

AFRICANA HERITAGE

The New York Public Library • Volume 10, No. 1, 2010 • Where Every Month Is Black History Month

SPOTLIGHT ON THE COLLECTIONS

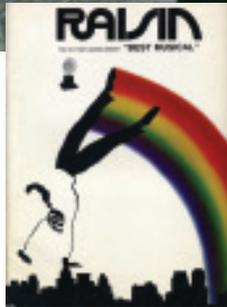
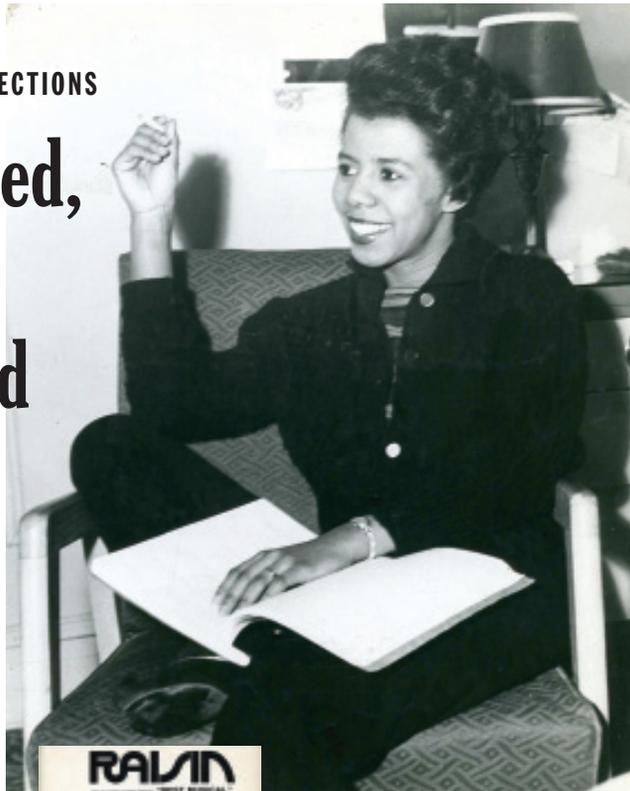
Young, Gifted, Black and Complicated

The Question of Lorraine Hansberry's Legacy

BY STEVEN G. FULLWOOD*

In 1984, scholar and former editor of *The Black Collegian*, Kalamu ya Salaam, published a rather probing article on Lorraine Hansberry, in which he encouraged a re-reading of her work and legacy. Salaam points to omissions of Hansberry's groundbreaking work in various anthologies of black literature during the Black Arts Movement suggesting the oversight was due primarily to her death at age 35, and that her work was often seen as "non-Black," "white-oriented," "commercial." He posits intriguing reasons why, after nearly two decades after her death, Hansberry's significance as a writer and intellect of almost uncanny and prophetic vision, she had yet to be scrutinized or acknowledged for her intellectual and creative works.

However Salaam's oversights were as interesting. In 1979 *Freedomways* published



Photographer: Milton Meltzer. Lorraine Hansberry Portrait Collection, Photographs and Prints Division.

Author and playwright Lorraine Hansberry. The 1974 program cover for *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hansberry's Tony Award-winning play.

"Lorraine Hansberry: Art of Thunder, Vision of Light," a special issue on Hansberry and her work featuring rich, insightful, and sometimes blistering essays by James Baldwin, Woodie King, Jr., Julian Mayfield, Adrienne Rich, and Margaret Wilkerson. In the journal's introductory essay, "Lorraine Hansberry: To Reclaim Her Legacy," Jean Carey Bond describes Hansberry as "born into material comfort, but baptized in social responsibility; intensely individual in her attitudes and behavior, yet sensitive to the wills and aspirations of a whole people; a lover of life, yet stalked by death..." Mayfield recalled the playwright's clear-eyed perspective on celebrity, quoting her response to handling talk shows, "I figure the best way to approach [it]

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HERITAGE WATCH

Rediscovering Algeria

Last July at the invitation of the Minister of Culture of Algeria I attended the 40th Anniversary Festival of Pan African Culture in Algiers, Algeria. I was part of a delegation of African Americans that was led by Dr. Manthia Diawara, Emeritus Director of the Africana Studies Program at New York University. Some 30-40 of us from the United States were counted among the 5-8000 visitors/participants in the festival from Africa and its Diaspora. Over the course of the 15-day festival, literally millions of enthusiastic Algerians welcomed us and participated in the Festival. The following are my reflections on that experience.

