



Smithsonian

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

## Hannah Sylvester Papers

NMAH.AC.1611

Vanessa Broussard Simmons

2025

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Hannah Sylvester Papers
<b>Date:</b>	1961-1962, undated
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1611
<b>Source:</b>	Swann Auction Galleries (Seller)
<b>Creator:</b>	Sylvester, Hannah, 1903-1973 (Singer)
<b>Extent:</b>	.15 Cubic feet (1 box)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Papers document the personal life and professional career of Blues singer and dancer Hannah Sylvester.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection purchased at Swann Galleries, New York City, in March 2024.

### Related Materials

#### **Archives Center, National Museum of American History**

Irving Berlin Collection, NMAH.AC.0257

Sam DeVincent Collection of Illustrated American Sheet Music, Series 3: African-American Music, NMAH.AC.0300.S03

Frank Schiffman Apollo Theatre Collection, NMAH.AC.0540

Jonas Bernholm Rhythm and Blues Collection, NMAH.AC.0551

Ray McKinley Music and Ephemera, NMAH.AC.0635

Bernice Johnson Reagon Collection of the African American Sacred Music Tradition, NMAH.AC.0653

Fletcher and Horace Henderson Music and Photographs, NMAH.AC.0797

William Russo Music and Personal Papers, NMAH.AC.0845

Leonard Gaskin Papers, NMAH.AC.0900

Bobby Tucker Papers, NMAH.AC.1141

Donald J. Stubblebine Collection of Theater and Motion Picture Music and Ephemera, NMAH.AC.1211

Duncan P. Schiedt Photograph Collection, NMAH.AC.1323

Robert "Mack" McCormick Collection, NMAH.AC.1485

## **Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage**

Moses and Frances Asch Collection, CFCH.ASCH

Fast Folk Musical Magazine, CFCH.FFMM

Smithsonian Folklife Festival Records: 2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, CFCH.SFF.2011

### **Processing Information**

Collection processed by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, 2024; finding aid encoded by Meredith Clowse, intern, 2024.

### **Preferred Citation**

Hannah Sylvester Papers, 1961-1962, undated, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

### **Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Conditions Governing Use**

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## **Content Description**

Papers document the personal life and professional career of Hannah Sylvester [Genevia Scott], a Blues singer, who predominantly toured the northeastern part of the country and Canada performing with well-known African American bands. Her life is described in a handwritten manuscript which details her early days as a three-year girl performing for Amateur Nite in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It follows her travels, performances, and recordings ending in 1962 with her appearances in the X-Glamour Girls Revue in New York City. There is little mention of family only noting the early deaths of her parents or in the context of her travels or work. Also found among the materials is a discography documenting her vocal recordings primarily in the 1920s for the Pathé Actuelle, Olympic, Paramount, New Emerson, Puritan, and Spivey record labels. In addition, there are a few photographs of Sylvester later in life.

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## **Arrangement**

Collection is arranged in one series.

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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 dancers
- African American music -- 20th century
- African American women
- African American women -- Biography
- African American women jazz singers

African American women singers  
Blues (Music)  
Blues (Music) -- 1920-1930.  
Jazz  
Musical theater  
Musicals -- United States.  
Night clubs -- 1930-1940  
Performers  
Popular music -- African American influences  
Sound recording industry  
Vaudeville -- 1930-1940  
Women dancers

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs  
Notes  
Photographs

Names:

Swann Auction Galleries

Places:

Atlantic City (N.J.) -- 1920-1940  
New York (State) -- New York City

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## Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical notes, 1962-06-01, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Discography, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Photographs, 1961, undated