



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

GUide to the Dr. Theodore Shell  
Collection of Duke Ellington Ephemera

NMAH.AC.0502

Jeremy Nordmoe, Scott Schwartz, and Evelyn Kramer

July 23, 1996

Archives Center, National Museum of American History  
P.O. Box 37012  
Suite 1100, MRC 601  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012  
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270  
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453  
archivescenter@si.edu  
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Dr. Theodore Shell Collection of Duke Ellington Ephemera
<b>Date:</b>	1933-1990
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0502
<b>Creator:</b>	Shell, Theodore, Dr. (dentist) (Creator)
<b>Extent:</b>	1.75 Cubic feet (5 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Periodical articles, news clippings, concert programs, radio transcripts, personal correspondence, broadsides, photographs, and pencil sketches collected by Dr. Shell. The material documents part of Duke Ellington's music career, especially ca. 1940-1974.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Dr. Theodore Shell donated his collection of Duke Ellington ephemera to the National Museum of American History on November 17, 1993.

### Provenance

According to Dr. Shell, many of the materials found in this collection were originally found in the garage of a house purchased by a friend of his, circa 1980-1981. It was suggested to Dr. Shell by Melvin Smith, another friend, that the materials were originally compiled by the Ellington's bus driver. In addition eighty-three copy photographs, taken by Smithsonian Institution's Photographic Services, were made from two photographic montages created by Dr. Shell of his original photographs taken of performances of the Ellington Orchestra in the Baltimore and Washington area during the late 1960s and early 1970s. These copy prints were added to the collection on May 15, 1996.

### Processing Information

Processed by Jeremy Nordmoe, Scott Schwartz, and Evelyn Kramer, July 23, 1996 (revised March 16, 1998).

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Jeremy Nordmoe, Scott Schwartz, and Evelyn Kramer, July 23 1996.

### Preferred Citation

Dr. Theodore Shell Collection of Duke Ellington Ephemera, 1933-1990, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright restrictions. Contact the Archives Center.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Dr. Theodore Shell (1915- ), dentist, "amateur" photographer and Ellington enthusiast, was born in Rahweh, New Jersey. He graduated from Shaw University in 1937 with a degree in science and chemistry, and he served five years in the U.S. Army's chemical warfare service during World War II in the European Theatre. In 1950 he received his dentistry degree from Howard University and began a practice in Washington D.C. Dr. Shell also held the position of Clinical Professor of Dentistry for 43 years at Howard. He retired in 1993.

Dr. Shell first became interested in Ellington's music in 1952. He and Maurice Lawrence, a fellow member of the Omega Psi Phi National Fraternity, founded a Duke Ellington Club in 1956, and it eventually became Chapter 90 of the Ellington Society by 1962. Other founding members of this chapter include Grant Wright, Terrell Allen, and Juanita Jackson. Over the course of his activities with the Ellington Society, Dr. Shell had the privilege of meeting with Duke Ellington on numerous occasions, the first time being in 1964, and in 1971 he hosted Ellington's 72nd birthday party in his own home. Currently, Dr. Shell is serving as president of the organization.

---

## Scope and Contents

The Dr. Theodore Shell Collection of Duke Ellington Ephemera contains autographs, concert programs, publicity booklets, conference materials, correspondence, periodicals, news clippings, photographs, play lists, transcripts of radio broadcasts and a variety of other ephemeral materials that document the life, career, and legacy of Duke Ellington, as well as the early history of Jazz. The collection is arranged alphabetically. Oversized materials are located at the end of the collection but are listed alphabetically within the container list.

Items of particular interest include: a collection of programs, napkins, and menus autographed by Duke Ellington and other members of his orchestra including Johnny Hodges; concert programs spanning forty years of Ellington's career (1933-1973); a pencil-sketched portrait of Duke Ellington; and photographs of Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, "Peg leg" Bates, Cat Anderson, Harry Carney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Russell Procope and many other Ellington band members taken or collected by Dr. Shell. There are radio broadcast transcripts that contain the scripts, play lists, and promotional spots from various Ellington radio performances between 1943 and 1946. Biographical notes document the life of one of Ellington's public relations agents, Jerome O. Rhea, and there are also some photographs that might possibly be of Rhea's family. Also of interest are a transcript of a meeting related to the organization of a Negro Baseball League and several hand-illustrated poems by African American poets, both of which are found in the Miscellaneous folder.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

Jazz  
Jazz musicians -- 1940-1980 -- United States  
Music -- 20th century

### Types of Materials:

Articles -- 1940-1980

Broadsides -- 1940-1980  
Clippings -- 20th century  
Correspondence -- 1940-2000  
Drawings -- 20th century  
Photographs -- 20th century  
Programs -- 1940-1990  
Radio scripts -- 1940-1980  
Sketches -- 1940-2000

Names:

Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974

---

## Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Autographs, undated
Box 3, Folder 1	Autographs, circa 1942
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical Notes on Duke Ellington, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Biographical Notes on Jerome O. Rhea, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Booklet - "The Cornell Rhythm Club Presents", undated
Box 1, Folder 5	Broadsides for appearances by Johnny Hodges and Albert Hibbler, undated
Box 1, Folder 6	Catalogs - Liberty Music Shops, 1950 and FDC Records, 1966
Box 1, Folder 7	Christmas Cards - Duke Ellington, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 8	Concert Programs, 1933
Box 1, Folder 9	Concert Programs, 1945
Box 1, Folder 10	Concert Programs, 1946
Box 1, Folder 11	Concert Programs, 1947
Box 1, Folder 12	Concert Programs, 1948
Box 1, Folder 13	Concert Programs, 1959
Box 1, Folder 14	Concert Program - The First International Jazz Festival, 1962
Box 1, Folder 15	Concert Programs, 1966
Box 1, Folder 16	Concert Programs, 1967
Box 1, Folder 17	Concert Programs, 1968
Box 3, Folder 2	Concert Program - NAACP Benefit, 1970
Box 1, Folder 18	Concert Programs, 1971
Box 1, Folder 19	Concert Programs, 1973
Box 1, Folder 20	Concert Programs, undated

Box 1, Folder 21	Correspondence- Business, May 1945 - March 1948
Box 1, Folder 22	Correspondence - Fan Mail, September 1938 - May 1947
Box 1, Folder 23	Discographies, circa 1959 and 1966
Box 1, Folder 24	Ellington '90 - "The Eighth Annual International Conference of the Duke Ellington Study Club," May 17-20, 1990
Box 3, Folder 3	Esquire's 1947 Jazz Book , 1947
Box 1, Folder 25	Itinerary for Duke Ellington's Spring Tour, 1946
Box 1, Folder 26	Memorabilia, circa 1933-1946
Box 1, Folder 27	Miscellaneous, undated
Box 1, Folder 28	News clippings, 1937-1950
Box 1, Folder 29	News clippings, 1963-1968
Box 1, Folder 30	News clippings, 1969
Box 2, Folder 1	News clippings, 1970-1990
Box 3, Folder 4	News clipping, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	News clippings, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	Newsletter - The Duke Ellington Society (New York Chapter), 1987
Box 2, Folder 4	Pamphlet - "The Duke Ellington Center", undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Pencil Sketches, undated
Box 2, Folder 6	Periodical - Collector , 1966
Box 2, Folder 7	Periodical - De Jazz Wereld , July 1938
Box 2, Folder 8	Periodical - Down Beat , January 1947 and December 1948
Box 2, Folder 9	Periodical - Jazz Journal , February and July 1977
Box 2, Folder 10	Periodical - Jazz Times , August 1990
Box 2, Folder 11	Periodical - Jet , June 13, 1974

Box 2, Folder 12	Periodical - The Pittsburgh Courier , March 27, 1948
Box 3, Folder 5	Periodical - Vogue , February 1948
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Photograph - Cat Anderson, undated
Box 4, Folder 3	Photograph - Cat Anderson, Paul Gonsalves, undated
Box 4, Folder 4	Photograph - Cat Anderson, Lawrence Brown, 2 unidentified individuals, undated
Box 4, Folder 5	Photograph - Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, Russell Procope, undated
Box 4, Folder 6	Photograph - Harold Ashby, Russell Procope, Lawrence Brown, Harold Ashby, Mercer Ellington, undated
Box 2, Folder 13	Photograph - "Peg leg" Bates (autographed), undated
Box 4, Folder 7-8	Photograph - Aaron Bell, undated
	Photograph - Aaron Bell, Harry Carney, undated
Box 4, Folder 10-11	Photograph - Lawrence Brown, undated
Box 4, Folder 12	Photograph - Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney, Russell Procope, undated
Box 4, Folder 13	Photograph - Lawrence Brown, Cat Anderson, unidentified individual, Johnny Hodges, undated
Box 4, Folder 14	Photograph - Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney, Russell Procope, undated
Box 4, Folder 15	Photograph - Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney, Russell Procope, Rufus Jones, Paul Gonsalves, undated
Box 2, Folder 14	Photograph - Cab Calloway (autographed), undated
Box 4, Folder 16-17	Photograph - Harry Carney, undated
Box 4, Folder 18	Photograph - Harry Carney, Russell Procope, unidentified individual, Tom Whaley, undated
Box 4, Folder 19	Photograph - Harry Carney, Harold Ashby, Johnny Hodges, Booty Wood (standing), undated
Box 4, Folder 20	Photograph - Chuck Connors (standing, foreground), Harold Ashby (seated, right), other unidentified individuals, undated



