

# **SPIVEY, VICTORIA.**

## **Victoria Spivey papers, circa 1960-1976**

Emory University  
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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Spivey, Victoria.  
**Title:** Victoria Spivey papers, circa 1960-1976  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 809  
**Extent:** 8.75 linear feet (17 boxes), 1 oversized papers box (OP), and 1 bound volume (BV)  
**Abstract:** Papers of Victoria Spivey, African American blues artist, motion picture actress, and owner of Spivey Records.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

Special restrictions apply: Due to the fragile nature of some of the materials, researchers are required to use photocopies.

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

Printed or manuscript music in this collection that is still under copyright protection and is not in the Public Domain may not be photocopied or photographed. Researchers must provide written authorization from the copyright holder to request copies of these materials.

#### **Source**

Purchase, 1997 with subsequent additions

#### **Citation**

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

#### **Processing**

Processed by Emily Blanck, March, 1999; Revised

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Victoria Spivey, October 15, 1906 - October 3, 1976, African American blues artist, motion picture actress, and owner of Spivey Records, was born in Houston, Texas to Grant Spivey, a musician, and Addie Smith, a nurse. Her sisters Leona, Elton "Za Zu" and Addie "Sweet Peas" were also blues artists. She married four times; her husbands included Ruben Floyd, Billy Adams, and Len Kunstadt.

Spivey began her career playing first in Houston, Texas then later St. Louis, Missouri in the vaudeville and blues scene. At the age of 20 her first record, *Black Snake Blues*, was recorded in 1926 with Okeh Records. She recorded and performed in New York, Chicago, and Missouri through the 1930s with a range of prominent artists including Louis Armstrong, Lonnie Johnson, Lucille Hegamin, Dallas Tan Town Topics, Hunter's Serenaders, and Blind Lemon Jefferson. In 1929 she appeared in the first the all-African American musical film, *Hallelujah!* During this era she was recorded on nine records. In her performances she was a vocalist, as well as a ukelele and piano player.

After taking a semi-retirement in the 1950s, Spivey returned to performing in the United States and internationally in Europe and in 1962 began her own record company, Spivey Records. She used this company as a vehicle to resurrect older blues artists as well as introduce new artists, including Luther Johnson, Lucille Span, Olive Brown, and the first recording of folk artist Bob Dylan. She also recorded some of her own music during this period and occasionally performed on television. By the time of her death in 1976 she had attained copyrights on the lyrics of at least seventy-five songs.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of papers of Victoria Spivey and those gathered about Spivey by her last husband Len Kunstadt from ca. 1960-1976. The papers include personal, business, and biographical documents. The collection mainly documents the resurgence of her singing career and her involvement in Spivey Records.

### Arrangement Note

Organized into four series: (1) Personal papers, (2) Business records (3) Biographical materials, and (4) Restricted damaged materials.

## **Description of Series**

[Series 1: Personal papers](#)

[Series 2: Business records](#)

[Series 3: Biographical materials](#)

[Series 4: Restricted damaged materials](#)

**Series 1****Personal papers****Boxes 1-4; OP1 and BV1****Scope and Content Note**

The personal papers contain her music, a small collection of her correspondence, writings by and about Spivey, and a few photographs. The lyrics include drafts, lead sheets, and copyrights of her published work after 1960, in addition to much that was never published. The lyrics are organized by titled and untitled lyrics. The titled works are arranged alphabetically, the untitled works are arranged alphabetically by the first word on the page. Many works are undated so they may date prior to 1960. Other writings by her include a musical play and submissions to *Record Research*.

**Arrangement Note**

Arranged by type of record.

**Music**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
1	1	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, A
1	2	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, B
1	3	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, C
1	4	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, D
1	5	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, E
1	6	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, F
1	7	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Ga-Go
1	8	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Go-Gr
1	9	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, H
1	10	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, I
1	11	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, J
2	1	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, K
2	2	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, L
2	3	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Ma-Mr
2	4	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Mr-My
OP1	1	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Muddy Waters
2	5	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, N
2	6	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, O
2	7	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, P-Q
2	8	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, R
2	9	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, S
2	10	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, T
3	1	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, U-V
3	2	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, W-X

3	3	Titled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, Y-Z
3	4	Untitled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, First word, A-F
3	5	Untitled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, First word, G-L
3	6	Untitled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, First word, M-R
3	7	Untitled Lyrics, Victoria Spivey, First word, S-Z
OP1	2	Untitled Lyrics, "Down here in deep valley," Victoria Spivey, Oversized
3	8	Titled Lyrics, Other Artists
3	9	Sheet Music, Other Artists
3	10	Playlists
3	11	Record, Victoria Spivey, "Turpentine/Buddy Tate"
3	12	Scrapbook, Lyrics
3	13	Scrapbook, Music for Blue Horizon

