



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Garnette Hamilton Collection

NMAH.AC.0273

Mona Morris

1987

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Garnette Hamilton Collection
Date:	1957-1987.
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0273
Creator:	Hamilton, Garnette Jackson, Rose Marie
Extent:	0.3 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Hamilton Papers were received from Mrs. Garnette O. Hamilton of Canton, Ohio in August, 1987. An additional notebook of Hobo poetry was received from its compiler, Ms. Rose Marie Jackson, in January, 1989.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Mona Morris, 1987

Preferred Citation

Garnette Hamilton Papers, 1957-1987, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical Note

Garnette Olive Hamilton was crowned Queen of the Hoboes for life in 1957. Her official title is "Queen of the Knights of the Road, Air and Seven Seas Inc." In 1955 her nephew joined the Hoboes of America Organization, and her love of travel and interest in this unusual organization soon prompted her to join also. Hamilton became one of the first women to be accepted into the organization.

The Hoboes of America Organization was formed in 1908 by Jeff Davis. The organization's purpose was to act as a non profit service group to aid local charities as well as to encourage runaways to return home. In 1957, Hamilton's good deeds for others in need, as well as her friendliness, earned her the title of Queen of the Hoboes for Life in

the United States, Canada, and the British Isles, as well as Empress of India. She gave many interviews as Queen of the Hoboes and appeared on Jack Linkletter's Show in 1959. Hamilton has been the editor and publisher of the Hobo Newsletter for the last seven years and remains Queen of the Hoboes (1988).

The items shown here are from a collection of hobo documents and memorabilia donated by Garnette Olive Hamilton.

Scope and Contents

The material consists of newspaper articles, photographs, pamphlets, souvenirs, and newsletters on Hamilton's reign as Queen of the Hoboes as well as a brief history of the Hoboes of America Organization from 1908-1987. Among such items are newspaper articles on Garnette Hamilton herself, Hoboes of America's motto, accomplishments, responsibilities, requirements for admission, and the meaning of the word hobo. This last point was very important to Hamilton and the Organization. In almost every article, Mrs. Hamilton stressed the difference between the words hobo, tramp, and bum. These words do not mean the same thing and Mrs. Hamilton wanted to make sure the public was informed of these differences. The photographs concentrated on Hamilton and the Hoboes of America's annual conventions. Also included are stubs and souvenirs of past conventions. The newsletters contain poetry written by hoboes, letters to the editor (Hamilton), and personal notes on various members. Each newsletter was dedicated to a different hobo member.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Community service -- 20th century
- Hoboes
- Newspapers -- 20th century
- Retirees
- Runaway teenagers -- 1950-1990
- Service organizations
- Tramps -- 1940-1990
- Travel -- 1950-1990

Types of Materials:

- Black-and-white photographic prints -- Silver gelatin -- 1950-2000
- Papers -- 1950-1990
- Scrapbooks -- 1950-2000

Names:

- Davis, Jeff
- Hoboes of America (organization).

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1-2	Newspaper articles, 1957-1987
Box 1, Folder 3	Photographs, circa 1960-1965
Box 1, Folder 4	Souvenirs of Conventions, circa 1960-1987
Box 1, Folder 5	Newsletters, 1960-1981
Box 1, Folder 6	Newsletters, 1981-1983
Box 1, Folder 7	Newsletters, 1983-1985
Box 1, Folder 8	Newsletters, 1985-1987
Box 1, Folder 9	Pamphlets, 1961
Box 2, Folder 1	Scrapbook, 1957-1974
Box 2, Folder 2	Scrapbook, 1975-1979
Box 3, Folder 1	Jackson, Rosemarie. Hobo Tales of the Open Road. Unpublished manuscript and miscellaneous poems.