Box 4, Folder 21	Photograph - Chuck Connors, Money Johnson, Norris Turney, Booty Wood, Russell Procope, Harry Carney, undated
Box 4, Folder 22	Photograph - Unidentified (probably Willis Conover), Duke Ellington, undated
Box 4, Folder 23	Photograph - Willis Conover, Duke Ellington, unidentified trombonist (probably Chuck Connors), undated
Box 4, Folder 24	Photograph - Wild Bill Davis, Duke Ellington, undated
Box 4, Folder 25-29	Photograph - Duke Ellington, undated
Box 4, Folder 30	Photograph - Duke Ellington, Ray Nance, undated
Box 4, Folder 31	Photograph - Duke Ellington, Rufus Jones, undated
Box 4, Folder 32-33	Photograph - Montage: Duke Ellington and others, undated
Box 4, Folder 34	Photograph - Mercer Ellington, unidentified individual, undated
Box 4, Folder 35	Photograph - Mercer Ellington, Paul Gonsalves, Russell Procope, Harry Carney, Lawrence Brown, Paul Gonsalves, Cat Anderson, undated
Box 4, Folder 36	Photograph - Mercer Ellington, unidentified individual, Lawrence Brown, Cat Anderson, undated
Box 4, Folder 37	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, undated
Box 4, Folder 38	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, undated
Box 4, Folder 39-41	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, undated
Box 4, Folder 42	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, undated
Box 4, Folder 43	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Chuck Connors, Harold Ashby, Paul Gonsalves, Cootie Williams, undated
Box 4, Folder 44	Photograph - Paul Gonsalves, 2 unidentified individuals, Willie Cook, undated
Box 4, Folder 45	Photograph - Unidentified (possibly Jimmy Grisson), undated
Box 5, Folder 1	Photograph - Jimmy Hamilton, undated
Box 5, Folder 2	Photograph - Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Duke Ellington, undated
Box 5, Folder 3-5	Photograph - Johnny Hodges, undated

Box 5, Folder 6	Photograph - Johnny Hodges, Sam Woodyard, Ben Webster, undated
Box 5, Folder 7	Photograph - Rufus Jones, Paul Gonsalves, Money Johnson, Willie Cook, Harold Ashby, undated
Box 5, Folder 8	Photograph - Rufus Jones, Paul Gonsalves, Money Johnson, Willie Cook, Harold Ashby, undated
Box 5, Folder 9	Photograph - Rufus Jones, Paul Gonsalves, Cootie Williams, Harold Ashby, Chuck Connors, undated
Box 5, Folder 10	Photograph - Money Johnson, Duke Ellington, undated
Box 5, Folder 11	Photograph - Money Johnson, Ben Webster, undated
Box 5, Folder 12	Photograph - Ray Nance, Duke Ellington, undated
Box 5, Folder 13	Photograph - Russell Procope, undated
Box 5, Folder 14	Photograph - Russell Procope, Rufus Jones, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, undated
Box 5, Folder 15	Photograph - Russell Procope, Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown, Paul Gonsalves, undated
Box 5, Folder 16-17	Photograph - Norris Turney, undated
Box 5, Folder 18	Photograph - Tony Watkins, Harold Ashby, Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Chuck Connors, undated
Box 5, Folder 19	Photograph - Ben Webster, undated
Box 5, Folder 20	Photograph - Tom, Whaley, three other unidentified individuals, undated
Box 5, Folder 21-23	Photograph - Cootie Williams, undated
Box 5, Folder 24	Photograph - Cootie Williams, Russell Procope, undated
Box 5, Folder 25	Photograph - Cootie Williams, Willie Cook, undated
Box 5, Folder 26	Photograph - Cootie Williams, unidentified (probably Booty Wood), Harold "Money" Johnson, Duke Ellington, undated
Box 5, Folder 27	Photograph - Cootie Williams, unidentified women, unidentified bassist, Paul Gonsalves, unidentified, Jimmy Hamilton, undated
Box 5, Folder 28	Photograph - Cootie Williams, unidentified woman, unidentified bassist, undated

Box 5, Folder 29	Photograph - 2 unidentified individuals, Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, undated
Box 5, Folder 30-31	Photograph - Sam Woodyard, undated
Box 5, Folder 32	Photograph - Sam Woodyard, Harold Ashby, undated
Box 5, Folder 33	Photograph - Sam Woodyard, Lawrence Brown, Cat Anderson, Photograph - Sam Woodyard, Lawrence Brown, Cat Anderson
Box 5, Folder 34	Photograph - Sam Woodyard, unidentified individual, Chuck Connors, Mercer Ellington, Tony Watkins, unidentified, Russell Procope, Harold Ashby, undated
Box 5, Folder 35	Photograph - Unidentified trombonist, Sam Woodyard, unidentified individual, undated
Box 5, Folder 36	Photograph - Unidentified trombonist, Sam Woodyard, unidentified singer (possibly Jimmy Grissom), undated
Box 5, Folder 37	Photograph - Unidentified singer, undated
Box 5, Folder 38	Photograph - Unidentified women, unidentified bassist, unidentified trumpeter, Ben Webster, undated
Box 2, Folder 15	Photographs - unidentified, undated
Box 2, Folder 16	Playlists, circa 1945
Box 2, Folder 17	Poster - "Duke Ellington Festival," July 1972
Box 3, Folder 6	Publicity Book for Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, undated
Box 2, Folder 18	Publicity Book for Duke Ellington by Irving Mills, undated
Box 2, Folder 19	Transcripts of Radio Broadcasts featuring Duke Ellington, December 1943-September 1945
Box 2, Folder 20	Transcripts of Radio Broadcasts featuring Duke Ellington, October 1945 -March 1946
Box 2, Folder 21	Wants List for Duke Ellington AFRS recordings by Jerry Valburn, 1972