

Roger D. Abrahams Papers, Folklore Archives

4007

Finding aid prepared by Paige Randazzo.

Last updated on March 02, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

08/04/2016

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Summary Information

| | |
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| Repository | University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives |
| Creator | Abrahams, Roger D., b. 1933 |
| Title | Roger D. Abrahams Papers, Folklore Archives |
| Call number | 4007 |
| Date [inclusive] | 1960-1994 |
| Extent | 3 linear foot |
| Language | English |
| Abstract | <p>Roger D. Abrahams is a native of Philadelphia, PA. He received his B.A. at Swarthmore College, M.A. at Columbia University, and Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1986 he came to teach in the English and Anthropology Departments at the University of Pennsylvania following many years at the University of Texas and Scripps and Pitzer Colleges. While at Penn he served as the Founding Director for the Center for Folklore and Ethnography. The Roger D. Abrahams Collection consists of three linear feet of textual records related to his research in the Caribbean Islands and publications from throughout his career. Reel-to-reel tape recordings of songs, stories, and poems from the Caribbean, as well as photographic slides and negatives are also included in the collection.</p> |

Biography/History

Roger D. Abrahams, born June 12, 1933 in Philadelphia, PA, is an American anthropologist and folklorist and former president of the American Folklore Association. He obtained a B.A. in English from Swarthmore College in 1955 before going on to receive an M.A. in Literature and Folklore from Columbia University in 1959. Two years later he received a Ph.D. also in Literature and Folklore from the University of Pennsylvania. For three years beginning in 1963, Abrahams was an instructor in the English Department of the University of Texas. He was subsequently promoted to assistant professor (1963-1966) and associate professor (1966-1969) and held positions in both the English and Anthropology Departments. During his time at the University of Texas, Abrahams served as the Associate Director for the Center for Intercultural Studies in Folklore and Oral History (1968-1970) as well as a Director for the Afro-American Research Institute. In 1974, Abrahams was appointed chairman of the English Department chairman, a position he held for five years. From 1979 to 1985 he served as the Alexander H. Kenan Professor of Humanities and Anthropology at Scripps and Pitzer Colleges, before leaving to return to the University of Pennsylvania in 1986. At the University of Pennsylvania he served as the Hum Rosen Professor of Folklore and Folklife (1989-2002), as well as the Founding Director for the Center for Folklore and Ethnography (1999-2002). He retired from academia in 2002.

Abrahams has also served in numerous positions outside of his career in academics. Between 1975 and 1982 Abrahams served as a panelist for the National Endowment of the Humanities' Special Project in Education and the National Endowment for the Arts' Artist-in-the-Schools programs. He also served as the editor for the reprint series of "The Ethnography of Performance" and as a member of the advisory and editorial boards of the Encyclopedia of American Ethnicity, Wayne State Publications in Folklore, and the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Abrahams' research has focused on African and African Diaspora folkloric concepts and ideas. Abrahams has published twenty-one books and monographs, sixty book chapters and introductions, sixty-four scholarly articles, six encyclopedia and handbook entries, and twenty-five "notes" sections in various publications. The Roger D. Abrahams Collection consists of three linear feet of textual records covering Abrahams' research in the Caribbean islands of Nevis and St. Kitts, St. Vincent, and Tobago (1965-1968), as well as correspondence, manuscripts, and publications from throughout his career. The collection also includes ___ reel-to-reel tape recordings and photographic slides and prints.

Scope and Contents

The Roger D. Abrahams Collection consists of three linear feet of textual records covering Abrahams' research in the Caribbean islands of Nevis and St. Kitts, St. Vincent, and Tobago (1965-1968), as well as correspondence, manuscripts, and publications from throughout his career. The collection also includes ___ reel-to-reel tape recordings and photographic slides and prints.

The Roger D. Abrahams Collection is associated with The University of Pennsylvania Folklore Archives. The University of Pennsylvania Folklore Archives was originally formed around the 1950s recordings from Jamaica and Newfoundland by J. Granville Leach, founder of the Folklore graduate program. The permanent archives of the Folklore Department were later established in 1970 and were active until the last students completed coursework in 2006. In 2010, the archives were transferred to the Penn Museum Archives.

The original folder titles and organization were maintained throughout most of the collection. Loose, unidentified, and miscellaneous records were re-integrated into the collection where possible.

The reel-to-reel tape recordings comprise songs, stories, poems, etc., collected by Abrahams in Tobago,

St. Vincent, and Nevis in 1965 and 1966.

The field notes series contains 17 notebooks and 2 folders of loose field notes containing written transcriptions and notes collected from each Caribbean island. The notes are arranged by location and by topic. Most have original titles and numbering sequence established by Abrahams. 0.6 linear feet.

The transcriptions were produced from the content of the audio recordings. They consist of handwritten and typed stories, songs, poems, etc. Many of the transcriptions contain varying versions of the same story. Two folders consist of unidentified transcriptions. The series also includes riddles. 1 linear foot.

