

# MOTOJICHO.

## Vantile E. Whitfield papers, circa 1953-2005

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### Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Motojicho.  
**Title:** Vantile E. Whitfield papers, circa 1953-2005  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 1159  
**Extent:** 6.5 linear feet (13 boxes) and AV Masters: .25 linear feet (1 box)  
**Abstract:** Papers of African American playwright Vantile E. Whitfield including audiovisual material, correspondence, photographs, printed material, and scripts.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### Administrative Information

#### Restrictions on Access

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#### Source

Gift of Loretta Argrett, widow of Vantile E. Whitfield, 2016

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**Custodial History**

The collection was physically transferred to the Library in 2010 and formally acquired and accessioned in 2016.

**Citation**

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

**Appraisal Note**

Acquired by Randall Burkett, Curator of African American Collections, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in the history of African American theater.

**Processing**

Arranged and described at the box level by Sarah Quigley, October 2016.

Arranged and described at the file level by Serena McCracken as part of an internship for the Simmons College Masters of Library Science program's archives management course, November 2017.

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**Collection Description****Biographical Note**

Vantile Emmanuel Whitfield, African American playwright and director known as Motojicho, was born on September 8, 1930, in Washington, D.C. to Theodore Roosevelt Whitfield and Lugene Ellen Green. He attended Dunbar High School, graduating in 1948. Following high school, he joined the Air Force and served until 1952. He graduated from Howard University (Washington, D.C.) in 1957 with a bachelor's degree in theatre and design, and received a master's degree in film production from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1967. In 1963, Whitfield co-founded the American Theatre of Being in Los Angeles where he taught classes with such actors as Isabel Sanford and Whitman Mayo. He also worked in television in Los Angeles, directing a team of reporters covering the Watts riots of 1967 and 1968 and producing and co-hosting a half-hour program called "From the Inside Out." In the 1970s, he co-founded the D.C. Black Repertory Company and was founding director of the National Endowment for the Arts Expansion Arts Program in 1971. Under that program, he awarded millions of dollars' worth of grants to artists and arts organizations in minority communities. Whitfield wrote numerous plays, including *Changes*, which debuted at the D.C. Black Repertory Company to standing-room-only audiences in 1973. He also designed sets for the James Baldwin play *The Amen Corner* (1963) and produced and directed a Bill Cosby special on NBC (1971). He died in 2005.

**Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of the papers of Vantile E. Whitfield from 1953-2005 and includes records of the D.C. Black Repertory Company, writings by Whitfield and others, Whitfield's professional and personal papers, photographs, and printed material. The collection primarily documents Whitfield's professional life. Records of the D.C. Black Repertory Company contain administrative documents, as well as planning and promotional material for productions. There

is a significant amount of material relating to the company's production of Whitfield's *Changes*, including recordings. Writings in the collection consist primarily of scripts by Whitfield and others, most notably drafts of James Baldwin's and Arnold Pearl's screenplay adaption of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Other professional papers contain correspondence and subject files documenting Whitfield's work with organizations, such as the Creative Arts Foundation, Arts Media Services, the National Endowment for the Arts Expansion Arts Program, American Theatre of Being, and the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles. Personal papers include an address book, certificates, and Whitfield's wallet. Photographs contain headshots, stills of movies and plays, and images of Whitfield. Printed material consists mostly of clippings and event brochures.

**Arrangement Note**

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

### D.C. Black Repertory Company

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	"About the Rep," undated [1]
13	1	"About the Rep," undated [2]
1	2	Addenda, 1981-1982
1	3	Board of Directors, 1979
1	4	Certificates of appreciation, undated
1	5	Children's Workshop, 1980-1982
1	6	Clippings, 1971-1980
1	7	"Commitment by Company Members," undated
1	8	Dance Company, circa 1972-1973
1	9	Financial records, 1970-1989
1	10	Fliers and brochures about the company, 1971-1981
1	11	Fragment, undated
1	12	Job descriptions, undated
1	13	"Membership Benefits," undated
1	14	Memorandum, undated
1	15	"Narrative Introduction of the Rep Inc.," 1977
1	16	Newsletters, 1974
1	17	"Outline of Critical Issues and Proposed Action for Solution," 1979
1	18	Press releases, 1979-1985
1	19	Production season summaries, 1977-1982
1	20	Productions, <i>A Day, A Life, A People</i> , undated
1	21	Productions, <i>The Amen Corner</i> , undated
1	22	Productions, <i>Among All This You Stand Like a Fine Brownstone</i> , 1976
1	23	Productions, <i>And Still the Sun Rose</i> , 1980
1	24	Productions, <i>Black Elephant Sale</i> , undated
1	25	Productions, <i>Brown Sterling</i> , 1974
1	26	Productions, "Celebrating Black History Week," 1975
1	27	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , act two re-write, third draft, undated
1	28	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , casting, undated
1	29	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , edited draft with notes, undated
1	30	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , first act with edits by Elizabeth Whitfield, 1970
1	31	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , playbill, 1973-1974
1	32	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , pre-Broadway production, undated
1	33	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , production costs, undated
1	34	Productions, <i>Changes</i> , production poster, undated

