**MOLETTE, CARLTON W.**  
Carlton W. and Barbara J. Molette papers, 1942-2011 (bulk 1944-1955)  

Emory University  
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**Descriptive Summary**

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<tr>
<td>Call Number:</td>
<td>Manuscript Collection No. 1095</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent:</td>
<td>13.75 linear ft. (27 boxes), 26 oversized papers (OP), and AV Masters: 1 linear ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract:</td>
<td>Papers of African American playwrights and theatre professionals, Carlton and Barbara Molette, including writings; printed material; records documenting their work in education, consulting, set and costume design, and professional organizations; subject files; and correspondence.</td>
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<td>Language:</td>
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**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on Access**  
Special restrictions apply: Use copies have not been made for audiovisual material in this collection. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance for access to this material.

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**Separated Material**  
Emory University also holds a number of play scripts, written by other playwrights and sent to the Molettes. These materials have been removed and placed in the Camille Billops and James V. Hatch archives at Emory University.

Some printed items from this collection have been cataloged individually. These materials may be located in the Emory University online catalog by searching for Molette, Carlton W. and Barbara J, former owners.

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Source
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Citation
[after identification of item(s)], Carlton W. and Barbara J. Molette papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Collection Description

Biographical Note
Carlton Woodard Molette (1939-) was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to Carlton and Evelyn (Richardson) Molette. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. from Florida State University. Barbara Jean Molette (1940-) was born in Los Angeles, California, to Baxter R. Roseburr and Nora L. Johnson. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida A & M University, a Master of Fine Arts degree from Florida State University, and a Ph.D from the University of Missouri. Carlton and Barbara were married in 1960 and have two children: Carla E. Molette-Ogden and Andrea R. Molette.

The Molettes are a husband-and-wife team of playwrights who have worked in partnership for most of their careers. Together they created a well-established corpus of Afrocentric Theatre including the musical Doctor B. S. Black in 1969 which was produced in Atlanta in collaboration with Charles Mann. Other works include Rosalee Pritchett (1970), a one-act play about a well-to-do African American woman critical of the black revolutionary movement; Booji (1971), a play about a lawyer who questions his purpose in life as the African American community becomes devastated by drugs; Fortunes of the Moor (1995), a sequel to Shakespeare's Othello; and Prudence (2007), a play based on the 1832 closing of a Connecticut school that admitted African American girls. Their plays have been produced by theatre companies including The Negro Ensemble Company and the Frank Silvera Writers’ Workshop in New York, ETA in Chicago, The Free Southern Theatre in New Orleans, Rites and Reason in Providence, Kuntu in Pittsburgh, Miami’s M Ensemble, and Abibigromma, the national theatre company of Ghana.

In addition to their writing careers, the Molettes have served as faculty in a number of university theatre departments. Carlton Molette served on the faculties of Spelman College and Atlanta University in Atlanta; Howard University in Washington, D.C.; and Florida A & M University in Tallahassee. He was also the founding dean of the School of Communications at Texas Southern University in Houston (1975-1984); the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Lincoln University in Missouri; Professor of Dramatic Arts and Senior Fellow, Institute for African American Studies at the University of Connecticut; and vice president for Academic Affairs at Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland. Barbara Molette taught at Spelman College, Texas Southern University, and Baltimore City Community College. She is also the former chair of the English Department at Eastern Connecticut State University.
The Molettes are also involved in a number of professional organizations. They are founding members of the American Theatre Association’s Black Theatre Program and the Black Theatre Network, and both are past presidents of the National Conference on African American Theatre. Barbara was administrative fellow for the Mid-Missouri Associated Colleges and Universities and director of arts in education programs for the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Art and Culture in Baltimore. Carlton served as guest director for University of Michigan performances and as seminar leader at the University of Iowa’s Afro-American Summer Drama Institute. The couple work as consultants for universities, colleges, theatre companies, government agencies, and businesses, and they have served on the boards of arts organizations in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Houston.

Scope and Content Note
The collection consists of audiovisual material, correspondence, photographs, printed material, professional papers, subject files, and writings of African American playwriting and theatre professionals, Carlton W. and Barbara J. Molette. Audiovisual material includes video recordings of performances of the Molettes’ plays including Doctor B. S. Black, Booji, and Fortunes of the Moor as well as plays directed by Carlton Molette including August Wilson's Fences. Other video recordings include interviews, lectures, and award ceremonies honor the Molettes.

