Summary

Creator: Andrews, Regina

Title: Regina Andrews papers

Date: 1901-1987 [bulk 1920-1987]

Size: 8.58 linear feet (21 boxes)

Source: Donation, Regina M. Andrews, February 26, 1988

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Allison Hughes.

Abstract: The papers document Andrews' personal life and professional career and activities. Correspondence, reports, printed material, and writings are included. The papers include manuscripts of Andrews' plays Climbing Jacob's Ladder, The Man Who Passed, and Matilda; the posthumously published The Black New Yorkers and an unpublished manuscript "Women ...With Banners and Human Rights: Laws, Statutes and Amendments in the Constitution of the United States." Andrews' professional activities at the Washington Heights Branch of the New York Public Library are, in part, very well documented by a series of scrapbooks containing photographs, broadsides and other printed material of the "Family Night at the Library" programs. Also included among the papers are some family correspondence, clippings, and a scrapbook relating to Andrews' husband, attorney and assemblyman William T. Andrews.

Preferred citation: [Item], Regina Andrews papers, Sc MG 275, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English


Separated Materials: Printed matter transferred to JBH Research and Reference division.

Drawings transferred to Art and Artifacts division.
Photographs transferred to Photographs and Prints division.

Film reels transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound (MIRS) division. Please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.

Creator History

Librarian, author, civic leader, and community activist, Regina Andrews (née Anderson) was born in Chicago in 1901 to Margaret Simons, an artist, and William G. Anderson, a lawyer. After graduating from Hyde Park High School in 1919, she attended Wilberforce University for one year, where she had her first library job at the university's Carnegie library. After leaving school, she got a job as a library assistant through the Chicago Public Library’s apprenticeship training program, but left in 1922 for New York City.

After applying for a job with the New York Public Library (NYPL), she was assigned to work at the 135th Street Branch, at that time a hub for many writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance. Andrews' Harlem home, an apartment at 580 St. Nicholas Ave known as "Dream Haven" that she shared with Louella Tucker and Ethel Ray Nance, the executive secretary of *Opportunity* magazine, also functioned as a gathering place for many figures of the period, including Zora Neale Hurston, W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen.

While at the 135th Street Branch, Andrews became involved in Du Bois's CRIGWA (later KRIGWA) Players, which initially performed in basement of the library. After this group disbanded, Andrews cofounded the Harlem Experimental Theatre with Dorothy Peterson and Harold Jackman. Andrews performed in many of the group's productions and wrote plays under the pseudonym Ursula Trel ling, two of which were produced by the group: *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* (1931) and *Underground* (1932). Andrews continued to support theater when she moved on to the 115th Street branch, allowing playwright Loften Mitchell's Pioneer Drama Group, later known as the 115th Street People's Theatre, to perform in the library.

In 1926, Regina married William (Bill) T. Andrews, a lawyer who went on to work as special counsel to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), then became a state assemblyman representing Harlem. In 1948, the couple adopted a three-year-old daughter, Regina Ann.

Andrews' library career continued to grow, though she at times faced discrimination from NYPL administrators, who were slow to promote her. She worked at branch libraries throughout the city, including Woodstock in the Bronx, Rivington on the Lower East Side, and 115th Street, where in 1938 she became the first African American to head a library. In 1948, Andrews was appointed supervising librarian of the Washington Heights Branch, a post she held until her retirement in 1966. While there, she inaugurated a special library community outreach program which ran for thirteen years. Billed as "Family Night at the Library," this series concentrated on the social, political, and cultural life of Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Southeast Asia as well as on African-American history and culture. Distinguished scholars, artists, writers, statesmen, and representatives of various governments participated, and the programs were supplemented by exhibitions of art and artifacts and by annotated bibliographies.