BY HOWARD DODSON

Algeria dropped off my radar screen some time in the mid-to-late 1970s. And in all honesty, I hadn't thought about it at all since then except when I had occasions to revisit the writings of Frantz Fanon. Mine was not a singular experience. Most people living in the United States who were conscious of Algeria during the 70s

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Howard Dodson

Dance troupe performing at the 40th Annual Festival of Pan African Culture in Algiers, July 2009.

Last year, 2009, was rough. Rough on us. Rough on everyone. Here at the Schomburg Center, we were obliged to endure some severe budget cuts. In addition, several key staff persons retired leaving major voids in our organizational structure. In the face of these and other challenges, we have taken a number of steps to stabilize our operations and refocus our resources and energies. The goal has been to further streamline our operations while enhancing our ability to tackle the priority goals and objectives we have established. Our Strategic Visioning Committee has helped us in this effort with the report they prepared last spring. The

“We’re off to a brand new start in 2010 as we celebrate our 85th anniversary. We hope you will be with us throughout the year.”

— Howard Dodson, Schomburg Chief



Strategic Visioning Committee, Co-chaired by Drs. Johnnetta Cole and Henry Louis Gates, provided sage advice and council regarding the long-term future of the Center as well as affirmed its unique character and leadership position in the world of Africana libraries, museums and cultural centers globally.

Guided by the Report and other planning processes carried out during the year, the Center is positioning itself to continue building its collections, to extend access to its collections and services through digitization, and to enhance marketing of its exhibitions and programs so as to reach and serve larger audiences nationally and internationally. This is all being done within the framework of our year-long commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of my tenure as Director and the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the Center.

Three major events and activities are being

planned as part of these commemorations—a 25th anniversary retrospective exhibition on the development of the Center in May; an 85th anniversary exposition and gala in October, and a year-long 85th anniversary collection development initiative. Our black history month exhibitions, which open in February, are products of two recent donations of collection materials.

The first is a retrospective photographic exhibition on the first year of President Obama’s administration. Based on the photographs of the Chief Official White House Photographer, Pete Souza, the exhibition presents a stunning visual portrait of the president as Commander in Chief, statesman, husband, father and world leader during his inaugural year as President. *President Barack Obama: The First Year*, the exhibition is comprised of over 70 behind the scenes and at times iconic photographs of major and not so major events and personalities that shaped the President’s agenda last year.

The second exhibition, *Jerry Pinkney’s African-American Journey to Freedom*, is a stunning collection of some 36 watercolor paintings by award-winning children’s book illustrator and artist Jerry Pinkney. In addition to his more than 100 published books, Mr. Pinkney has been commissioned to do original artworks for a number of private individuals and public and corporate entities. The collection of watercolors was commissioned by Joseph E. Seagram and Sons during the 1970s. These 36 original works by Mr. Pinkney plus seven other works by African-American artists that were commissioned by Seagram Distillers were donated to the Schomburg Center by Vivendi, Seagram’s successor organization. We thank Vivendi for this gift and hope you enjoy Mr. Pinkney’s treatment of some of the seminal moments and personalities in black American history.

We’re off to a brand new start in 2010 as we celebrate our 85th anniversary. We hope you will be with us throughout the year.