Correspondence is both professional and personal. The majority of the correspondence is written by or to Carlton, including letters of recommendation written by Molette for former students and other colleagues. There are also invitations to government officials to attend performances of Molette's plays, letters from university presidents, and material related to Molette's prospective 1978 appointment as Panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Correspondence created in conjunction with performances is located along with the scripts for those performances. Correspondence originally filed with subject files or professional records is kept with those records.

Photographs include performance stills of the Molettes' plays, mainly Fortunes of the Moor, but there are also photographs of the Molettes themselves, including some of Barbara and her colleagues in 1994 and several photographs circa 1960s and 1970s that show the Molettes working together. Printed material includes magazines and journals, some student art publications, various playbills and handbills, and newspaper clippings of reviews of the Molettes' plays, articles by and about the Molettes, and annotated articles. Topics focus mainly on African American theatre, culture, and politics. Printed material also contains their research for a book on makeup methods for African American actors.

Other professional papers consist of costume and set designs created by the Molettes, materials relating to Carlton's consulting work for university theatre departments and government organizations, publication submissions and rejections, and the Molettes' professional development activities at conferences and workshops. There is also material relating to Carlton's work with other African American scholars to create university curricula in the field of African American studies in the 1970s. The subject files include a wide variety of background and research materials relating to the Molettes' professional activity. These materials contain documents from arts festivals attended by the Molettes, exchange programs between American universities and African universities, and various theatre publications in which the Molettes were
involved. The Molettes also assembled subject files on playwrights, poets, directors, actors, and other artists that they had known personally or were otherwise interested in.

Writings consist primarily of scripts for plays the Molettes wrote along with production scripts of plays produced or directed by Carlton. There are also drafts of academic, professional, and public lectures given by Carlton, drafts of scholarly essays, files relating to productions of the Molettes' work, and the Molettes' graduate school dissertations and theses. Also included is a phone interview conducted with Barbara Molette in which she describes her family background and early professional life.

**Arrangement Note**

Arranged by record type.
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### Audiovisual material: interviews and lectures

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      |        | [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppcws] |
| AV1 | -      | Distinguished Alumni Awards, Barbara Molette, University of Missouri College of Arts and Sciences, 2000 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppcxx] |
| AV1 | -      | ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Playwrights Development Initiative (PDI) Award, invitational conference, October 29-31, 1999 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppcz2] |
| AV1 | -      | Lifting the Veil of Eurocentricism from African American Dramatic Arts, lecture, Carlton Molette, November 19, 1992 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppd3q] |
| AV1 | -      | Makeup for Black Performers, Barbara and Carlton Molette, 1984 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppd4v] |
| AV1 | -      | Transitions of *Fortunes of the Moor*, Barbara Molette, Eastern Connecticut State University Lunch and Learn series, October 14, 1998 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdkn] |

### Audiovisual material: play performances

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      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppd50] |
| AV1 | -      | *Doctor B. S. Black*, adapted from *Le Medecin Malgre Lui* by Moliere, book by Carlton and Barbara Molette and music by Charles Mann, Carlton Molette, and Barbara Molette, Morehouse-Spelman Players, March 1973 [original: VHS]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppf1j] |
| AV1 | -      | *Doctor B. S. Black*, adapted from *Le Medecin Malgre Lui* by Moliere, book by Carlton and Barbara Molette and music by Charles Mann, Carlton Molette, and Barbara Molette, Texas Southern University, 1976 [original: CD-R]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id gk5px] |
| AV1 | -      | *Doctor B. S. Black*, adapted from *Le Medecin Malgre Lui* by Moliere, book by Carlton and Barbara Molette and music by Charles Mann, Carlton Molette, and Barbara Molette, Texas Southern University, March 1973 [original: CD-R]  
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id gk5ns] |
      |        | [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdg7] |
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdhc]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Abibigromma Theatre Group, University of Ghana, 1997
   [original: VHS]
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdct]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Abibigromma Theatre Group, University of Ghana, no date [original: VHS]
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdms]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Brown University, October 25, 1998 [original: VHS]
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppdf3]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, ETA Creative Arts Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, no date [original: VHS]
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppt8n]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Ghana, rehearsal, July 14, 1997; *Othello*, student production (not directed by Carlton Molette), no date [original: VHS]
   [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id ppddz]

AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Ghana, rehearsal, July 21, 1997 [original: VHS]
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AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, Ghana, rehearsal and concert party, July 29, 1997
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AV1 - *Fortunes of the Moor*, University of Louisville, directed by Nefertiti Burton, no date [original: VHS]
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AV1 - *Lguanre*, Solomon, excerpts, University of Ghana productions of *The Father*, *Mouse Trap*, and *Scwpiorico*, 1997 [original: VHS]
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AV1 1 Unidentified film, Carlton and Barbara Molette Theatrical Services, no date

**Correspondence**

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| 1  | 3   | 1978-1980      |
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3  3  Florida A & M University, performance stills, various plays, 1964-1968
3  4  *Fortunes of the Moor*, Connecticut Repertory Theatre (University of Connecticut), 1997
3  5  *Fortunes of the Moor*, Ohio State University, 1998
3  6  Des Moines Community Playhouse, set designs, 1962-1963
3  7  *Hamlet*, Howard University, 1965
3  8  Hill, Abram and Ruth Hill, no date
3  9  Mann, Charles, no date
3 10  Mattei, Isis; Barbara Molette, and Nelson, Eastern Connecticut State University, February 1994
3 11  Molette, Barbara and Carlton, no date
3 12  The Negro Ensemble Company, no date
3 13  *Our Short Stay* cast: Melissa Camilo; Crystal Anne Dickinson; and Brandon Dirden, 2006

AV1 - Various, "B and C Molette photos and sketches," DVD, no date

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3  14  "The Afro-American Texans," University of Texas at San Antonio Institute of Texan Cultures, 1975
3  15  *After Dark*, January 1974
3  16  *The Amen Corner* [James Baldwin] world premiere, March 4, 1964
3  17  *Black Arts Theatre Magazine*, volume 1, number 1, winter 1968
3  18  *Black Issues in Higher Education*, volume 14, number 12, August 7, 1997
3  19  *Black Theatre Network Directory*, 1995
3  20  *Black Theatre Network News*, volume 7, number 1-3; volume 8, number 1, 3; volume 9, number 1, 1996-1998
3  21  *Black Theatre Network News*, volume 15, number 2-3; volume 16, number 1-2; volume 17, number 1-2, 2005-2007

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OP2 - Broadsides, 1992-2000
OP3 - Broadsides, no date
4  2  Clippings, 1961-1969
4  3  Clippings, 1970-1971
4  4  Clippings, 1972-1974
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Conferences and programs, 1966-2001
The Crisis, volume 90, number 2, February 1983
Encore, 1948-1960
Encore, 1966-1970
First World: An International Journal of Black Thought, volume 1, numbers 1-4; volume 2, numbers 1-3, 1977-1979
Freedomways, volume 19, number 4, 1979
The Free Southern Theatre Records register, Amistad Research Center, 1963-1978
Howard University, programs, 1963-1970
Institute in Dramatic Arts at Lincoln University, program, summer 1969
International Council of Fine Arts Deans conference, Florence and Bellagio, Italy, program, 1981
"Juneteenth Blues Festival: An Emancipation Celebration," program, 1981
Kuumba Theatre 25th anniversary, program, 1993
Makeup for the Dark-Complexioned Actor, 1983
Middle Atlantic Writers Association newsletter, volume 5, number 2; volume 7, number 3, 1990-1994
National Black Arts Festival, program, 1988
National Conference on African American Theatre, annual meetings, programs, 1985-1992
National Conference on African American Theatre, annual meetings, programs, 1993-1999
National Conference on African American Theatre, Review of Annual Research and Recognition, April 1995
National Council of Teachers of English, convention preview, November 1989
The Pegasus-Phoenix, number 6, spring 1959
Players, April/May 1970
Remembering Owen Dodson, monograph, 1984
Texas Southern University newsletters, 1975-1980
7  9  *Theatre Arts*, August 1942 [photocopy]
7  10  *Theatre Arts*, September 1943
7  12  *Unity Awards*, Lincoln (Missouri) University, programs and press releases, 1985-1986