- 2 1 Productions, *Changes*, production notes, 1973-1992
- 2 2 Productions, *Changes*, prologue, undated
- 2 3 Productions, *Changes*, props chart, undated
- AV1 - Productions, *Changes*, recordings, circa 1973 [original: audiocassettes] [5 tapes]
- 2 4 Productions, *Changes*, reviews, 1973-1974
- 2 5 Productions, *Changes*, schedule, undated
- 2 6 Productions, *Changes*, song notes/lyrics, undated
- 2 7 Productions, *Changes*, unknown draft, undated
- 2 8 Productions, "The Childress Zone," undated
- 2 9 Productions, *Clay Goss*, 1973
- 2 10 Productions, *Coda*, undated
- 2 11 Productions, *Day of Absence*, 1975-1979
- 2 12 Productions, *Don't Leave Go My Hand*, untitled
- 2 13 Productions, *East of Jordan*, 1989
- 2 14 Productions, *Eden*, 1982
- 2 15 Productions, "Evening of Comedy," 1975
- 2 16 Productions, *The Face of Love*, 1985
- 2 17 Productions, *Five on the Black Hand Side*, 1979
- 2 18 Productions, *Fredrick Douglass*, undated
- 2 19 Productions, *Happy Ending*, 1974
- 2 20 Productions, *Harlem Renaissance*, undated
- 2 21 Productions, *Imamu*, undated
- 2 22 Productions, *A Kiss...Too Late*, undated
- 2 23 Productions, *Lifestyles*, 1973
- 2 24 Productions, *A Love Awakening*, 1981
- 2 25 Productions, *Lyrics for a Sad Old Song*, undated
- 2 26 Productions, *Modern Time Blues*, 1985
- 2 27 Productions, *Morning, Noon, and Night*, undated
- 2 28 Productions, *Night at the Theatre*, undated
- 2 29 Productions, *Night of Scenes*, 1984-1985
- 2 30 Productions, *Nevis Mountain Dew*, 1981
- 2 31 Productions, *No Place to be Somebody*, undated
- 2 32 Productions, *Owen's Song*, 1975
- 2 33 Productions, "Open House Reception" (undated)
- 2 34 Productions, *Riggs Night*, undated
- 2 35 Productions, "Save the Pigfoot Benefit," 1981
- 2 36 Productions, *Simply Heavenly*, undated
- 2 37 Productions, *Showdown*, (1976)
- 2 38 Productions, *Sister Selena Got the Gift*, undated

- 2 39 Productions, *Sojourner's Journey*, undated  
 2 40 Productions, *Steal Away*, 1986  
 2 41 Productions, *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, 1975  
 2 42 Productions, *Touch Me in the Morning*, 1982  
 2 43 Productions, "A Tribute to Maya Angelou," 1977  
 2 44 Productions, *Trilogy*, 1978  
 2 45 Productions, *Trouble Man*, 1972  
 2 46 Productions, *Two Years, No Fears*, 1974  
 2 47 Productions, *Upon this Rock, Spirit, and No Outlet*, undated  
 2 48 Productions, *Visions of Madam Corina*, undated  
 2 49 Productions, *Widows*, 1981  
 2 50 "Raisin's Agreement with Robert Nemiroff," undated  
 3 1 "Resource Development Packet," 1979  
 3 2 "Season Overview," 1975-1976  
 3 3 Stationery, undated  
 3 4 Strategic Planning and Management Associates Inc., undated  
 3 5 "Summary of Findings of the Rep Inc.'s Self-Evaluation," 1985  
 3 6 The Training Center, 1974  
 3 7 "Transition to the Rep Inc.," undated  
 3 8 "Year End Report," 1980-1981