### Correspondence

4	1	Personal correspondence
4	2	Greeting cards
4	3	Post cards

### Writings by Victoria Spivey

4	4	Play, "Riding the Waves"
4	5	Play, Notes on
4	6	Columns and column drafts

### Writings about Victoria Spivey

4	7	Article drafts
4	8	Articles
OP1	3	Berendt, J.E., <i>Jazz Kalender 1965</i>
4	9	Obituaries
BV1		Scrapbook

### Photographs

4	10	Spivey, Victoria
4	11	Others

### Documents

4	12	Death certificate, 1976
4	13	Passport
4	14	Negro Actors Guile, membership card, 1975

### Ephemera

4	15	Victoria Spivey's teeth
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**Series 2**  
**Business records**  
**Boxes 5-10 and OP1**

**Scope and Content Note**

Her business records include her business correspondence, record sales, and royalty records. The business correspondence reflects the international scope of her late career. The correspondence is therefore separated into domestic and international correspondence and reflects her interactions with companies and people.

**Arrangement Note**

Arranged by type of record.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
5	1	Accounting
5	2	Addresses and Phone Numbers, 1 of 4
5	3	Addresses and Phone Numbers, 2 of 4
5	4	Addresses and Phone Numbers, 3 of 4
5	5	Addresses and Phone Numbers, 4 of 4
5	6	Advertising
5	7	Bills and Receipts
5	8	Bills, Rent
5	9	Business Cards and Stationery
5	10	Contracts
6	1	Copyright Forms, Blank
6	2	Copyright Form, Photograph
6	3	Copyright List
6	4	Business Correspondence, Domestic, Catalog Requests
6	5	Business Correspondence, Domestic, A - Blues
6	6	Business Correspondence, Domestic, BMI, Jan 1962 - Nov 1964
6	7	Business Correspondence, Domestic, BMI, Nov 1964 - May 1967
6	8	Business Correspondence, Domestic, BMI, June 1967 - Sep 1976, no date
6	9	Business Correspondence, Domestic, Br - F
6	10	Business Correspondence, Domestic, G - Mc
6	11	Business Correspondence, Domestic, Me-P
6	12	Business Correspondence, Domestic, R-Z
7	1	Business Correspondence, International, A - B
7	2	Business Correspondence, International, C-G
7	3	Business Correspondence, International, H-K
7	4	Business Correspondence, International, Lippman, Horst
7	5	Business Correspondence, International, L-St

7	6	Business Correspondence, International, Stewart-Baxter, Derrick, 1963-1966
7	7	Business Correspondence, International, Stewart-Baxter, Derrick, 1967-1976, no date
7	8	Business Correspondence, International, Sw-W
8	1	Leases and Correspondence regarding Apartment
8	2	Maps
8	3	Memberships
8	4	Newsletters
8	5	Programs
8	6	Promotional Materials, Businesses
8	7	Promotional Materials, Other Artists
8	8	Promotional Materials, Victoria Spivey and Spivey Records
OP1	4	Promotional Materials, Victoria Spivey and Spivey Records, Oversized
8	9	Record Inventories
8	10	Record Sales, A
8	11	Record Sales, B-C
8	12	Record Sales, D-F
9	1	Record Sales, G
9	2	Record Sales, H
9	3	Record Sales, I-J
9	4	Record Sales, K-O
9	5	Record Sales, P-R
9	6	Record Sales, S-Z, no name
9	7	Recording Costs
9	8	Recordings, Notes On
10	1	Royalties from Companies, A-J
10	2	Royalties from Companies, BMI
10	3	Royalties from Companies, K-R
10	4	Royalties from Companies, Southern Publishing Co.
10	5	Schedules

### Series 3

## Biographical materials

### Boxes 11-14

#### Scope and Content Note

The series contains biographical materials generally collected by Spivey's husband Len Kunstadt. The first grouping contains notes taken on Spivey's life organized around particular periods. Kunstadt's notes depict events in Spivey's life from 1906-1969. The second grouping contains subject files on people and places. His methodical collections of newspaper citations relating to Spivey are also included in this series.

#### Arrangement Note

Biographical notes are arranged in chronological order, biographical subject files are arranged in alphabetical order.