**Professional work**
7  13  Consulting, Catholic University of America, 1992
8  1  Consulting, Eastern Connecticut State University, 1994
8  4  Consulting, Free Southern Theatre, 1969-1985
8  6  Consulting, Match Institute, script videotaping, 1973
8  7  Consulting, National Black Repertory Theatre founding, 1990
8  8  Consulting, National Endowment for the Arts, 1991-1993
8  9  Consulting, National Endowment for the Arts, Partnership Consultation, Michigan Council for the Arts participation, 1980
8 10  Consulting, National Endowment for the Arts, Partnership Consultations project, 1978-1980
8 11  Consulting, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1972-1979
8 12  Consulting, solicitations and requests, 1967-1973
9  1  Consulting, solicitations and requests, 1974-1981
9  3  Consulting, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, 1990
9  4  Consulting, University of Iowa Theatre Arts, 1990-1998
9  5  Consulting, University of Louisville, 2003
24  6  Contracts and agreements, 1976
9  6  Costume designs, *Aladdin*, no date
9  7  Costume designs, *The Alchemist*, no date
9  8  Costume designs, *The Bacchae*, no date
OP4 -  Costume designs, Egyptian through the Middle Ages (prehistory through AD 1399), 1967
9  9  Costume designs, *Francesca da Rimini*, no date
9 10  Costume designs, *From Morn to Midnight*, no date
9 11  Costume designs, *Hamlet*, no date
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9 13 Costume designs, Marty, no date
9 14 Costume designs, Masque of the Twelve Months, no date
9 15 Costume designs, Oganda's Journey, 1974
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10 1 Costume designs, Simply Heavenly, no date
10 2 Costume designs, The Tempest, no date
10 3 Education, African American Studies course materials, 1970 [1 of 2]
10 5 Education, Bowling Green State University Ethnic Studies Conference, 1989
10 6 Education, Dillard University Theatre Workshop, 1997
10 7 Education, ETA Creative Arts Foundation, PDI Conversation, 1999
10 8 Education, Georgia Theatre Conference, 1970-1971
10 9 Education, HBCU/LSAC United: A Conference to Increase the Number of Black Lawyers in the Next Century, 1990
10 10 Education, The Inner City Cultural Center internship program, 1969-1970
10 11 Education, International Conference on Television Drama, 1986
10 12 Education, Midwest Theatre Alliance conference, 1977
10 13 Education, Minority Writers Conference on Television Production report, 1976
10 15 Education, Nigeria lecture tour and hosting, 1975-1980
11 1 Education, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Management Institute Program, 1977-1978
11 2 Fundraising letters, 1973-1984
11 3 Invoice, Storer Studios Inc., 1971
11 7 Organization, The Community Film Workshop Council of Atlanta, 1971-1972
11 8 Organization, Institute of the Black World, 1972, 1979
11 9 Organization, National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, Encore, editorial records, 1965-1977
12 4 Publication rejection slips, 1982-1991
12 5 Publication submissions, 1966-1976
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OP8 - Set designs, The Amen Corner, no date
OP9 - Set designs, *Carnival*, no date
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12  7  African American Institute, 1970-1979
12  9  American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1983
12  11 Arena Players, 1987-1995
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13  3  Biddle, Livingston, nomination, National Endowment for the Arts chairmanship 1977
13  4  Black College Education Network, 1983-1984
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13  6  *Black Journal*, 1971-1972
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17 7 Essays, written for classes, Carlton Molette, 1956-1970
17 8 Lecture, "African Theatre in Production in the United States," Carlton Molette, no date
Lecture, "American Theatre in Production in the United States," Carlton Molette, no date


17 16 Lecture, Black theatre and mass media panel, Carlton Molette, no date

17 17 Lecture, "Conventions of the Theatre: Black Theatre," Carlton Molette no date


17 19 Lecture, "Cross-cultural Communication through Language and the Arts," Carlton Molette, no date

17 20 Lecture, "Does Pulpit Drama Change Attitudes and Behavior," Carlton Molette, no date

