

# **KARAMU HOUSE.**

## **Karamu House collection from the Billops-Hatch Archives, 1925-2007**

Emory University  
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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Karamu House.  
**Title:** Karamu House collection from the Billops-Hatch Archives, 1925-2007  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 1236  
**Extent:** 8.25 linear ft. (17 boxes), 2 oversized papers (OP), and 1 bound volume (BV)  
**Abstract:** Collection of material related to the Karamu House, a neighborhood settlement that was nationally known for its dedication to interracial theater and the arts. The collection includes correspondence, programs, playscripts, reports, clippings, and interviews.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### **Related Materials in Other Repositories**

[Russell and Rowena Jelliffe papers](#) and the [Karamu House records](#), Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

#### **Related Materials in This Repository**

Additional Karamu Theatre playscripts may be found in the Billops-Hatch Archives at Emory University.

#### **Source**

Gift, 2002.

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### **Custodial History**

Forms part of the Camille Billops and James V. Hatch Archives at Emory University

### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Karamu House collection from the Billops-Hatch Archives, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

### **Processing**

Processed by Susan Potts McDonald, unknown.

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## **Collection Description**

### **Biographical Note**

The Karamu House (Cleveland, Ohio) is a neighborhood settlement that became nationally known for its dedication to interracial theater and the arts. It was founded in 1915 by two young white social workers, Rowena Jelliffe and Russell Jelliffe, with the support of the Second Presbyterian Church, but it soon was popularly known as the Playhouse Settlement. The Jelliffes began producing plays with interracial casts in 1917. In 1920, they sponsored the Dumas Dramatic Club, which was renamed the Gilpin Players, after the noted black actor Charles Gilpin in 1922. A theater was acquired adjacent to the settlement in 1927 and named "Karamu," Swahili for "a place of joyful meeting," a name adopted by the entire settlement in 1941.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection contains material related to the Karamu House and Theatre from 1925-2007. This artificially created collection created by James V. Hatch and Camille Billops contains correspondence, programs, play scripts, reports, clippings, and interviews related to the Karamu House and the Karamu Theatre.

### **Arrangement Note**

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

### Correspondence

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	1940
1	2	1941
1	3	1942-1943
1	4	1944
1	5	1945-1995
1	6	2001-2003
1	7	2004 January-August
1	8	2004 September-December
1	9	2005 January-May
1	10	2005 June-December
1	11	2006-2007

### History/Reports/Studies

2	1	Dalva, Harry O., "A Study of Karamu," February 2, 1952
2	2	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Proposed Program of the Neighborhoods Association of Cleveland, Ohio," 1939
2	3	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Proposed Cultural Art Center: A Study of the Feasibility of Establishing a Cultural Arts Center in Boston," October-December 1963
2	4	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Suggested Arts and Education Programs Designed to be Included in the Model City Plans for St. Louis, Missouri," May 1967
2	5	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Suggestion of Cultural Arts Programs for Community Action against Poverty, Indianapolis, Indiana," September 1967
2	6	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Recommended Community Arts Program for Canton, Ohio," May- June, 1968
2	7	Jelliffe, Russell W. and Rowena W. Jelliffe, "Karamu Foundation, Inc: Report of the Directors to the Board of Trustees," April 1, 1969
2	8	McDowell, John, "General Report of the Cleveland Settlement Study 1946 and Report to Karamu House," 1946
2	9	Mende, Dietrich, "Six Weeks in America," 1954
2	10	Newald, Cora Geiger, <i>Karamu: 48 Years of Integration through the Arts, 1970 [1 of 3]</i>
2	11	Newald, Cora Geiger, <i>Karamu: 48 Years of Integration through the Arts, 1970 [2 of 3]</i>

- 2 12 Newald, Cora Geiger, *Karamu: 48 Years of Integration through the Arts, 1970 [3 of 3]*
- 3 1 Silver Reuben, Dissertation, "A History of the Karamu Theatre of Karamu House, 1915-1960," Ohio State University