Schomburg International Update Lecture

On Wednesday, September 23, 2009 His Excellency Festus G. Mogae, Former President of the Republic of Botswana, delivered a speech on the theme *Democracy in Africa: What Africa Expects from the Obama Administration*, at the Center to Schomburg Society members and other specially invited guests. Prior to his speech, Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson presented H.E. Mogae with the Center's Africana Heritage Award.

H.E. Mogae noted how important it is for President Obama to continue to support AIDS and debt relief to countries in Africa as well as development policies that will ensure the sovereignty of African nations. In commenting on his role as a Special Envoy on Climate Change for the United Nations, Mogae stressed to the audience how global warming negatively and disproportionately affects developing countries, specifically those in Africa. "Africa suffers the worst consequences of climate change, such as droughts, food and water shortages, heightened temperatures, sinking coastal areas," Mogae said. "All this is a situation in which Africa has made the least contributions to the [causes of global climate change]."

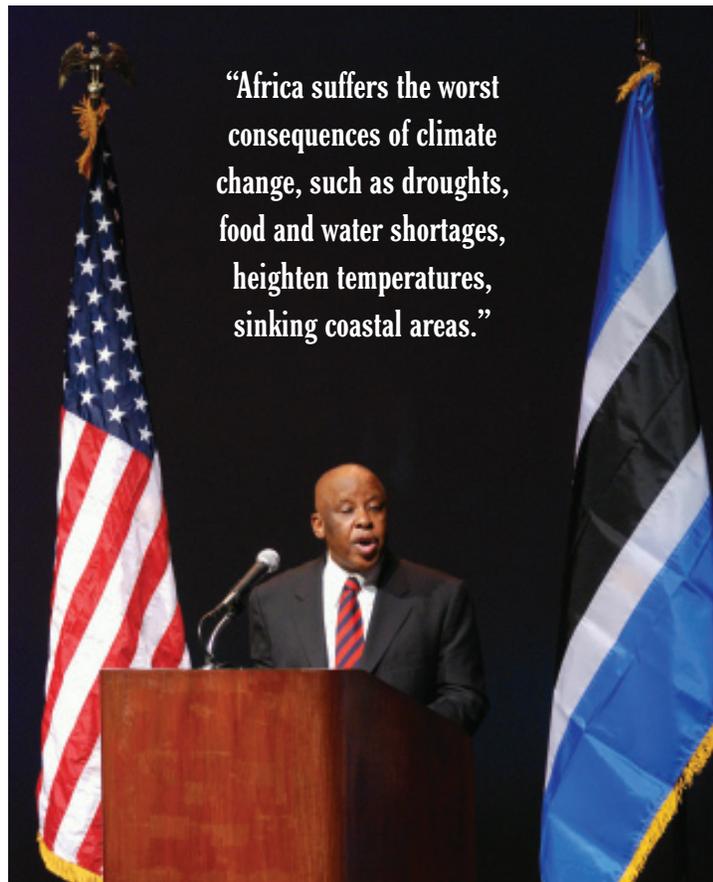
Festus Gontebanye Mogae served as the third President of the Republic of Botswana from March 1998 to March 2008. He was born on August 21, 1939 at Serowe in the Central District of Botswana and studied economics at the universities of Oxford and Sussex in the United Kingdom. He started his career as a public officer in 1968 as planning officer and was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning from 1975 to 1976. In October 2008, Festus Mogae was awarded the *Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership*. The *Mo Ibrahim Prize* is awarded annually to a former African Head of State or Government who has

demonstrated excellence in African leadership. Unprecedented in its scale and scope, the *Mo Ibrahim Prize* consists of US\$5 million over 10 years and \$200,000 annually for life thereafter.

His Excellency Mogae was also awarded the Grand Cross of the Légion d'honneur by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in March 2008 for his exemplary leadership

in making Botswana a model of democracy and good governance and was also named *Africa's Man of the Year 2008* by *Africa Today* magazine. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon appointed him as a Special Envoy on Climate Change in September 2008.

To view the video of the speech, please visit www.schomburgcenter.org.