17 21 Lecture, "Education of Minorities for the Media," Carlton Molette, no date

17 22 Lecture, "Evaluation and Analysis of Black Theatre in the US," Carlton Molette, no date


17 24 Lecture, "James Baldwin as a Playwright," Carlton Molette, no date

17 25 Lecture, "The Master of Fine Arts Degree: A Concept," Carlton Molette, no date

17 26 Lecture, "Preachin' Signifyin' and Black Heroes on Stage," Carlton Molette, 1979

17 27 Lecture, "Putting Black Theatre 'In the Black','" Carlton Molette, no date

17 28 Lecture, "Theatre Rituals as Communicators of Values," Carlton Molette, 1983

17 29 Lecture, "Walk Together, Don't You Get Weary: Goals and Functions of Black Theatre," Carlton Molette, no date

18 1 Play, Black Warrior, Barbara Molette, 1968

18 2 Play, Booji, 1972

18 3 Play, Booji, 1972, 1975

18 4 Play, Booji, 2002 [2 copies]

18 5 Play, Booji, correspondence, 1972-1979

18 6 Play, Booji, script, 1973

18 7 Play, Booji Wooji, director's production book, 1971

18 8 Play, Conventions of the Theatre: Black Theatre, 1976

19 1 Play, Doctor B. S. Black, 1972

19 2 Play, Doctor B. S. Black, 1973

19 3 Play, Doctor B. S. Black, 1976

19 4 Play, Doctor B. S. Black, correspondence, 1969-1992

19 5 Play, Doctor B. S. Black, production script, no date
20  1  Play, Doctor B. S. Black, production script, Texas Southern University (Houston, Texas), 1981
20  2  Play, Doctor B. S. Black, script and music, 1976 [1 of 2]
20  3  Play, Doctor B. S. Black, script and music, 1976 [2 of 2]
20  4  Play, The Escape, or A Leap for Freedom, Barbara Molette, 1976
20  5  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, 1994
20  6  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, 1995
20  7  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, 2003 [2 copies]
20  8  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, correspondence (rejections), 1994-1997
20  9  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Agnes Scott College (Atlanta, Georgia), 2001
20 10  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Community Arts Project, Inc., Encore Theatre (Baltimore, Maryland), 2004-2005
21  1  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, ETA Creative Arts Foundation (Chicago, Illinois), 1998-1999
21  2  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Frank Silva Writers' Workshop (University of Connecticut), 1995
21  3  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Kuntu Repertory Theatre, 2001-2007
21  4  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, The Ohio State University, 1997-1998
21  5  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Panafest (Ghana), 1997
21  6  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Rites and Reason (Brown University), 1998-1999
21  7  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, University of Louisville (Kentucky), 2000-2001
21  8  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, performance material, Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, Michigan), 1995-1996
21  9  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, production script, Panafest (Ghana), 1997
21 10  Play, Fortunes of the Moor, reference material, 1982-1996
21 11  Play, Four Black Revolutionary Plays, by Amiri Baraka, introduction, 1997
21 12  Play, Noah's Ark, 1975
22  1  Play, Noah's Ark, correspondence, 1975-1976
22  2  Play, Noah's Ark in anthology, Center Stage, 1980-1994
22  3  Play, Our Short Stay, 2004
22  4  Play, Our Short Stay, production material, National Black Theatre Festival, 2003
22  5  Play, Our Short Stay, stage directions, 2005
22  6  Play, Perfect Fifth, performance materials, Arena Players (Baltimore, Maryland), Barbara Molette, 1987-1988
22  7  Play, *Presidential Timber*, 2002
22  8  Play, *Prudence*, 2008
22  9  Play, *Prudence*, 2010
22 11  Play, *Prudence*, research files, Crandall, Prudence (1812-1878) [1 of 2]
23  1  Play, *Prudence*, research files, Crandall, Prudence (1812-1878) [2 of 2]
23  2  Play, *Prudence*, stage manager script, 2002
23  5  Play, *Rosalee Pritchett*, 1970
23  7  Play, *Rosalee Pritchett*, early drafts, 1970
24  1  Play, *Rosalee Pritchett*, page proofs, no date

**Unprocessed additions**

25  -  Printed material, slides, typescripts, audiovisual, and correspondence
26  -  Printed material, slides, typescripts, audiovisual, and correspondence