### Personal papers

- 3 2 Jelliffe, Rowena W. and Russell W., 1925-1992
- 3 3 Spivey, Terrence, 1990-2006

### Interviews

- 3 4 Rowena, Jelliffe, April 25, 1961 [Interviewer Reuben Silver]
- 3 5 Rowena, Jelliffe and Rusell Jelliffe, May 21, 1961 [Radio Station WABQ]
- 3 6 Rowena, Jelliffe, April 23, 1977 [Interviewer Gail Cohen]
- 3 7 Roger Furman, January 7-10, 1978 [Interviewer Carmen Bell]
- 3 8 Rowena, Jelliffe, December 30, 1982 [Interviewer Gail Cohen]

### Printed material

- 4 1 Gilpin Players: Brochures, 1938-1940
- 4 2 Gilpin Players: Clippings, 1930-1947
- 4 3 Gilpin Players: Programs, 6th-19th Seasons, 1924?-1940
- 4 4 Annual Report, 1983-1984
- OP1 Blueprints, Karamu Theatre, no date
- 4 5 Book and Magazine Lists about Karamu House, 1925-1961
- 4 6 Brochures: Activity Schedules, 1958-1996
- 4 7 Brochures: General, undated-1986
- 4 8 Brochures: Season Guides, circa 1958-2004
- OP2 Certificate: Junior Women's League Special Award (Cleveland, Ohio),  
November 21, 1964
- 4 9 Clippings, 1941-1982
- 4 10 Clippings, 2003-2006
- 4 11 Fliers, 1974-2003
- 4 12 Newsletters, *KaraMuse*, 1957-1988, [Published as the Karamu News,  
1974-1975]
- 4 13 Newsletters, *KaraMuse*, 1990-1994
- 4 14 Photograph, no date
- 4 15 Season Production Lists, 1955-1974
- 4 16 Souvenir Book, Karamu House, 75th Anniversary, 1991

### Programs: Karamu Theatre

- 4 17 28th Season, 1951-1952
- 4 18 29th Season, 1953-1954

5	1	30th Season, 1953-1954
5	2	31st Season, 1954-1955
5	3	32nd Season, 1955-1956
5	4	33rd Season, 1956-1957
5	5	34th Season, 1957-1958
5	6	35th Season, 1958-1959
6	1	36th Season, 1959-1960
6	2	37th Season, 1960-1961
6	3	38th Season, 1961-1962
6	4	39th Season, 1962-1963
6	5	40th Season, 1963-1964
6	6	41st Season, 1964-1965
6	7	42nd - 44th Season, 1965-1968
6	8	1975-2006

**Programs: Karamu Children's Theatre [includes Children's Dance Concerts, Karateens, Karamettes, and Youth Theatre]**

6	9	1952-1956
6	10	1957-1964

**Play scripts**

7	1	Alger, Esther Marion, <i>Greater Love Hath No Man</i>
7	2	Alger, Esther Marion, <i>In'pendence</i>
7	3	Alger, Esther Marion, <i>Tag End</i>
7	4	Allan, Otto, <i>Hallucinations</i>
7	5	Anderson, Harold, <i>Smell the Sweet Savor</i>
7	6	Archer, Leonard C., <i>Study War No Mo'</i>
7	7	Baker, Ruby Bell, <i>Over-Comin'</i>
7	8	Baker, Ruby Bell, <i>A Primitive Baptist</i>
7	9	Baker, Ruby Bell, <i>A Restaurant</i>
7	10	Bancroft, J.W., <i>This Freedom</i>
7	11	Barley, Anne, <i>Jungle Mission</i>
7	12	Bateman, S. (Mrs.), <i>Self</i> (Act 3 only)
7	13	Bein, Albert, <i>Heavenly Express</i>
7	14	Bennett, Isadora, <i>Coastwise</i>
7	15	Bennett, Isadora, <i>Soon Bright Day</i> [1 of 2]
7	16	Bennett, Isadora, <i>Soon Bright Day</i> [2 of 2]
8	1	Bentkover, Jacob, and Albert Arkules, <i>Kappala</i> , 1933
8	2	Bethea, Junius, <i>Upside Down</i> , 1942
8	3	Bond, Frederick W., <i>Family Affair</i>