(Above and left) Mogae delivering his speech in the Langston Hughes Auditorium. (Bottom) His Excellency Festus G. Mogae accepting an Africana Heritage Award from Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson.



Bob Gore

Rediscovering Algeria

Continued from page 1

forgot about it—and at best kept it a distant memory. It hadn't always been that way.

Algeria intruded itself into the public consciousness during the Algerian Revolution from 1954-1962. Colonized by France beginning in the 1930s, Algeria struggled against French colonization until the early 1900s. French colonial power remained intact until World War II. Afterwards, with the demands for freedom in the air in all of Europe's colonial empire, Algerians stood up, demanded and then fought for their freedom. Other colonized African peoples would also seek and attain their freedom after the war. But Algerians had to fight for theirs. Their military struggle with Imperial France and the success of their revolution made them symbols of revolutionary possibilities among colonized people along with Cuba, China, and Vietnam, in the modern era and Haiti in the 18th century. Fanon analyzed this struggle and used it to probe the psychological effects of colonialism on the colonizer as well as the colonized.

Gillo Pontecorvo's film, *The Battle of Algiers*, arguably one of the best documentary films on anti-colonial struggles, gave visual form and content to the concept of revolution that few outside of living in the midst of a revolution had ever witnessed. Algeria became a symbol of possibilities and progress for conscious political people throughout the colonial world—throughout the black world. Its status and stature as a model of successful revolutionary struggle made it a safe haven for liberation strugglers throughout the African continent and the African world. Revolutionaries and would be revolutionaries spent part of their periods of exile in Algeria. And then she disappeared—off of the front pages of mainstream newspapers, off of the

pages of radical journals, out of the theaters, off of the television sets and radios, out of the public consciousness. A generation after its successful revolution, Algeria had become a non-entity in the minds of most people living in the United States—including mine.

That Algeria should suffer such a fate is in itself remarkable. The second largest country in Africa in terms of land mass, Algeria is also counted among the major oil producing nations of the world. These material realities coupled with the fact that Algeria has been deeply enmeshed in a fratricidal civil war for more than a decade (1991-2002) should have made Algeria front page news. Over 150,000 people were killed in the Civil War and tens of thousand more were injured. While the Civil War in Ireland found its way to the front pages of the nation's newspapers and the nightly news, the Algerian Civil War came and went without Americans knowing much if any-

thing about it. I, I regret to say, missed it too.

When I received the call advising me that I would be invited to the Festival of Pan African Culture, I frankly assumed that it was being held in Nigeria. After all, Nigeria had hosted the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977. When I agreed to go to Nigeria if invited, the caller corrected me and advised me that Algeria not Nigeria had been the host of the First Festival of Pan African Culture in 1969 and would be hosting the 40th Anniversary Conference in Algiers, Algeria from July 5-20, 2009. I jumped at the opportunity to attend, juggled my very complicated work schedule, accepted the invitation when received and took off for Algiers on July 7, 2009. A planned 5-day visit would stretch into a full week.

The scars of the Civil War are still with Algeria even though its people have been living largely in peace for the last five years.





(Top) Part of the African-American delegation with host, Khalida Toumi (seated, center), Minister of Culture of Algeria.



Car bombings and other terrorist acts are largely a thing of the past, and a democratically elected government backed by a victorious military has largely restored order and is leading the nation back to normalcy. Police and Military personnel are stationed everywhere day and night giving Algiers the appearance of an armed fortress. But, whereas the fear of terrorist acts had reduced Algerians' daily lives to going to and returning from work with no recreation or leisure life, citizens of Algiers today move freely about their city in heavy traffic and partake fully of the City's cultural and recreational activities. The current government is committed to rebuilding a sense of national unity among its citizens while reestablishing Algeria's position as a major national presence in Africa and in the world. One of the objectives of the Second Festival of Pan African Culture was to pro-

mote this dual foreign policy agenda.

