



# Smithsonian

*Anacostia Community Museum*

## Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia, 1800-2002

Aston Gonzalez

2009

Anacostia Community Museum Archives  
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<https://anacostia.si.edu/collection/archives>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Anacostia Community Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia
<b>Date:</b>	1800 - 2002
<b>Identifier:</b>	ACMA.06-020
<b>Creator:</b>	Isaacs, Diane
<b>Extent:</b>	14.75 Linear feet (17 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The collection, which dates from 1800 to 2002 and measures 14.75 linear feet, documents two centuries of the depictions of African Americans in popular culture. The collection is comprised of papers, journals, books, audio visual materials, sheet music, correspondence, photographs and artifacts. Included in the audiovisual series are recordings of Maya Angelou and Alice Walker reading their works.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia was donated to the Anacostia Community Museum in 2003 by Diane Isaacs.

### Preferred Citation

The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia was donated to the Anacostia Community Museum in 2003 by Diane Isaacs.

### Restrictions

Use of the materials requires an appointment. Please contact the archivist to make an appointment: [ACMarchives@si.edu](mailto:ACMarchives@si.edu).

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## Biographical Note

Diane Isaacs was a professor of English and a collector of black memorabilia. She earned her Ph.D. from Teachers College at Columbia University in 1982 after she wrote a doctoral thesis entitled "Ann Petry's Life and Art: Piercing the Stereotypes." As a professor at Fordham College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Minnesota, Isaacs taught English courses throughout the 1980s and 1990s. She was a scholar of the Harlem Renaissance and published essays and articles pertaining to the contributions that African-American writers made to U.S. culture.

Isaacs married Professor Jay Leon Halio, another professor of English at the University of Delaware, on May 26, 2002 at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection documents various elements of African American history. The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia is arranged into three series: Printed Materials, Audio Visual Materials, and Miscellaneous. Material in each folder is arranged in chronological order from 1800 through 2002.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged by into three Series: (1) Printed Materials, (2) Audiovisual Material, and (3) Miscellaneous.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- African American authors
- African Americans
- Children's stories
- Stereotypes (Social psychology) in advertising

### Types of Materials:

- Audiovisual materials
- Books
- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Periodicals
- Photographic prints
- Postcards
- Sheet music

### Names:

- Giovanni, Nikki
- Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967
- Hurston, Zora Neale
- Myers, Walter Dean, 1937-
- Petry, Ann, 1908-1997
- Ringgold, Faith
- Walker, Alice, 1944-
- Wright, Richard, 1908-1960

### Preferred Titles:

- Black literature and culture*

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Printed Materials, 1800-2009; undated

#### 13.25 Linear feet

**Scope and Contents:** This series is the largest in the Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia and covers the period from 1800 to 2002. It contains books, journals, periodicals, stationery materials, and sheet music. The materials span topics such as African--american education, women's issues, racial stereotypes, and literary and artistic contributions. Finally, some of the materials explore the depictions of African--americans during the eras of Reconstruction and Jim Crow.

#### 1.1: Books

##### 10.5 Linear feet

**Scope and Contents:** This subseries contains over 200 books which are organized alphabetically by the author's last name. These books span a diverse range of topics such as black culture, women's issues, history, religion, poetry, literature, Black memorabilia, children's stories, and theatre. This subseries exemplifies the range of the topics covered in the Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia and also highlights the importance African--american women's role as writers, artists, and leaders in American history.

Box 1	A-C
Box 2	C-F
Box 3	F-G
Box 4	G-H
Box 5	H-K
Box 6	K-M
Box 7	M-P
Box 8	P-S
Box 9	S-W
Box 10	W-Y
Box 11	C-L (Oversize)

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## 1.2: Journals, 1984 - 2009

### 1 Linear foot

**Scope and Contents:** Twenty--our issues of African American Review, Callaloo, In Profile, and Sage published from the 1984 to the present are part of the Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia. They contain articles about African--merican history, Black women's history, and Black internationalism.

Box 12	African-American Review-- Sage, 1984 - 2009
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## 1.3: Periodicals, 1800 - 2002

### 1.75 Linear feet

#### Box 13

**Scope and Contents:** This subseries also contains newspapers, magazines, advertisements from periodicals, and cartoons. Many of the newspapers and newspaper articles are from national newspapers. Some are historic 19th century articles and illustrations published in Harper's Weekly and other publications. Many of the older articles and clippings document elements of African--merican education and social life. The more recent articles often detail the artistic accomplishments of African--merican men and women.

Box 13	Magazines, 1973 (1988)-1995
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Box 14	Original Periodical Clippings, 1800 (1900)-1951
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Box 15, Folder 1	Original Periodical Articles, 1979 (2000)-2002
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Box 15, Folder 2	Reproductions of Periodical Articles, 1978 (2000)-2002
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## 1.4: Stationery Materials, 1907-2000; undated

### 0.36 Linear feet

**Scope and Contents:** This subseries also contains many postcards that have images of stereotyped black children and adults printed on them. Others use photographs as a sort of documentary tool to show its recipient the economic circumstances faced by African--mericans in the South. The series also contains three postcards from France and one postcard from England which display stereotyped and caricatured images of African--escended people. Additionally, greeting cards and birthday cards that feature Black males gambling and serving food are also in the Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia. These cards and postcards date from 1893 until 2000.

