Summary

Creator: Johnson, Hall, 1888-1970

Title: Hall Johnson collection

Date: 1953-2001 [bulk 1953-1969]

Size: 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)


Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: African-American composer, musician, and arranger, Hall Johnson is best known as a choral director and for his arrangements of spirituals. In 1925, Johnson formed the Hall Johnson Negro Choir, which performed spirituals in the traditional style. The Hall Johnson Choir, which he organized in 1928, performed on Broadway in Marc Connolly's play Green Pastures (1930), for which Johnson was music director. Johnson was known for his compositions as well as the articles he authored that discussed the history of spirituals and their performance practice. The Hall Johnson Collection contains a miscellaneous assortment of material including correspondence and news clippings regarding a workshop Johnson held in East St. Louis, Missouri, in 1969; and a letter to Katherine Dunham explaining his need to give more time to the inexperienced chorus. There is a music book with some holographic music; a poem he authored “Changelessness” (1956); and a few notes. This collection also includes biographical notes and personal recollections written in 2001, by Madeline Preston, a friend and member of his choir, along with a letter Johnson wrote to her in 1956.

Preferred citation: [Item], Hall Johnson collection, Sc MG 811, 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: Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image materials. For more information, please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.
Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Transferred to the Sheet music collection, Sc MG 915, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Division: sheet music

**Creator History**

African-American composer, musician, and arranger, Hall Johnson is best known as a choral director and for his arrangements of spirituals. In 1925, Johnson formed the Hall Johnson Negro Choir, which performed spirituals in the traditional style. The Hall Johnson Choir, which he organized in 1928, performed on Broadway in Marc Connolly's play *Green Pastures* (1930), for which Johnson was music director. Johnson was known for his compositions as well as the articles he authored that discussed the history of spirituals and their performance practice.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Hall Johnson Collection contains a miscellaneous assortment of material including correspondence and news clippings regarding a workshop Johnson held in East St. Louis, Missouri, in 1969; and a letter to Katherine Dunham explaining his need to give more time to the inexperienced chorus. There is a music book with some holographic music; a poem he authored "Changelessness" (1956); and a few notes. This collection also includes biographical notes and personal recollections written in 2001, by Madeline Preston, a friend and member of his choir, along with a letter Johnson wrote to her in 1956.

**Key Terms**

**Subjects**
African American choral conductors
African American composers
African American musicians
African Americans in the performing arts
Authors, Black

**Names**
Johnson, Hall, 1888-1970