Festivals have become instruments of state craft and continent-wide nation building in Africa. The theory, it seems, is that major Pan African Festivals, Conferences and other Pan African gatherings can be used to enhance the status and stature of African States among their peers on the continent. President Thabo Mbeki had proposed to do a Pan African Cultural Festival in South Africa prior to leaving office. President Wade of Senegal has been proposing to host the World Festival of Black Arts (Fesman) for the last five years. It is scheduled to take place in December 2010. As the concept of the African Union has continued to evolve toward the establishment of a United States of Africa, these Presidents of African nations, among others, have been jockeying for positions to run for President of a United States of Africa. As the theory goes, anyone who can bring African peoples and

nations together under a cultural umbrella is likely candidates to forge a united Africa out of many. That some of this jockeying was happening at the Festival of Pan African Culture was evidenced by the fact that under the Festival banner, Algiers declared itself the "Capital of Africa."

The Festival was equally a coming-out-party for Algeria. It is estimated that the Algerian government invested some \$40 million Euros in the Festival. Between 5,000 and 8,000 artists, intellectuals, activists, entrepreneurs, and practitioners of Africa's diverse cultures participated in the 15-day Festival. The national dance companies of the Congo, Benin, Senegal, Ghana, and Cameroon among others performed. Leading African musicians including Ishmael Lo, Mory Kanté, Salif Keita, and Youssou N'Dour appeared at free concerts before adoring throngs nightly.

The Algerian people came out by the thousands to witness and participate in the four to six nightly concerts, dance performances, and theatre productions. Daily film screenings featured Africa's premier filmmakers, and thousands of people attended the four to six daily screenings. Numerous exhibitions on African themes were on display in the City museums as well as a large exhibition pavilion in Algiers. The highlight of the many exhibit offerings was one featuring the actual physical remains (skeleton) of the mother of all of humankind, "Lucy" or "Denkeish." There were also exhibits surveying Africa's artistic legacy as well as a contemporary design show. An arts and crafts fair sponsored by African governments showcased some of the unique cultural products produced by each country.

All of Africa participated except Morocco, and delegations from the United States and Brazil were there representing the African Diaspora. I was part of the U.S. Delegation. I soon discovered that I should have planned to spend the full two weeks at the Festival. Scampering around trying to take in the Festival while simultaneously trying to experience and learn as much about Algeria and Algiers as possible soon confirmed this assessment. There was simply too much—of Africa and of Algeria—for one to absorb in such a short stay. Frustrated at the end of my planned five-day trip, I stayed two extra days at the request of the Minister of Culture so I could at least begin to have a feel for the place and the experience.

Courage Preview



Bob Gore

Members getting a look at the exhibition *Courage: The Vision to End Segregation, The Guts to Fight for It* in the Main Exhibition Hall.



Bob Gore

Doug Mayers, former President of the Freeport, New York NAACP, and Henry Conyers, Hempstead, NY's Mayor Pro Tem and a native of Summerton at the Members' Preview for the exhibitions *Courage: The Vision to End Segregation, the Guts to Fight for It* and *Courage: The Black New York Struggle for Quality Education*.



Bob Gore

Led by Rev. J. A. De Laine, principal of Liberty Hill school in Clarendon County, South Carolina, the African-American citizens of Clarendon County filed what would become the first lawsuit in the composite *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case that legally ended racially segregated public schools in the United States. At the preview, members of the De Laine and Stukes families (*left to right*): Brumit B. De Laine, Ada Minault, Ada's Son, Willie Stukes, "Dena" Stukes, Joseph De Laine, Ophelia De Laine Gona, Raj Gona.



Bob Gore

Plaintiff Edward Ragin's family—part of the Clarendon County case—(*left to right*): Delphine Howard (Granddaughter), Donna Scott (granddaughter), Lillian Ragin Scott (daughter), Gardenia Ragin Scott (daughter), Delores Ragin Jones (daughter), and Margaret Georgia Alford (niece of Edward Ragin and Robert Georgia) were present at the *Courage* preview.