The notes and analysis series contains mostly handwritten ideas and thoughts on subjects of interest to Abrahams. A number of these topics were also turned by Abrahams into publications. 0.5 linear feet.

Correspondence is the smallest series. Abrahams did not keep many letters. Much of Abrahams' correspondence is related to his publications, and these letters can be found in the manuscripts and publications series. 0.1 linear feet.

The manuscripts and publications series consists of books, articles, and reviews by Abrahams, as well as contributions to the works by others. The writings have been arranged chronologically, except for undated manuscripts, which are at the beginning. The series also includes correspondence relating to the publications. 0.8 linear feet.

Visual materials consist of photographic prints and 35mm color slides. These are not yet processed.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

08/04/2016

Finding aid prepared by Paige Randazzo.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Field notes
- Manuscripts for publication
- Photographs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Trinidad and Tobago

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Abrahams, Roger D., b. 1933
- Agree, Peter
- Cray, Ed, b. 1933
- Osterud, Nancy Grey, b. 1948

SUBJECT(S)

- Ethnology
- Folklore
- Games
- Material culture

Collection Inventory

FIELD NOTES 1965-1966.

| | Box |
|---|-----|
| Notebook: Nevis Collection I. | 1 |
| Notebook: Nevis Collection II. | 1 |
| Notebook: Nevis Collection III. | 1 |
| Typed Field Notes: Nevis and St. Kitts. | 1 |
| St. Kitts- Nevis The Gingerland Gem. | 1 |
| Nevis Notes. | 1 |
| Notebooks: St. Vincent 1 of 2. | 1 |
| Notebooks: St. Vincent 2 of 2. | 1 |
| Notebooks: Tobago Day Book. | 1 |
| Notebook I: Rhymes and Riddles. | 1 |
| Notebook II: Songs. | 1 |
| Notebook III: Stories. | 1 |
| Notebooks IV: Games. | 1 |
| Notebooks misc. | 1 |

TRANSCRIPTIONS (1962-1968, N.D.).

| | Box |
|-------------------|-----|
| Tobago 1 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 4 (1966). | 1 |
| Tobago 7 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 12 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 13 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 14 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 16 (1965). | 1 |
| Tobago 17 (1965). | 1 |
| [Tobago 18]. | 1 |
| Tobago 20 (1965). | 1 |
| [Tobago Misc.]. | 1 |
| Nevis (1962). | 1 |
| Nevis 1 (n.d.). | 1 |
| Nevis 8 (1966). | 1 |
| Nevis 9a (1966). | 1 |
| Nevis 9b (1966). | 1 |
| Nevis 10a (1966). | 1 |

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| Nevis 10b (1966). | 1 |
| Nevis 11 (1966). | 1 |
| [Nevis 16]. | 1 |
| [Nevis 19]. | 1 |
| [Nevis 20]. | 1 |
| Nevis 30 (1966). | 1 |
| Nevis: Games and Other. | 1 |
| Nevis: Dolly Hanley misc. | 1 |
| Nevis: Jerry Ward misc. | 1 |
| [Nevis] David and Goliath 1 of 2. | 1 |
| [Nevis] David and Goliath 2 of 2. | 1 |
| Nevis misc. | 1 |
| St. Vincent 1 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 3 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 4 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 5 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 6 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 7 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 8 (1966). | 1 |

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| St. Vincent 10 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 13 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 17 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 18 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 19 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 20 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 21 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 22 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent 23 (1966). | 1 |
| St. Vincent Interviews (1968). | 2 |
| St. Vincent misc. | 2 |
| Southwest Los Angeles (1963). | 2 |
| Unidentified Transcriptions 1 of 2. | 2 |
| Unidentified Transcriptions 2 of 2. | 2 |
| U.S. Riddles 1 of 3. | 2 |
| U.S. Riddles 2 of 3. | 2 |
| U.S. Riddles 3 of 3. | 2 |
| World Riddles 1 of 6. | 2 |
| World Riddles 2 of 6. | 2 |

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|-----------------------------|---|
| World Riddles 3 of 6. | 2 |
| World Riddles 4 of 6. | 2 |
| World Riddles 5 of 6. | 2 |
| World Riddles 6 of 6. | 2 |
| Reverse Riddles 1 of 2. | 2 |
| Reverse Riddles 2 of 2. | 2 |
| Riddles and Puzzles 1 of 2. | 2 |
| Riddles and Puzzles 2 of 2. | 2 |

NOTES AND ANALYSIS.

| | Box |
|---|-----|
| Dance of Death-Notes on Reading, etc. | 2 |
| Detectives and Deviance. | 2 |
| Games and Play-Theoretical. | 2 |
| Hausa Talking and Performance. | 2 |
| Notes on tea meetings, ceremonial occasions, etc. | 2 |
| Plantation House and Yard. | 2 |
| Play and Games. | 2 |