- 8 4 Bontemps, Arna and Countee Cullen, *St. Louis 'Oman or Leaving Time*
- 8 5 Brecht, Bertoldt, *Mother Gut*
- 8 6 Brown, Oscar, Jr., *Oscar, Kicks and Co.*
- 8 7 Brownell, John Charles, *Nothin But Trouble* (Act 1 only)
- 8 8 Burris, Andrew, *You Mus' Be Born Again* (Acts 2 and 3)
- 8 9 Buttitta, Anthony, *Singing Piedmont*, 1936
- 8 10 Carroll, Walter, *Tin Top Valley*, 1947
- 8 11 Chapman-Heath, Tedwell Eric, *Dusky Gods*
- 8 12 Chase, Richard, *Home to Canaan* (with music sheets)
- 8 13 Cobey, Herbert Todd, *The People in the Book*
- 9 1 Cooksey, Curtis, *Miss Starlight*
- 9 2 Courlander, Harold, *Swamp Mud*
- 9 3 Davidson, Gerald, *Fresh Out O' Hebben*
- 9 4 Davis, Bernard, *Dark Corner*
- 9 5 Disney, Loren, *Land of Cotton*
- 9 6 Dodson, Owen, *Doomsday Tale* (Scene 1 only)
- 9 7 Dubois, William, *Haiti*
- 9 8 Edmonds, Randolph, *Earth and Stars*, 1946
- 9 9 Edmonds, Randolph, *The Land of Cotton*
- 9 10 Edmonds, Randolph, *Simon in Cyrene*
- 9 11 English, H.C., *King Cristophe*
- 9 12 Evans, J. Wellington, *The Other Woman*
- 9 13 Eyre, Laurence, *Sazus Matazuz*
- 10 1 Fisher, Rudolph, *The Conjure Man Dies*
- 10 2 Flagg, Ann K., *Make No Tarrying*
- 10 3 Fowke, H. Shirley, *Mister Job*
- 10 4 Gold, Michael, *Hoboken Blues*
- 10 5 Golden, Joseph, *Johnny Moonbeam and the Silver Arrow*, 1957
- 10 6 Gould, Maggy, *Bamboula*
- 10 7 Green, Paul, *Blackbeard*, 1927
- 10 8 Green, Paul, *The No' Count Boy*
- 10 9 Green, Paul, *Roll Sweet Chariot*
- 10 10 Greensfelder, Elmer, *Nobody Knows*
- 10 11 Greggs, Herb D., *Touch a Star*
- 11 1 Hamilton, Roland J., *Crack of the Whip*
- 11 2 Hartman, Jan, *Freeman! Freeman!*, 1967
- 11 3 Henneke, Ben Graf, *Good Old War!*
- 11 4 Hill, Hugh M., *Song for a Broken Horn*, 1952
- 11 5 Howard, Jr., F.E., *Black Jesus*