Panelists from the Schomburg Black Gay & Lesbian Archive Reading Series event, *Writing What We Know*, on October 26, 2009. Clockwise from above: G. Winston James, Cheryl Boyce-Taylor, Pamela Sneed, Heru Khuti.



Steven Fullwood

Panelists (l to r) Curu Necos-Bloice, Staceyann Chin, Steven G. Fullwood, and Anton Nimblett from the Black Gay & Lesbian Archive Reading Series event, *Songs from Paradise*, on November 2, 2009.



Terrence Jennings

On November 20, 2009 the Schomburg Center, in conjunction with The Children's Studies center/ The City University of New York, held a youth forum, *The Human Rights of Children and the 55th Anniversary of Board v. Board of Education and the 20th Anniversary of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Panelists included: Elise Goldberg and Loretta Chin, Coordinators, Children's Studies at Brooklyn College/CUNY; Deirdre Hollman, Manager, Schomburg Education Programs, and Dr. Victor Karunan, Chief, ICEF-NY Adolescent Development and Participation vision.



Bob Gore

Panelists from *The Speech: Race and Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union'* discussion and book signing with Schomburg Chief Howard Dodson (far right). From left to right are: Moderator Jelani Cobb, contributors Adam Mansbach and Joan Morgan, editor Denean Sharpley-Whiting, contributors Keli Goff and Obery M. Hendricks, Jr.

Young, Gifted, Black and Complicated

The Question of Lorraine Hansberry's Legacy

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is to act as if you do not expect to be invited back, and to say what's on your mind."

Salaam also failed to mention that Hansberry's former husband, Robert Nemiroff, was proactive in keeping Hansberry's works—and legacy—very much alive. Shortly after her death in addition to handling Hansberry's literary estate, Nemiroff began building an archive of Hansberry's materials, reaching out to people she knew or with whom she worked, and institutions where she had worked or appeared as a speaker. Under his guidance several legacy projects came to light including the play and subsequent book, *To Be Young Gifted and Black*, and *Raisin*, a musical based on Hansberry's seminal work, *A Raisin in the Sun*.

For many *A Raisin in the Sun* is their first encounter with Hansberry. Few know about her other writings—plays, articles, short stories, poems, editorials—not to mention her work as a political activist. Even fewer know about her work as an associate editor for *Freedom* newspaper in the 1950s, or that she had relationships with women. While it is usually history's prerogative to present people as flat and one-dimensional, one could easily surmise that Hansberry's legacy, as complicated and as far-flung as any creative person's could be, does not allow for simple rendering. Engaging her raging creativity and politics not only fascinate because, as Martin Luther King, Jr. noted, of Hansberry's "profound grasp of the deep social issues" of the time, but because her work dealing with race, human rights, women's equality, sexuality, predates the Black Power, Black Arts, Women's, and Gay and Lesbian movements of the late 1960s.

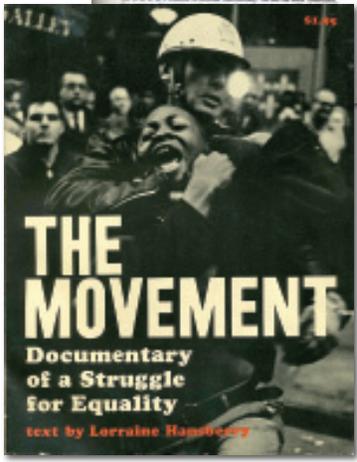
How She Became Herself

The last of four children, Hansberry was born in 1930, auspiciously at the beginning of the Great Depression, in Chicago to middle-class parents. She described herself



Clockwise from above. The author photographed after hearing the news that her first play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, won The New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for "Best American Play," April 1959. Wide World Photos. Photographs and Prints Division; Yearbook photograph, Englewood High School, January 1948. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division; *The Movement*, cover. 1964. General Research and Reference Division.: Page from *The Movement*. General Research and Reference Division: Young Lorraine. Photographer and date unknown. Photographs and Prints Division.

