



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

## Guide to the Jeni LeGon Papers

NMAH.AC.0829

Vanessa Broussard Simmons

2002

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Jeni LeGon Papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0829
<b>Date:</b>	1930 - 2002
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Cubic foot (1 box, includes photographs)
<b>Creator:</b>	LeGon, Jeni, 1916-
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The collection documents the career of Jeni LeGon as a dancer, dance instructor and actress.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Jeni LeGon in 2002.

### Other Finding Aids

Inventory available; contact the Archives Center for more information.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, 2002.

### Preferred Citation

Jeni LeGon Papers, 1930s-2002, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Jeni LeGon has been credited as being one of the first African-American women to establish a solo career in tap. Born Jennie Bell in Chicago, Illinois she began in musical theater at the age of thirteen. Her long career has allowed her to work with well-known artists including Count Basie, Leonard Reed, Ethel Waters, Al Jolson, Fred Astaire, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Fats Waller. She died on December 7, 2012 at the age of ninety-six.

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## Scope and Contents

Papers documenting LeGon's career as an actress and dancer. The collection includes biographical information; letters; photographs of LeGon, her students, and other dancers with whom she worked, including Bill "Bojangles" Robinson"; her early travel itineraries, schedules and personal calendars; an honorary doctoral degree; programs; advertisements and invitations to dance events; a scrapbook of clippings; and clippings and articles.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series.

Series 1, Early Career, 1930s

Series 2, Materials relating to Movie Performances, 1935-1945

Series 3, Dance Instruction and Performances, 1953-2002

Series 4, Tributes and Awards, 1979-2002

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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:

- Actresses
- African American women
- African American women entertainers
- Dance in motion pictures, television, etc.
- Dance, Black
- Dancers
- Tap dancing

Types of Materials:

- Advertisements -- 20th century
- Clippings
- Itineraries
- Letters (correspondence) -- 20th century.

Photographs -- 20th century  
Programs -- 1930-2000

Names:

Robinson, Bill, 1878-1949

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Early Career , 1930s

Box 1, Folder 1	Articles
Box 3, Folder 1	Articles
Box 1, Folder 2	Publicity photographs <a href="#">Image(s): 1 2 Publicity photographs</a>
Box 3, Folder 9	Publicity photographs, undated

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## Series 2: Materials relating to Movie Performances , 1935-1945, undated

Box 1, Folder 3	Hooray for Love, 1935 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 3, Folder 4	Hi--De-Ho, 1945
Box 1, Folder 8	Early to Bed, 1943
Box OS 1	incoln Theater, 1938
Box 3, Folder 3	Hooray for Love, 1935
Box 3, Folder 4	Ali Baba Goes to Town, 1937
Box 1, Folder 4	Broadway Melody, 1935
Box 1, Folder 5	Follow the Sun, 1936
Box 1, Folder 6	Dishonour Bright, 1936 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	Ali Baba Goes to Town, 1937

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**Series 3: Dance Instruction and Performances , 1953-2002, undated***Box 3*

Box 1, Folder 9	Ballet Teens Dance Company, Los Angeles, California, 1953
Box 1, Folder 10	Ed Sullivan Show, correspondence relating to possible show performance, 1960
Box 1, Folder 11	Jazz Caribe, 1965
Box 1, Folder 12	Calendar, 1966
Box 1, Folder 13	Calendar, 1967
Box 1, Folder 14	Urban Gateways school program, 1967-1968
Box 1, Folder 15	Jazz Caribe, 1968
Box 1, Folder 16	Jazz Caribe, 1969
Box 1, Folder 17	Jazz Caribe, 1972
Box 1, Folder 18	Jazz Caribe, 1977
Box 1, Folder 19	Photographs, Jazz Caribe, undated
Box 1, Folder 20	Troupe One Youth Theater Group, 1970s
Box 1, Folder 21	Troupe One Youth Theatre Group, 1976-1985
Box 1, Folder 22	Troupe One Youth Theatre Group, 1979
Box 1, Folder 23	Roots and All That Jazz, 1982
Box 3, Folder 6	Pelican Players, 1982
Box 3, Folder 3	Troupe One, 1984
Box 3, Folder 5	Troupe One, undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Pelican Players, 1985
Box 1, Folder 25	Jazz Cinq, 1985-1988
Box 1, Folder 26	Roots and All That Jazz, 1986
Box 1, Folder 27	All Tap Nightclub Review, 1989-1991
Box 1, Folder 28	National Tap Dance Festival, 1993
Box 1, Folder 29	New Orleans Jazz Dance Festival, 2001



Box 1, Folder 29	Festivals and Performances, 2002
Box 3, Folder 7	Masters of Tap, 2002
Box 3, Folder 8	Private club performances, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	African American Film Marketplace Honor, 1998

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## Series 4: Tributes and Awards, 1979-2002

Box 1, Folder 30	Leo Birthday Week, 1979
Box 1, Folder 31	Articles about achievement, 1984
Box 1, Folder 32	Articles about achievement, 1987
Box 1, Folder 33	Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, 1987
Box 1, Folder 34	Articles about achievement , 1988
Box 1, Folder 35	Articles about achievement, 1989
Box 1, Folder 36	Marla Gibbs 'Choice Award', 1992
Box 2, Folder 1	Article relating to book From Harlem to Hollywood, 1995
Box 2, Folder 2	Articles about achievement, 1997
Box 2, Folder 4	Articles about Living in a Great Big Way film, 1999
Box 2, Folder 5	Tributes, 2000
Box 2, Folder 6	Flo-Bert Lifetime Achievement Awards, 2001
Box 2, Folder 7	Honorary Degree of Doctor of Performing Arts, Oklahoma City University, 2002
Box 2, Folder 8	Beacon of Freedom Award, 2002
	Articles about achievement, 2002
Box 3, Folder 9	Tributes, 1999-2002

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