Father is Reigning Now!" no date
OP3  2 Poster: "For all who have sinned," no date
OP3  2 Poster: "God is Science and Science is God!" no date
OP3  2 Poster: "God," no date
OP4  - Poster: "I will unify the world of science," no date
OP3  3 Poster: "Prejudicial decision against Father Divine," no date
OP3  3 Poster: "The Staple Singers" no date
OP4  - Poster: "The State of International Peace," no date
OP3  3 Poster: "Three cheers for MJD saving democracy," no date
OP4  - Poster: "Truth. Justice." no date
XOP2 Poster: "We are proud to bear Father's name!" no date
XOP3 Poster: "Young America, Father Divine solves your problems positively," no date

Financial ledgers: Divine Hotel Riviera (Newark, New Jersey)
11  1 August 14, 1950-March 3, 1951
11  2 September 23-December 18, 1951
11  3 December 19, 1951-March 16, 1952
11  4 March 18, 1952-June 12, 1952
11  5 June 13, 1952-September 3, 1952
11  6 September 5, 1952-November 27, 1952
11  7 October 23, 1953-October 26, 1954

Scrapbooks
12  Scrapbook 1, The New Day clippings, 1934-1935
13  Scrapbook 2, The New Day clippings, 1934-1935
OBV1 Scrapbook 3: The New Day clippings, 1951-1955 [RESTRICTED]
OBV2 Scrapbook 4: The New Day clippings, 1951-1953 [RESTRICTED]
14  1 Scrapbook 7: Message cards and brochures, no date
14  2 Scrapbook 8: The New Day Reading Class of Unity Mission Church Bible Institute, Excerpt Book, September 24, 1963

The New Day particular series of articles (bound)
15  1 Messages of Father Divine, January-April 1939
15  2 Messages of Father Divine, January 2-March 20, 1941
15  3 Messages of Father Divine, June 11-August 20, 1942
OBV6 "The Portal of Life Eternal," July 31-November 27, 1971
"Righteousness Marches on," August 4, 1939-February 20, 1941

"Righteousness Marches on," August 1, 1940-July 3, 1941 (reverse order) [also include June 20, 1936 issue of The Spoken Word]


Audiovisual

AV1 - Rosebud Choir, April 5, 1934 (C-1) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc003][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc017]

AV1 - Rosebud Choir, Inspirational Christmas Songs (CS-26) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc02c][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc03h]

AV1 - Sacred Praises, Woodmont (CS36-1) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc04n][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc05s]

AV1 - "This Grace Wherein I Stand" (CW8) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc06x][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc072]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW2) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc086][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc09b]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW6) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0bg][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0cm]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW8) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0dr][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0fw]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW12) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0r4][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0s8]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW18) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0td][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0v]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW19) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0wp][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0xt]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW23) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc0zz][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc106]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW26) [original: audio cassette]
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc11b][Digital/
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc12g]

AV1 - Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW30) [original: audio cassette]
AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW31) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc13m][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc14r]

AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW32) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc15w][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc161]

AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW34) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc175][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc189]

AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW35) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc19f][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc1bk]

AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW41) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc1fo][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc1dv]

AV1 -  Word of GOD Revealed, Program (CW50) [original: audio cassette]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc1h8][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id bc1jd]

AV1 -  Father Divine Praise Medley (side 1) and Excerpts from Righteous Government
       Meeting, November 9, 1939 [original: 78 RPM]
       [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id b7w2s][Digital/
        digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id b7w3x]