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|--------------------------|---|
| Plot and Tale. | 2 |
| Proverb Notes. | 2 |
| Pyramid Parties. | 2 |
| Story and Myth. | 2 |
| A teaching experiment. | 2 |
| Van paper. | 2 |
| Vocabulary of Intensity. | 2 |
| Misc. Notes 1 of 3. | 2 |
| Misc. Notes 2 of 3. | 2 |
| Misc. Notes 3 of 3. | 2 |

CORRESPONDENCE CA. 1962-2004.

| | Box |
|--|-----|
| Cray, Ed (ca. 1964-1971). | 2 |
| Dorson Memorial Essay Prize (ca. 1970-1984). | 2 |
| Hawes, Bess- "This is Robert" (1962). | 2 |
| Osterud and Agree (ca. 2002-2004). | 2 |
| Nevis Correspondence (1962). | 2 |

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|-----------------------|---|
| Misc. Correspondence. | 2 |
|-----------------------|---|

MANUSCRIPTS AND PUBLICATIONS (1960-1994).

| | Box |
|--|-----|
| American Folklore and Cultural Pluralism (N.D.). | 2 |
| Books as Literary Performances (N.D.). | 2 |
| Cultural Capital (N.D.). | 2 |
| Dance of Death (N.D.). | 2 |
| Fable and Parable Devices of Caution (N.D.). | 2 |
| Folklore Chapters Tradition (N.D.). | 2 |
| Intruder in the Dusk (N.D.). | 2 |
| On the Relationship of Short Narratives (N.D.). | 2 |
| Power of Positive Regression (N.D.). | 2 |
| Riddles (N.D.). | 2 |
| Story Paper (N.D.). | 2 |
| A Study of the Derby Ram Tradition (N.D.). | 2 |
| [Talk and Performance: Incomplete Manuscript]. | 2 |
| A West Indies Christmas (N.D.). | 3 |

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|---|---|
| Mnemonics (ca. 1960). | 3 |
| Review: Williams and Lloyd, National Music (1960). | 3 |
| Mission Reviews and Comments: The mission of the Archive of Folk Song (1961). | 3 |
| The Changing Concept of the Negro Hero (1962). | 3 |
| Playing the Dozens (1962). | 3 |
| The “catch” in Negro Philadelphia (1963). | 3 |
| Folklore in Culture: Notes toward an analytic method (1963). | 3 |
| Twangs (ca. 1963). | 3 |
| On Proverb Collecting and Proverb Collections (1967). | 3 |
| Political Jokes on East Germany (1967). | 3 |
| Report on the Symposium “The Formation of Folklore Traditions” (1967). | 3 |
| The Shaping of Folklore Traditions in the British West Indies (1967). | 3 |
| Charles Walters - West Indian Autolycus (1968). | 3 |
| Public Drama and Common Values in Three Caribbean Islands (1968). | 3 |
| Pull out your Purse (1968). | 3 |
| Rhetoric of Everyday Life (1968). | 3 |
| On Meaning and Gaming (1969). | 3 |
| Review: West Indian Music on Records (ca. 1969). | 3 |
| Can you dig it? (1970). | 3 |

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|---|---|
| Rapping and Clapping (1970). | 3 |
| Such Matters as Every Man Should Know (1970). | 3 |
| Sense and Nonsense (1971). | 3 |
| Training of the Man of Words in Talking Sweet (1972). | 3 |
| Deep the Water, Shallow the Shore (1974) 1 of 2. | 3 |
| Deep the Water, Shallow the Shore (1974) 2 of 2. | 3 |
| Negotiating Respect (1975). | 3 |
| Man as Animal (1976). | 3 |
| The Inaugural Square Dance Books Considered (1977). | 3 |
| Literary Use of Proverbs (1977). | 3 |
| The Riddle of the Poisoned Animal (1977). | 3 |
| Toward an Enactment-centered Theory of Folklore (1977). | 3 |
| Afro-Caribbean Culture and the South: Music with Movement (1978). | 3 |
| Capital Talk (1978). | 3 |
| Folklore textbook (ca. 1978). | 3 |
| Moving in America (1978). | 3 |
| Review: Wilson, Peter J. - Reputation vs. Respectability (1979). | 3 |
| Riddles which Tell Stories in Honour of Herbert Halpert (1980). | 3 |
| And Other Neighborly Names (1981). | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| On Celebrations (1982). | 3 |
| Play and Games (1982). | 3 |
| A Riddling on St. Vincent (1983). | 3 |
| Play in the Face of Death (ca. 1985). | 3 |
| Pragmatism and Folklore of Experience (1985). | 3 |
| Preface: Italian Folktales in America (ca. 1985). | 3 |
| Riddle, Almeda James. Grove Dictionary (ca. 1985). | 3 |
| Child Ballads in the West Indies (1987). | 3 |
| Rough Sincerities (1988). | 3 |
| Representative Man: Richard Dorson, Americanist (1989). | 3 |
| Turner Preface (ca. 1994). | 3 |
| Misc. manuscripts. | 3 |

PHOTOGRAPHS.

REEL-TO-REEL TAPES.