as a "serious off-talking kid who could [not] double-dutch," but envied those children who could. Her interests (or perhaps, pre-occupations) with human rights struggles had been anticipated by the work of her father, Carl Hansberry, a lawyer who successfully sued the city of Chicago in *Hansberry vs. Lee* [1940] a landmark case which effectively broke the racial covenants in real estate. Her mother, Mamie, was a school teacher and community leader. Lorraine grew up in a

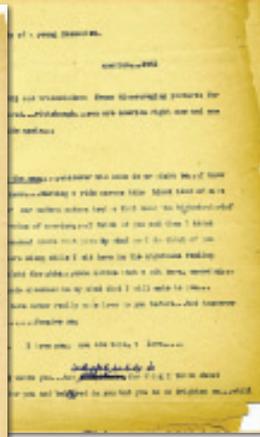
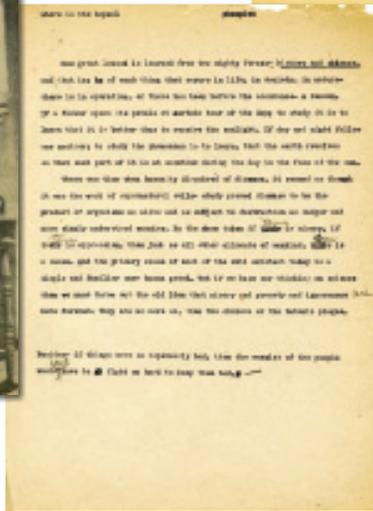


home often visited by luminaries of the day such as Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois. William Leo Hansberry, her uncle, taught at Howard University where he founded the African Civilization Section of the History Department. Consider the effect of over-hearing conversations among these men about race, civil rights, Communism, Africa, and the subsequent impressions they may have left on this "serious" young woman.

Much like those varied conversations,



Clockwise from left: "Village Intellect Revealed," article by Lorraine Hansberry on her second play, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*. The New York Times, October 1964. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division.; "Notes found by the body of a young Communist," draft, 1951. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division.; Still from *A Raisin in the Sun*, Eisenhower Theater, featuring Esther Rolle and Starletta DuPois, c. 1986. Photograph by Joan Marcus. Photographs and Prints Division.; FBI surveillance report to determine if Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* had Communist themes or ties to the Communist Party, 1959. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division.; "A Negro Woman Speaks for Peace," article by Lorraine Hansberry, about her experience as a delegate at the Inter-American Peace Congress, June 1952. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division.



In 1956 Hansberry sat down to write, in her words, "an honest play about Negroes." That play became *A Raisin in the Sun* which starred Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, and Diana Sands. In 1959 *A Raisin in the Sun* was a smash on Broadway, and garnered a Drama Critics Circle Award, making Hansberry the first black playwright and the youngest woman to win the Best Play of the Year award.

Prize-winning author and radio broadcast personality Studs Terkel interviewed Hansberry and asked if the play was autobiographical. She remarked that although she came from an "extremely comfortable background, materially speaking," her family lived in a ghetto which meant that she had direct experiences with people of varied classes. "This is one of things that the American experience has meant to Negroes," she remarked noting that working class and poor black people's experiences were more common, and that those people will help to transform our lives and will be "most decisive in our political history and our political future."

Hansberry's health began to falter in the early 1960s, however she continued to work. In addition to public appearances in support of her work and various Civil Rights causes, she wrote the screenplay for *A Raisin in the Sun*, the text for *The Movement*, a pictorial book on the Civil Rights Movement, editorials, letters to newspapers and magazines, poetry, short articles, and most importantly, plays. *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, which debuted on Broadway in the fall of 1964 is the last play she would complete and have produced during her lifetime. When *Brustein* opened in October

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Lorraine was complex and thoughtful and sometimes uncomfortable in her middle-class brown skin. In *To Be Young Gifted and Black*, Nemiroff included Hansberry's recalling an incident during her childhood when she was sent to school in a white ermine fur during the Depression. "The kids beat me up," she recalled, "and I think it was from that moment I became a rebel..." The coat was a Christmas present that she didn't favor, and after being attacked at school she became "antagonistic to the symbols of affluence."