Box 15, Folder 4	Cachet Envelopes, 1940 (1975)-1988
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Box 15, Folder 4	Postcards, (1907-1913)-2000
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Box 15, Folder 5	Greeting Cards, undated
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Box 15, Folder 6	Trade Cards, 1893; undated
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## 1.5: Pamphlets, 1923-2002; undated

### 0.08 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia has a small but broad collection of booklets and posters. There are a few teacher's guides and paper presentations related to African--merican history. Most of the materials in this sub series are academic and educational.

Box 15, Folder 7	Denison's Blackface Series, 1923
Box 15, Folder 8	Dinah's Southern Dinner Menu, 1936
Box 15, Folder 9	Academic Booklets, 1947 - 1981
Box 15, Folder 10	Jacob Lawrence: American Painter, 1987
Box 15, Folder 11	Florida Black Heritage Trail, 1991
Box 15, Folder 12	Educational Guides, 1993; undated
Box 15, Folder 13	National Poetry Month Poster, 2001
Box 15, Folder 14	African American History and Culture Book Pamphlet, 2002
Box 15, Folder 15	Polk County Theater Program, 2002

## 1.6: Sheet Music, 1914 - 1942

### 0.08 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: The collection also contains six scores of sheet music for ragtime, vaudeville, and blues music dating from 1914 to 1942. The covers and lyrics of the sheet music often depict stereotypes of African--mericans.

Box 11, Folder 1	"When the War Breaks Out in Mexico I'm Going to Go to Montreal", 1914
Box 11, Folder 1	"They Made It Twice As Nice As Paradise, And They Called It Dixieland", 1916
Box 11, Folder 1	"Pray for the Lights to Go Out: A Negro Shouting Song", 1916
Box 11, Folder 1	"Remem'bring", 1923
Box 11, Folder 1	"Ill Wind", 1934
Box 11, Folder 1	"The Saint Louis Blues: 'The International Melody'", 1942

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## Series 2: Audio Visual Materials, 1976-2002; undated

*1 Linear foot*

Scope and Contents: The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia contains cassette tapes that contain readings of fiction and non fiction books written by Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Terry McMillan, Dinesh D'Souza, and others. The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia also contains one compact disc (CD) of "Profile America: 60 Daily Features about America," from the Radio Service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

This series also contains VHS videos with information about Faith Ringgold, Zora Neale Hurston, African--merican World War II heroes, and others. The Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia also contains one DVD entitled "A Lesson Before Dying."

Box 16	African--American Heroes of World War II (VHS), 1995
Box 16; Box 16	drylongso (VHS), 2000
Box 16; Box 16	Faith Ringgold: The Last Story Quilt (VHS), 1992
Box 16; Box 16	Faith Ringgold Paints Crown Heights (VHS), 1996
Box 16; Box 16	Jacob Lawrence: The Glory of Expression (VHS), 1993
Box 16; Box 16	A Lesson Before Dying (DVD), 1999
Box 16; Box 16	A Raisin in the Sun (VHS), 1985
Box 16; Box 16	Zora is my Name! (VHS), 1989
Box 16; Box 16	Untitled (VHS, with adhesive note attached), undated
Box 16; Box 16	Angelou, Even the Stars Look Lonesome (audiocass.), 1997
Box 16	Angelou, The Heart of a Woman (audiocass.), 1997
Box 16	D'Souza, The End of Racism (audiocass.), 1995



Box 16	Angelou: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (audiocass.), 1996
Box 16	Ellison, Invisible Man (audiocass.), 1976
Box 16	Johnson, Dreamer (audiocass.), 1998
Box 16	McBride, Miracle at St. Anna (audiocass.), 2002
Box 16	McMillan, A Day Late and a Dollar Short (audiocass.), 2001
Box 17	McMillan, Disappearing Acts (audiocass.), 1989
Box 17	McMillan, How Stella Got Her Groove Back (audiocass.), 1996
Box 17	McMillan, Mama (audiocass.), 1994
Box 17	McMillan, Waiting to Exhale (audiocass.), 1992
Box 17	Profile America : 60 Daily Features About America (CD), 1998
Box 17	Walker, By the Light of My Father's Smile (audiocass.), 1998
Box 17	Walker, A Celebration of Black Women in Literature (audioca.), 1981
Box 17	anonymous, Literature of the Black Experience (audiocass.), 1981

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## Series 3: Miscellaneous, 1965-1996; undated

### 0.16 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: Diane Isaacs Collection of Black Memorabilia contains two letters (with accompanying materials) written to Diane Isaacs from two of her colleagues when she was a professor. It also contains assorted items that were collected by her.

Box 11, Folder 2	Santa Anita Fan, undated
Box 15, Folder 16	Black Sambo Figure, undated
Box 15, Folder 17	Famous Slugger Yearbook, 1965
Box 15, Folder 18	Bibliography of Black Women Writers (with letter), 1981
Box 15, Folder 19	75th Jubilee Photograph (with letters), 1985
Box 15, Folder 20	Playing Cards, 1992
Box 15, Folder 21	Ruffles Bag, 1996

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