#### Biographical Notes

Box	Folder	Content
11	1	Typewritten, 1906-1926 (Youth)
11	2	Holograph, 1906-1926
11	3	Typewritten, 1926-1927 (Black Snake Blues)
11	4	Holograph, 1926-1927
11	5	Typewritten, 1927-1928 (Moving to New York)
11	6	Holograph, 1927-1928
11	7	Typewritten, 1928-1929 ( <i>Hallelujah!</i> )
11	8	Holograph, 1928-1929
11	9	Typewritten, 1929-1930 (After <i>Hallelujah!</i> )
11	10	Holograph, 1929-1930
11	11	Typewritten, 1931 (with Hunter's Serenaders)
11	12	Holograph, 1931
11	13	Typewritten, 1931-1932 (Victoria Spivey Organizes Show)
11	14	Holograph, 1931-1932
11	15	Typewritten, 1933 (with Dallas Tan Town Topics)
11	16	Holograph, 1933
11	17	Typewritten, 1933-1935 (Tulsa, OK)
11	18	Typewritten, 1936-1941 (Billy Adams and Hellzapoppin')
11	19	Holograph, 1936-1941
11	20	Typewritten, 1941-1950 (During the War)
11	21	Holograph, 1941-1950
11	22	Typewritten, 1950-1960 (Semi-Retirement)
11	23	Holograph, 1950-1960
11	24	Holograph, 1960-1969 (Spivey Records)
11	25	Typewritten, General



- 11 26 Holograph, General
- 11 27 Newspaper Notes, Biographical

**Biographical Subject Files**

- 12 1 Adams, Billy
- 12 2 Alabama Blossom
- 12 3 Alix, Mac
- 12 4 Allen, Jap
- 12 5 American Folk-Blues Festival
- 12 6 Bible Assignments
- 12 7 Bitter End
- 12 8 Black Eagles
- 12 9 Bloom, Ruby
- 12 10 Blue Belle
- 12 11 Booze, Bea
- 12 12 Brown, Ada
- 12 13 Brown, Olive
- 12 14 Bumble Bee Slim
- 12 15 Cafe Au Go Go
- 12 16 Cannon, Gus
- 12 17 Caston, Bobbe
- 12 18 Central Plaza
- 12 19 Colonial Inn
- 12 20 Cooper, Ralph
- 12 21 Crystal, Jack
- 12 22 Cousin Joe
- 12 23 Cumberland, Sarah
- 12 24 Dancer, Jenny
- 12 25 Davison, Wild Bill
- 12 26 Detroit, MI
- 12 27 Dial, Harry
- 12 28 Dixon, Big Willie
- 12 29 Duke Ellington Jazz Society
- 12 30 Durham, Eddie
- 12 31 Dylan, Bob
- 12 32 Eady, James Eugene
- 12 33 Edwards, Bernice
- 12 34 Ellison, Pauline
- 12 35 Floyd, Reuben
- 12 36 Friedman, George Alexander

12	37	Gerdes Folk City
12	38	Glaser, Joe
12	39	Gooden, Sally
12	40	Grand Terrace
12	41	Hawkshaw, Julius
12	42	Hegamin, Lucille
12	43	Henderson, Bertha
13	1	Hines, Miss
13	2	Hogg, Smokey
13	3	House, Son
13	4	Hunter's Serenaders
13	5	Institute of Jazz Studies
13	6	Jackson, Willie
13	7	"Jammed," TV Show
13	8	<i>Jazz: A History of the New York Scene</i>
13	9	Jessye, Eva
13	10	Johnson, James P.
13	11	Johnson, Lonnie
13	12	Kirk, Andy
13	13	Lists of Names
13	14	Logan, Tex
13	15	Louisiana Costume Ball
13	16	Mack, Mary
13	17	McClennon, George
13	18	McGinty, Artie Belle
13	19	Meers, Paul and Thelma
13	20	Melrose, Lester
13	21	Metcalf, Louis
13	22	Miles, Lizzie
13	23	Moberly, MO
13	24	Monarch, Jan and Powell, Jimmy
13	25	Moore, Ella "Chinch"
13	26	Newport Music Festival
13	27	Newspaper Notes
13	28	Notebooks, Miscellaneous
13	29	Palmer, Olive
13	30	Performances: Evening with the Blues
13	31	Perkins, Red
13	32	Perry, Kathryn

13	33	Philadelphia Music Festivals
14	1	Purple Manor
14	2	Red Henry
14	3	Remnight, Sammy
14	4	Rhythm and Blues
14	5	Rotter (Henderson), Alma
14	6	Russell, George
14	7	Samples, Arthur Lee
14	8	Sheer, Anita
14	9	Smith, Bessie
14	10	Smith, Mamie
14	11	Snowden, Carolyn
14	12	Spann, Otis
14	13	Spivey Family
14	14	Straight, Charles
14	15	Sweet Chariot
14	16	Sweet Peas
14	17	Sykes, Roosevelt
14	18	Tatum, Art
14	19	Theology Notes by Brother Haynes
14	20	Village Gate
14	21	Wallace, Sippie
14	22	Walters, Lorraine
14	23	Waters, Muddy
14	24	Wetling, George
14	25	Wiggins, Jack
14	26	Williams, Fess
14	27	Williams, Joe
14	28	X-Glamour Girls

**Series 4**  
**Restricted damaged materials**  
**Boxes 15-17**

**Scope and Content Note**

The last series of the papers contains items that are extremely fragile and therefore have been restricted from public access is restricted. Many of the documents in this collection had been burnt in a fire. Each item has been photocopied, and the photocopy remains in the original location. The damaged items can be accessed if the researcher must look at the original item because the photocopy is unclear.