Apart from her library career and creative interests, Andrews was involved in a variety of civic activities. In 1968, she served as a consultant for the controversial *Harlem on My Mind* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and subsequently used her research on the show to develop a manuscript
that was posthumously published as *The Black New Yorkers*. She served on the boards of several organizations including the National Council of Women of the United States, of which she was a Vice President, and she represented the National Urban League as a member of the United States National Commission for UNESCO. Through the National Council of Women and other groups, Andrews made international trips to West Germany, West Africa, and Asia.


1901 May 21 Regina Anderson is born in the Hyde Park section of Chicago.
1919Graduates from Hyde Park High School.
1919-1920Attends Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio.
1921-1922Works at Chicago Public Library.
1922Moves to New York City.
1923-1926Works at 135th Street branch library.
1926 April 10Marries William (Bill) T. Andrews.
1926-1927Works at Hamilton Fish Park branch library.
1927-1930Works at Woodstock branch library.
1929Cofounds Harlem Experimental Theatre company.
1930-1936Works at Rivington branch library.
1936-1948Works at 115th Street branch library.
1948Adopts three-year-old daughter, Regina Ann.
1958Travels to West Germany on four-week study tour as a representative of the National Council of Women of the United States.
1964Travels to several West African countries on a tour organized by the Musical Arts Group.
1965Travels to several Asian countries through an award from the Asia Foundation.
1966Retires from New York Public library.
1984Bill Andrews dies.
1993 February 5Regina Andrews dies in Ossining, New York.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers document Andrews' personal life and professional career and activities. Correspondence, reports, printed material, and writings are included.

The papers include correspondence spanning Andrews' career with the New York Public Library, with the bulk of the NYPL files pertaining to her time at the Washington Heights Branch. The "Family Night at the Library" programs are very well documented by a series of scrapbooks containing photographs, broadsides, and other printed material. Andrews' involvement in other civic organizations, such as the National Urban League and National Council of Women in the United States, are also documented.

The writings include manuscripts of Andrews' plays *Climbing Jacob's Ladder*, *The Man Who Passed*, and *Matilda*; unpublished children's stories; the posthumously published *The Black New Yorkers* and an unpublished manuscript titled "Women ...With Banners and Human Rights: Laws, Statutes and
Amendments in the Constitution of the United States."

Also included among the papers are some family correspondence, clippings, and a scrapbook relating to Andrews' husband, attorney and assemblyman William T. Andrews.

**Key Terms**

**Subjects**
- African American legislators -- New York (State)
- African American librarians
- African American women -- Biography
- African Americans -- New York (State)
- Librarians -- United States
- Libraries -- Cultural programs
- Libraries and community -- New York (State) -- New York
- Women -- Biography
- Women -- Legal status, laws, etc -- United States
- Women social reformers -- United States
- Women's rights -- United States

**Names**
- Andrews, Regina
- Andrews, William T., 1898-1984
- National Council of Women of the United States
- National Urban League
- New York Public Library. Washington Heights Branch
Container List

Personal Activities 1901-1986
b. 1 f. 1-2 Biographical 1901-1973
b. 1 f. 3 Family Correspondence 1920-1983
   General Correspondence 1939-1986
b. 1 f. 4 1939-1978
b. 1 f. 5 1980-1986
b. 1 f. 6 undated
b. 1 f. 7 Business Correspondence 1981-1984
b. 1 f. 8 Legal Correspondence 1950-1985
b. 1 f. 9 Printed Material 1931-1984
b. 1 f. 10 Financial Records 1970-1986
b. 1 f. 11 Public Librarians Professional Certificate, State of New York 1951
b. 1 f. 12 Personal Notes