- - Hughes, Langston, *Little Ham and Mule Bone* [See Langston Hughes collection]
- 11 6 Hunkins, Eusebia, *Smoky Mountain*
- 11 7 Hurn, Philip, and William Chambers, *Heaven and Hell, Inc.*
- 11 8 Jelliffe, Rowena, *How Come Br'er Rabbit Do No Work*, [A Play for the Children's Theatre, no date]
- 11 9 Jelliffe, Rowena, *One Hundred in the Shade: A Comedy of Negro Life in Three Acts*, 1939 [Manuscript]
- 11 10 Jelliffe, Rowena, *Sat'd'y Evenin'*, A Play for the Children's Theatre
- 11 11 Jelliffe, Rowena, *Shoes Fer de Feets*, A Play for the Children's Theatre
- 11 12 Jelliffe, Rowena, and Ronald Mulhauser, *One Hundred in the Shade: A Comedy of Negro Life in Three Acts*, 1939 [Typescript]
- 12 1 Julian, Doris, *The Crystal Tree*
- 12 2 *Keep Your Fingers Crossed*
- 12 3 Landau, Julius, *The Sorrows of Chester Avenue*, 1956
- 12 4 Lawson, John Howard, *Marching Song*
- 12 5 Lee, Edd, *Bread Out of Stones*
- 12 6 Lee, Frank, *Smoke Dreams*
- 12 7 Lengyel, Cornel, *Eden, Inc.*
- 12 8 Lindsay, Powell, *Young Man of Harlem*, 1937
- 12 9 Lucas, Ottis, *Laugh-Sing-and-Pray*, 1935
- 13 1 Mason, Clifford, *Gabriel: The Story of a Slave Rebellion*
- 13 2 Mitchell, Lofton, *Land Beyond the River*
- 13 3 Mitchell, Lofton, *Star of the Morning*
- 13 4 Mitchell, Sam, *Book-of-Bits-Gags-and-Scenes*
- 13 5 O'Neill, Eugene, *The Emperor Jones*
- 13 6 *The Owl's Nest*
- 13 7 Pascal, Ernest, *The Pencil of God*, 1958
- 14 1 Patterson, McEvoy, *American Primitive*, 1947
- 14 2 Patterson, McEvoy, *Elim*, 1952 [1 of 2]
- 14 3 Patterson, McEvoy, *Elim*, 1952 [2 of 2]
- 14 4 Pawley, Thomas D., *Crispus Attucks*, 1949
- 14 5 Paxton, Dorothy, *It's Better Fo' to Sing*
- 14 6 Perry, Charlotte, and Arnold Sundgaard, *Way up Yonder*
- 14 7 Peterkin, Julia, *Scarlet Sister Mary*
- 14 8 Reed, Daniel, *Black April*
- 14 9 Richardson, Willis, *Compromise*
- 14 10 Riggs, Lynn, *Big Lake*
- 15 1 Rivers, Leon, *Father Seth's Daughter*
- 15 2 Rodman, Selden, and Fleming Macliesh, *The Revolutionists*
- 15 3 Roos, Joanna, *Golden Ladder*

- 15 4 Ross, John Mac, *Doc's Place*, 1935  
 15 5 Ross, John Mac, *Strivin'*, 1937  
 15 6 Rutenborn, Guenter, *The Sign of Jonah*  
 15 7 Schoenfeld, Bernard C., *Trouble with the Angels*  
 15 8 Seiler, Conrad, *Darker Brother* [1 of 2]  
 15 9 Seiler, Conrad, *Darker Brother* [2 of 2]  
 15 10 Seiler, Conrad, *Sweet Land*  
 15 11 Shaik, Haleemon V., *House of Eternal Darkness*  
 15 12 Shine, Theodis, *The Bats out of Hell*  
 15 13 Shokunbi, Mae Gleaton, *Dream Dust*  
 15 14 Sklar and Peters, *Stevedore*  
 16 1 Smith, J.A., *Just Ten Days*  
 16 2 Smith, J.A., and Peter Morell, *Turpentine*, 1935  
 16 3 Stephens, Nan Bagby, *Karamu*  
 16 4 Stephens, Nan Bagby, *Roseanne*  
 16 5 Stevens, Thomas Wood, *The Circle of Chalk*  
 16 6 Torrence, Ridgely, *Rider of Dreams*  
 16 7 Totheroh, Dan, *Wild Birds*  
 16 8 Unidentified Karamu  
 16 9 *Union Play*  
 16 10 Walker, C. Lester, *Goshen*, 1964  
 16 11 Watkins, Maurine, *Marshland*  
 16 12 Williams, Eugene Hummons, *The Return of John Evans*  
 17 1 World War II Propaganda Play  
 17 2 Worthington, Walter Coslou, *Pilgrimage*  
 17 3 Yamazaki, Masakazu, *Zeami*, 1964  
 17 4 Zalk, Mark, *Litany for the Man*, 1964

### Scrapbook

BV1 Gilpin Players and Other Theatre Productions, 1928-1930

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