### Writings

- 3 9 Anthony, Earl, *Time is Running Out*, play script, 1974  
 3 10 Baldwin, James and Arnold Perl, *Malcom X*, reviews, 1971  
 3 11 Baldwin, James and Arnold Perl, *Malcom X*, teleplay, first draft, 1969  
 3 12 Baldwin, James and Arnold Perl, *Malcom X*, teleplay, first draft with suggestions from Columbia Pictures, 1969  
 3 13 Baldwin, James and Arnold Perl, *Malcom X*, treatment, undated  
 3 14 Bandele, Ramla, *Facing the Rising Sun*, play script, undated  
 3 15 Belle, Regina, "After the Love Has Lost Its Shine," poem, undated  
 3 16 Brown, Abena Joan, "Looking for Coltrane," essay, 1993  
 3 17 Childress, Alice, "The Pocketbook Game," short story, undated  
 3 18 Cosby, Bill, *The Third Bill Cosby Special*, teleplay, 1970  
 4 1 de Leon, Aya, "1981 In My Eyes," poem, circa 1981  
 4 2 Dickens, Nathaniel A., *The Gospel Singer*, novel, undated [1 of 2]  
 4 3 Dickens, Nathaniel A., *The Gospel Singer*, novel, undated [2 of 2]  
 4 4 Doenna, Lena, poems, 1981  
 4 5 Forbes, John and George Rubine, "Conclusion Jumping," short story, undated  
 4 6 Gibson, P.J., *Miss Ann Don't Cry No More*, play script, 1976

- 4 7 Gober, Jackie, Huey R. Harris, and Vantile Whitfield, "From the Inside Out," documentary proposal, 1968
- 4 8 "I Can't Hold My Peace, Cause Peace Ain't Fit To Mention," essay, undated
- 4 9 Lewis, L.N., *Miss Marie's Last One*, play script, 1988
- 4 10 Marzon, Julio, poems, (undated)
- 4 11 Rackley, Lurma, *Laugh if you Like Ain't a Damn Thing Funny: The Autobiography of Ralph "Petey" Greene as Told to Lurma Rackley*, proposal, 1984
- 4 12 Scrivner, Carla, "Gossip of the Movie Lots," review, undated
- 4 13 Smith, Candace E., "Little Man," poem, undated
- 4 14 Smith, Linwood, "This is for You," poem, undated
- 4 15 Smith, Stacy, *The Pimp Bible*, creative nonfiction, 1994
- 4 16 W'Ekunene, Mazisi KaMdabuli (translator), "Emperor Shaka the Great," epic poem, 1977
- 4 17 Unidentified, (undated)
- 13 2 Walker, Evan K., *East of Jordan*, play script, circa 1971
- 4 18 Whitfield, Vantile, *Among All This You Stand Like a Fine Brownstone*, play script, undated
- 4 19 Whitfield, Vantile, *Blues Man---Blues Woman*, treatment, (undated)
- 4 20 Whitfield, Vantile, *The Creeps*, screenplay, undated
- 5 1 Whitfield, Vantile, *Little Sister*, treatment, undated
- 5 2 Whitfield, Vantile, *Moto's Tales*, treatment, undated
- 5 3 Whitfield, Vantile, research papers, undated
- 5 4 Whitfield, Vantile, *Soul Odyssey*, treatment, undated
- 5 5 Whitfield, Vantile, unidentified writing (undated)
- 5 6 Whitfield, Vantile, untitled speech, undated

### Other professional papers

- 5 7 American Theatre of Being, 1964-1965
- 13 3 Art Committee of the Hollywood Los Feliz Jewish Community Center, "The Four Unknowns," undated
- 5 8 Arts Media Services, 1978-1990
- 5 9 The Black International Alliance of Technicians and Craftsmen for the Motion Picture and Telecommunications Industries, undated
- 5 10 Business cards, undated
- 5 11 Contracts and agreements, 1962-1981
- 5 12 Correspondence, 1957-1969
- 13 4 Correspondence, circa 1968-1971
- 5 13 Correspondence, 1970-1974
- 5 14 Correspondence, 1975-1979
- 6 1 Correspondence, 1980-1983

- 6 2 Correspondence, 1984-1989
- 6 3 Correspondence, 1990-1999
- 6 4 Correspondence, undated
- 6 5 Cosmetology certification, 1953-1955
- 6 6 Creative Arts Foundation, 1989
- 13 5 Creative Arts Foundation, circa 1992-1994
- 6 7 "D.C. Commission on The Arts and Humanities FY89 Theatre Panel," undated
- 6 8 The Dramatists Guild Inc., 1972-1975
- 6 9 Forms, undated
- 13 6 Fragments and notes, undated
- 6 10 Fragments and notes, 1986
- 6 11 Harrison, Paul Carter, *Death of Boogie Woogie*, 1979
- 6 12 Howard University, clippings, undated
- 6 13 Howard University, College of Fine Arts, 1984-1985
- 6 14 Howard University, correspondence, 1965-1989
- 6 15 Howard University, Hatch/ Billops Oral Black History Collection, 1986
- 6 16 Howard University, National Conference on African American Theatre, 1995-1996
- 6 17 Howard University, play programs and brochures, 1982-1985
- 7 1 "Hutch-Shine: Black Drama: Anthology 1847-1972," undated
- 7 2 "The Individual Artist," 1978
- 7 3 JFK Center, 1979-1983
- 7 4 JTPA Performing Arts Ensemble, phone list, undated
- 7 5 Larry Neal Writers Conference, second annual, 1984
- 7 6 "Mayors Arts Awards, 'You Gotta Have Art,'" 1982 [1]
- 13 7 "Mayors Arts Awards, 'You Gotta Have Art,'" 1982 [2]
- 7 7 Media Associates, articles of incorporation, 1974
- 7 8 Midwest Black Theatre Alliance, 1978-1985
- 13 8 Midwest Black Theatre Alliance, 1985
- 7 9 Miya Gallery, "Men Who Cook," 1982
- 7 10 Motojicho Inc., 1984
- 7 11 Motojicho Ensemble, Undated
- 7 12 National Black Touring Circuit Inc., undated
- 7 13 National Conference of Artists, 1978-1979
- 7 14 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), administrative records, 1971-1996
- 7 15 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), correspondence, 1971-1996
- 7 16 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), publicity, 1971-1996
- 7 17 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), administrative records, 1965-1990 [1 of 3]