Professional and Civic Activities 1919-1987
Correspondence 1939-1969
b. 2 f. 1 1939-1969
b. 2 f. 2 1970-1986
Printed Material 1919-1976
b. 2 f. 3 1919-1951
b. 2 f. 4 1963-1969
b. 2 f. 5 1970-1986
b. 2 f. 7 Alfred A. Knopf 1980
   American Council for Nationalities Service 1963-1987
b. 2 f. 8 1963-1986
b. 2 f. 9 1980-1987
b. 3 f. 1 American Jewish Committee, New York Chapter 1961-1962
b. 3 f. 2-3 American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa 1962
b. 3 f. 4 Amistad Research Center 1973-1985
b. 3 f. 5 The Asia Foundation 1960-1966
b. 3 f. 6-7 Center for Urban Education 1960-1971
b. 3 f. 6-7 Council of National Organization for Adult Education 1959-1970
Foreign Policy Association 1957-1987
b. 3 f. 9 1957-1964
b. 3 f. 10 1965
b. 4 f. 1-2 1966-1967
b. 4 f. 3 1968-1987
b. 4 f. 4 Fulbright Hays Advisory Committee 1977
b. 4 f. 5 H. & R. Liquor Store Company 1971
b. 4 f. 6 Harlem Cultural Council 1964-1965
Professional and Civic Activities (cont.)

b. 4 f. 7 Harold Jackman Memorial Committee 1973
b. 4 f. 8 Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Harlem On My Mind" exhibit 1967-1969
b. 4 f. 9 Mount Hope United Methodist Church, Mahopac, New York 1976-1985
b. 4 f. 10 The Musical Art Group 1963-1974
b. 4 f. 11 NAACP 1969-1983
b. 4 f. 12 National Council of Negro Woman, Inc 1963
    National Council of Women of the United States 1955-1986
b. 5 f. 1-3 1955-1967
b. 5 f. 4-6 1968-1969
b. 5 f. 7 1970-1986
b. 5 f. 8 Booklists 1965
b. 5 f. 9 Reports
    National Urban League 1935-1968
b. 6 f. 1-2 1935-1964
b. 6 f. 3-5 1952-1968
b. 6 f. 6 New York City Planning Board No. 12 1963-1967
    New York Public Library 1927-1984
    Correspondence 1927-1967
b. 6 f. 7 1927-1946
b. 6 f. 8 1962-1967
b. 7 f. 1 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture 1974-1984
    Washington Heights Branch 1953-1967
b. 7 f. 2 1958-1967
b. 7 f. 3 History 1963
    "Family Night At the Library"
    General 1953-1966
b. 7 f. 4 Press Releases, Programs and Broadsides 1956-1966
b. 7 f. 5 "Operation Crossroads Africa" 1961-1963
b. 7 f. 6 "Strengthening Ties Between...and the African Countries" 1964
b. 7 f. 7 "The Jamaican People and the African Nations" 1964
b. 7 f. 8 "South Africa In the International Society" 1964
b. 7 f. 9 "Korea: Today and Tomorrow" 1965
b. 7 f. 10 "Japan: Today and Tomorrow" 1965-1966
b. 7 f. 11 "India: Yesterday and Today" 1966
b. 7 f. 12 "Pakistan: East and West - The Struggle for Democracy" 1966
b. 7 f. 13 Printed Material 1956-1966
b. 7 f. 14 Program Speakers – Resumes
b. 7 f. 15 Class Questions
b. 7 f. 16 Regional Education Laboratories 1969-1971
b. 8 f. 1 Society for the Family of Man 1966-1967
b. 8 f. 2 Stevenson for President Committee of New York State 1956
b. 8 f. 3 Stevenson for President Committee of New York State 1956
Professional and Civic Activities (cont.)

b. 8 f. 4  United States Mission to the United Nations 1961-1970
b. 8 f. 5-6 1955-1959
b. 8 f. 7-8  1959-1980
          Washington Heights Hamilton Grange Cultural Center 1962-1968
b. 8 f. 9  Youth Cultural Center 1962-1963
b. 8 f. 10-11 Cultural Committee 1962-1968
b. 8 f. 12 West Harlem Development Corporation 1947-1951

