Summary

Creator:  Hedgeman, Anna Arnold, 1899-1990

Title:  Anna Arnold Hedgeman papers

Date:  1953 - 1983

Size:  7 linear feet (12 archival boxes; 1 1/2 archival box; 2 record cartons; 1 volume)


Abstract:  The Anna Arnold Hedgeman papers document the second half of Hedgeman's career in governmental, religious, civil rights, and educational organizations from the 1950s through the early 1980s.

Preferred citation:  [Item], Anna Arnold Hedgeman papers, Sc MG 123, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material:  English

Processing note:  This finding aid was prepared as part of a pilot archival processing project based on "Mapping the Stacks: A Guide to Black Chicago's Hidden Archives" (mts.lib.uchicago.edu). The necessary funding, graduate student staff, and archival training were arranged through support of New York University's Department of English, in collaboration with the Schomburg Center in Research in Black Culture. Processed by Matthew Bruen, Jane Carr, and Laura Helton in 2009.

Separated Materials:  Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: one folder containing nine photographs (six of Hedgeman; three miscellaneous).

Creator History
Anna Arnold Hedgeman (1899-1990) spent more than six decades working in the fields of interfaith and civil rights organizing, government service, and urban affairs. The author of two memoirs, *The Trumpet Sounds* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964) and *The Gift of Chaos* (Oxford, 1977), Hedgeman was a pioneer in opening civil service and political jobs to African-American women.

Raised in Minnesota, Hedgeman was the first African-American graduate of Hamline University in St. Paul. From 1924 to 1933, she served as an administrator for the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Ohio, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, including five years as membership secretary of the Harlem branch. She married musician Merritt Hedgeman in 1933.

During the New Deal and early years of World War II, Hedgeman worked for the Emergency Relief Bureau, worked as a consultant on racial problems for New York City, and monitored race relations for the Federal Office of Civilian Defense. In 1944, the Hedgemans relocated to Washington, D.C., where she became executive director of A. Philip Randolph's National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. After working on Harry Truman's presidential election in 1948, Hedgeman was appointed to an administrative position in the Federal Security Agency.

From 1954 to 1958, Hedgeman was a mayoral aide in the cabinet of Robert F. Wagner, Jr. As was often the case throughout her career, Hedgeman was the first African-American woman appointed to this post. From 1958 to 1962, she worked briefly in business and also covered civic and international affairs as a radio commentator and *New York Age* columnist.

In the 1960s, Hedgeman was at the center of national civil rights organizing and was the first female member on the administrative planning committee for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Returning to ecumenical work from 1963 to 1967, Hedgeman served in several capacities for the National Council of Churches' Commission on Religion and Race, where she coordinated efforts of clergy and lay leaders to win passage and ensure implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Hedgeman started a consulting service and throughout the 1970s worked as a freelance specialist on interfaith activism, urban affairs, and black studies. She also continued her commitment to public service as a member of countless community committees and government advisory bodies until her death in 1990.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Anna Arnold Hedgeman papers document the second half of Hedgeman's career in governmental, religious, civil rights, and educational organizations from the 1950s through the early 1980s. The collection consists largely of manuscripts, correspondence, and printed material. It covers the second half of Hedgeman's career beginning with her tenure as a mayoral aide in 1953, and continuing through her consulting work in the 1970s. The Personal/Biographical series includes family correspondence, biographical sketches and resumes, and information on Hedgeman's awards and honorary degrees. In addition, the series has a small amount of information regarding Hedgeman's husband Merritt, a successful musician. The Correspondence series contains incoming and outgoing letters covering twenty-eight years of Hedgeman's career from 1955 to 1982. It includes correspondence of a general nature and correspondence from Hedgeman's work as a freelance consultant. Other correspondence generated as part of Hedgeman's official duties on behalf of the organizations that employed her is contained in the Mayoral Aide, Organizations, and Government Service series. Correspondence pertaining to Hedgeman's speaking engagements as a freelance consultant or the publication of her writings is included in the Speaking Engagements and Writings series. The Mayoral Aide series documents Hedgeman's work as an aide to Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr. from 1954 to 1958 and
contains a limited amount of correspondence and printed material pertaining to racial discrimination within city agencies, Hedgeman's visits to school groups, and her trip to the Middle East in 1956. The largest and most substantive series, Organizations, is divided into three subseries: Religious, Education, and Community. The Religious subseries contains correspondence, minutes, legislative material, and internal office memoranda pertaining to Hedgeman's time with the National Council of Churches. It also contains research materials and printed matter collected by Hedgeman related to her interest in interfaith activism. The Education subseries contains correspondence, minutes, and printed material from 1963 to 1980 dealing with Hedgeman's consulting work on behalf of several universities, colleges, and school districts where she helped develop curricula and policies for minority students. The Community subseries consists of correspondence and printed matter from 1957 to 1983 on Hedgeman's voluntary service as a board member or committee member of numerous organizations, particularly the National Association of Black Professional Women in Higher Education and Harlem Hospital Center. The Government Service series consists primarily of printed material pertaining to federal, state, and local governmental bodies for which Hedgeman served as advisory committee member in the 1960s and 1970s. The bulk of material relates to the National Advisory Council on Vocational Rehabilitation and the New York City Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, but it does not directly document Hedgeman's involvement. Also included in this series are three small files on Hedgeman's participation in White House meetings and conferences. The Speaking Engagements and Writings series relates to Hedgeman's journalism, autobiographies, and speeches between 1954 and 1982. It includes annotated typescripts of significant speeches such as Hedgeman's address to the Conference of Women of African and African Descent in Ghana in 1960. A large portion of the series covers the publication and promotion of Hedgeman's two memoirs, The Trumpet Sounds (1964) and The Gift of Chaos (1973). It also contains research materials, drafts, and clippings of Hedgeman's articles for the New York Age where she was a columnist and the associate editor, as well as clippings from miscellaneous African-American periodicals and peace advocacy publications during the 1950s. Her clippings from the New York Age primarily report on Hedgeman's trips abroad and profile community leaders in Harlem. The series concludes with an assortment of short handwritten and typed documents that appear to have been unpublished during Hedgeman's lifetime. The Scrapbook Files series consists of newspaper clippings, leaflets, and pamphlets that Hedgeman compiled into four scrapbooks covering religion, civil rights, feminism, Black-Jewish relations, and labor.

**Arrangement:** Arranged: I. Personal/Biographical; II. Correspondence; III. Mayoral Aide; IV. Organizations; V. Government Service; VI. Speaking Engagements and Writings; VII. Scrapbook Files

**Key Terms**

**Subjects**
African American authors
African American women civil rights workers
African American women political activists
African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Education
African Americans -- Religion
Black author
Civil rights -- United States
Racism -- United States

**Geographic Names**
United States -- Race relations
United States -- Social conditions -- 1960-1980
Names
Hedgeman, Anna Arnold, 1899-1990
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America
New York (N.Y.). Office of the Mayor
United Methodist Church (U.S.). Commission on Religion and Race
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b. 3 f. 5 American Christian Palestine Committee 1956
b. 3 f. 6 Bethune, Mary McLeod. Light in the Southern Sky 1958
b. 3 f. 7 Racial discrimination in city agencies 1957 - 1958
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b. 3 f. 9 Air pollution control 1954
b. 3 f. 10 Baptist Ministers' Conference, Housing Committee statement 1956
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b. 3 f. 12 Huntingdon Community Center reports 1953 - 1954
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b. 4 f. 7 General Board of Social Concerns, the Methodist Church, Steering Committee 1967
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