Summary

Creator: Bailey, Pearl

Title: Pearl Bailey letters

Date: 1943-1990

Size: 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)

Source: Gift, Lillian Morrison, May 2010

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Pearl Bailey (1918-1990) was an African American actress and singer. In films, she was known chiefly for two roles: Maria in Porgy and Bess (1959) and Frankie in Carmen Jones (1954). She was also known for her starring role on Broadway in an all-Black cast version of Hello Dolly. During World War II, Bailey toured with the USO, performing for American troops. Beginning in 1946, she was a top attraction in nightclubs, variety houses, and television programs in the United States and Britain. At age 67, in 1985, she graduated from Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in theology. Between 1968 and 1989, she published six books on her life, cooking, and educational experiences. Bailey served as a special ambassador to the United Nations in 1975 and 1989, and in 1988, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The Pearl Bailey letters (1943-1989) consist of correspondence between Bailey and her friend, Lillian Morrison, a published author, compiler, and editor of children's and young adult books as well as a librarian at the New York Public Library, 110th Street Branch. Most of the letters were written by Bailey, and refer to her various endeavors, including her USO work at Fort Huachucha in Arizona; recordings of the song "Tired", which was one of her hit songs; Disney's The Fox and the Hound, for which she provided one of the voices; and her service with the United Nations. As both women were published authors, several of the letters make reference to this fact and to their long friendship and shared birthday, March 29, 1918. The letters do not provide a great amount of detail about Bailey's show business career.

Preferred citation: [Item], Pearl Bailey letters, Sc MG 824, 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 General Research and Reference Division: books and periodicals

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Transferred to the Programs and Playbills collection, Sc MG 928, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division: flyers and playbills

Creator History

Pearl Bailey (1918-1990) was an African American actress and singer. In films, she was known chiefly for two roles: Maria in *Porgy and Bess* (1959) and Frankie in *Carmen Jones* (1954). She was also known for her starring role on Broadway in an all-Black cast version of *Hello Dolly*. During World War II, Bailey toured with the USO, performing for American troops. Beginning in 1946, she was a top attraction in nightclubs, variety houses, and television programs in the United States and Britain. At age 67, in 1985, she graduated from Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in theology. Between 1968 and 1989, she published six books on her life, cooking, and educational experiences. Bailey served as a special ambassador to the United Nations in 1975 and 1989, and in 1988, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Scope and Content Note

The Pearl Bailey letters (1943-1989) consist of correspondence between Bailey and her friend, Lillian Morrison, a published author, compiler, and editor of children's and young adult books as well as a librarian at the New York Public Library, 110th Street Branch. Most of the letters were written by Bailey, and refer to her various endeavors, including her USO work at Fort Huachucha in Arizona; recordings of the song "Tired", which was one of her hit songs; Disney's *The Fox and the Hound*, for which she provided one of the voices; and her service with the United Nations. As both women were published authors, several of the letters make reference to this fact and to their long friendship and shared birthday, March 29, 1918. The letters do not provide a great amount of detail about Bailey's show business career.

Key Terms

Subjects
African American actresses
African American motion picture actors and actresses
African American women entertainers
African American women singers
African Americans in the performing arts
Authors, Black
Female friendship

Names
Bailey, Pearl
Morrison, Lillian