Writings 1934-1980

The Black New Yorkers
  Manuscript Version 1
b. 9 f. 1  Pages 1-94
b. 9 f. 2  Pages 95-188
b. 9 f. 3  Pages 189-268
b. 9 f. 4  Pages 269-344
  Manuscript Version 2
b. 9 f. 5  Pages 1-99
b. 9 f. 6  Pages 100-179
b. 9 f. 7  Pages 180-269
b. 9 f. 8  Pages 270-344
b. 9 f. 9  Additions
b. 10 f. 1-2 Unpublished Manuscript #1
b. 10 f. 3-4 Unpublished Manuscript #2
b. 10 f. 5-6 Unpublished Manuscript #3
b. 10 f. 7-8 Unpublished Manuscript #4
b. 10 f. 9-10 Unpublished Manuscript #5
b. 11 f. 1  Unpublished Manuscript #6
b. 11 f. 2  Unpublished Manuscript #7
b. 11 f. 3  Unpublished Manuscript #8
b. 11 f. 4-5 Unpublished Manuscript #9
b. 11 f. 6  Unpublished Manuscript #10
b. 11 f. 7  Unpublished Manuscript #11
b. 11 f. 8  Unpublished Manuscript #12
b. 12 f. 1-3 Unpublished Manuscript #13
b. 12 f. 4-5 Unpublished Manuscript #14
b. 12 f. 6-7 Unpublished Manuscript #15
b. 12 f. 8  Unpublished Manuscript #16
b. 13 f. 1-2 Unpublished Manuscript #17
b. 13 f. 3-5 Unpublished Manuscript #18
b. 13 f. 6-7 Unpublished Manuscript #19
b. 13 f. 8  Correspondence 1957-1980
Writings (cont.)
The Black New Yorkers (cont.)
b. 13 f. 9  Research File 1938-1940
b. 13 f. 10  Printed Material 1977
b. 14  Index Cards A-K
b. 15  Index Cards L-Z
"Women...With Banners and Human Rights: Laws, Statuses and Amendments in the Constitution of the United States"
b. 16 f. 1  Miscellaneous
b. 16 f. 2-3  Unpublished Manuscript #1
b. 16 f. 4-5  Unpublished Manuscript #2
b. 16 f. 6  Unpublished Manuscript #3
b. 16 f. 7-8  Unpublished Manuscript #4
b. 16 f. 9-10  Unpublished Manuscript #5
b. 17 f. 1  Unpublished Manuscript #6
b. 17 f. 2-3  Unpublished Manuscript #7
b. 17 f. 4-5  Unpublished Manuscript #8
b. 17 f. 6  Unpublished Manuscript #9
b. 17 f. 7-8  Unpublished Manuscript #10
b. 18 f. 1  Climbing Jacob's Ladder One-Act Play 1925
b. 18 f. 2  The Man Who Passed One-Act Play
b. 18 f. 3  Matilda One-Act Play
b. 18 f. 4  "The Prince and the Porker," Children's Story 1955
b. 18 f. 5  "The Rabbit Who Saw the World Outside," Children's Book
b. 18 f. 6  "The Showshoe Rabbit," Children's Book 1955 January 16
b. 18 f. 7  "Tales of a Negro Grandmother," Sketch (Incomplete)
b. 18 f. 9  Miscellaneous Writings and Drafts
b. 18 f. 10  Unidentified Writings, Speeches and Notes
b. 18 f. 11  Speeches 1934
b. 18 f. 12  Other Authors
b. 19 f. 1  Address Book
b. 19 f. 2  Bibliography
William T. Andrews papers 1920-1985
b. 20 f. 1  Biographical 1984
b. 20 f. 2  Correspondence 1927-1985
b. 20 f. 3  Printed Material 1920-1965
b. 20 f. 4  Reveille Club of New York 1977-1981
b. 20 f. 5  Speeches delivered before the New York State Assembly 1935 January 21
b. 21  Scrapbook