- 8 1 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), administrative records, 1965-1990 [2 of 3]
- 8 2 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), administrative records, 1965-1990 [3 of 3]
- 8 3 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), correspondence, 1971-1990
- 13 9 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), correspondence, 1969
- 8 4 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), performances, *East of Jordan*, undated [1 of 2]
- 8 5 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), performances, *East of Jordan*, undated [2 of 2]
- 8 6 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), performances, *Hajj Malik*, 1971
- 8 7 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), play programs and fliers, 1964-1970
- 8 8 Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles (PASLA), press, 1967-1971
- 8 9 Probation officer employment records, 1962-1964
- 8 10 "Resolution in the Council of the District of Columbia Confirming an Appointment for Vantile Whitfield," 1982
- 9 1 Resumes, others, undated
- 9 2 Resumes, Vantile Whitfield, undated
- 9 3 Screen Actors Guild (SAG), 1967-1970
- 9 4 Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, 1976
- 9 5 Songhai Film Group, 1977
- 9 6 Stationery, undated
- 9 7 Stevens and Stewart, *Rollin'*, 1987
- 13 10 *Tarzan*, episode guide, 2005
- 9 8 Teaching credentials, 1965-1968
- 9 9 Travel itinerary, 1980
- 9 10 Traylor, Eleanor, 1980-1983
- 9 11 Unidentified meeting notes, undated
- 9 12 Union of Black Artists, undated

### Personal papers

- 9 13 Address book, undated
- 9 14 Address list, undated
- 9 15 Certificates of birth and death, 1930-2005
- 9 16 Diplomas, 1948-1967
- 9 17 "Honorable Separation from the Armed Forces of the US," 1952
- 9 18 University of California, Los Angeles, petition for registration in absentia, 1963
- 9 19 Wallet, undated

**Photographs**

- 9 20 "The Black Theatre Movement," 1979
- 9 21 Contact sheets and negatives, undated
- 9 22 Children in performing arts, 1971-1975
- 9 23 Dance, 1975
- 9 24 Headshots, undated
- 9 25 "JCCEO Community Theatre," undated
- 9 26 Movie stills, undated
- 9 27 New York State Governor's Arts Awards, 1986
- 9 28 Orchestra, undated
- 10 1 Play stills, 1970-1978
- 10 2 Pryor, Richard, undated
- 10 3 Shirley, George, undated
- 10 4 "Tribal Doll," undated
- 10 5 Unidentified event, undated
- 10 6 Unidentified individuals, undated
- 10 7 "West Community Symphony Scrapbook," undated
- 10 8 Whitfield, Vantile, 1996

**Printed material**

- 10 9 Articles, acting and theatre, undated
- 10 10 Articles, Motojicho/Vantile Whitfield, undated
- 10 11 Articles, Vantile Whitfield's death, 2005
- 10 12 Clippings, 1960-1980
- 10 13 Clippings, 1960-1990
- 11 1 Clippings, 1970-1990
- 11 2 Clippings, 1970-1975
- 11 3 Clippings, 1970-1980
- 11 4 Clippings, 1975-1989
- 13 11 Clippings, 1993
- 11 5 "Dissertations Concerning Black Theatre," 1988
- 11 6 Event brochures, 1960-1990 [1 of 3]
- 12 1 Event brochures, 1960-1990 [2 of 3]
- 12 2 Event brochures, 1960-1990 [3 of 3]
- 12 3 Interviews with Vantile Whitfield, 1985
- 12 4 Manuals, undated
- 12 5 "Minority Theatre in the United States," 1979
- 13 12 Poems, undated
- 12 6 Research, 1980-1993