**Arrangement Note**

Arranged by original box and folder number.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
15	1	Box 1, Folder 2
15	2	Box 1, Folder 3
15	3	Box 1, Folder 4
15	4	Box 1, Folder 5
15	5	Box 1, Folder 6
15	6	Box 1, Folder 7
15	7	Box 1, Folder 8
15	8	Box 1, Folder 9
15	9	Box 1, Folder 10
15	10	Box 2, Folder 2
15	11	Box 2, Folder 4
15	12	Box 2, Folder 5
15	13	Box 2, Folder 6
15	14	Box 2, Folder 7
15	15	Box 2, Folder 10
15	16	Box 3, Folder 2
15	17	Box 3, Folder 3
15	18	Box 3, Folder 4
15	19	Box 3, Folder 5
15	20	Box 3, Folder 6
15	21	Box 3, Folder 7
15	22	Box 3, Folder 8
15	23	Box 3, Folder 10
15	24	Box 4, Folder 1
15	25	Box 4, Folder 6
15	26	Box 4, Folder 7
16	1	Box 5, Folder 1

16	2	Box 5, Folder 5
16	3	Box 5, Folder 6
16	4	Box 5, Folder 7
16	5	Box 5, Folder 10
16	6	Box 6, Folder 5
16	7	Box 6, Folder 9
16	8	Box 6, Folder 10
16	9	Box 6, Folder 11
16	10	Box 6, Folder 12
16	11	Box 7, Folder 1
16	12	Box 7, Folder 2
16	13	Box 7, Folder 5
16	14	Box 8, Folder 4
16	15	Box 8, Folder 5
16	16	Box 8, Folder 6
16	17	Box 8, Folder 7
16	18	Box 8, Folder 8
16	19	Box 8, Folder 11
16	20	Box 9, Folder 6
16	21	Box 9, Folder 7
16	21	Box 9, Folder 8
16	23	Box 10, Folder 1
16	24	Box 10, Folder 5
16	25	Box 11, Folder 2
16	26	Box 11, Folder 4
16	27	Box 11, Folder 6
16	28	Box 11, Folder 8
16	29	Box 11, Folder 16
16	30	Box 11, Folder 19
16	31	Box 11, Folder 20
16	32	Box 11, Folder 24
16	33	Box 11, Folder 25
16	34	Box 11, Folder 26
16	35	Box 11, Folder 27
17	1	Box 12, Folder 1
17	2	Box 12, Folder 2
17	3	Box 12, Folder 5
17	4	Box 12, Folder 7
17	5	Box 12, Folder 10

17	6	Box 12, Folder 11
17	7	Box 12, Folder 15
17	8	Box 12, Folder 18
17	9	Box 12, Folder 21
17	10	Box 12, Folder 22
17	11	Box 12, Folder 24
17	12	Box 12, Folder 27
17	13	Box 12, Folder 29
17	14	Box 12, Folder 32
17	15	Box 12, Folder 36
17	16	Box 12, Folder 37
17	17	Box 12, Folder 38
17	18	Box 12, Folder 40
17	19	Box 12, Folder 42
17	20	Box 13, Folder 1
17	21	Box 13, Folder 4
17	22	Box 13, Folder 5
17	23	Box 13, Folder 7
17	24	Box 13, Folder 8
17	25	Box 13, Folder 9
17	26	Box 13, Folder 10
17	27	Box 13, Folder 11
17	28	Box 13, Folder 13
17	29	Box 13, Folder 15
17	30	Box 13, Folder 21
17	31	Box 13, Folder 26
17	32	Box 13, Folder 27
17	33	Box 14, Folder 2
17	34	Box 14, Folder 4
17	35	Box 14, Folder 6
17	36	Box 14, Folder 8
17	37	Box 14, Folder 13
17	38	Box 14, Folder 15
17	39	Box 14, Folder 16
17	40	Box 14, Folder 17
17	41	Box 14, Folder 18
17	42	Box 14, Folder 20
17	43	Box 14, Folder 24
17	44	Box 14, Folder 26

17 45 Box 14, Folder 28

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