Hansberry enrolled in University of Wisconsin in 1948, and studied art, literature, drama, and stage design. Captivated by the Communism movements sweeping the nation, she became the Chair of the Young Progressives. In the summer of 1949 Hansberry traveled to Mexico to study art at the University of Guadalajara. However it was the '50s, the post-World War II-McCarthyism era that continued to lay the groundwork for Hansberry's political and artistic

sensibilities, dramatically changing her life. Upon arriving in the New York she immediately became heavily involved in peace and freedom campaigns led by the Communist Party and the Labor Youth League. She was also a member of Sojourners of Truth and Justice, a delegation of 100 black women who met in Washington, D.C. to demand federal protection of the lives and liberties of black people.

In 1951 Hansberry joined the staff of *Freedom* newspaper under the guidance of editor Louis E. Burnham and founder Paul Robeson. A year earlier the U.S. State Department, under the Subversive Activities Control Act, had revoked Robeson's passport, claiming he was a subversive. Unable to travel, Hansberry served as his representative at the Inter-American Peace Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, at the age of 24. Quite an accomplishment for someone so young. A year later Hansberry married Robert Nemiroff, who was also active in communist circles.

EXHIBITIONS

Jerry Pinkney's African-American Journey to Freedom

The Seagram's Watercolors Collection
February 5—April 18, 2010 • Latimer/Edison Gallery

Jerry Pinkney's African-American Journey to Freedom is a stunning collection of 35 watercolor paintings by the award-winning children's book illustrator and artist. Originally commissioned by the by Seagram Distillers in the mid-1970s for use in the Seagram African-American history calendars which were distributed to the public, this exquisite collection was part of a larger donation made by Vivendi to the Schomburg Center. The watercolors beautifully illustrate a wide range of people and events in African-American history; from the arrival of the first African indentured servants to the Great Migration to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Jerry Pinkney is the illustrator of more than 100 books for children. A five-time winner of both the Caldecott Honor and the Coretta Scott King Award, the Philadelphia native has been recognized with numerous other honors, taught illustration, and conducted workshops at universities across the country, and created art for the United States Postal Service's Black Heritage stamps.



The Great Migration, 1900-1920, 1976, watercolor. Artist: Jerry Pinkney

President Barack Obama: The First Year

Photographs by Pete Souza, Chief Official White House Photographer
February 5—April 18, 2010 • Main Exhibition Hall

This special exhibition offers an inside view of the first year of the historic Presidency of Barack Obama. Pete Souza is the Chief Official White House Photographer for President Barack Obama, as well as the Director of the White House photo office. Souza has known the President since January 2005, when he began documenting then Senator Obama's first year in Washington, DC for the Chicago Tribune, where he was a staff photographer. In July 2008, Souza's book *The Rise of Barack Obama* was published. It includes exclusive photographs of the Senator's rise to power. Souza has won numerous awards including Pictures of the Year Annual Competition, the National Press Photographer's Best of Photojournalism, and the White House News Photographer's yearly contest.

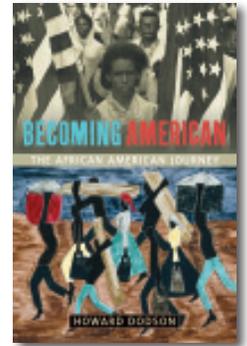


President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama dance at the Governors Ball in the East Room of the White House 2/22/09.

Get a Piece of Black History at The Schomburg Shop

Becoming American: The African-American Journey (Sterling Publishing)
By Howard Dodson

Becoming American: The African-American Journey offers a unique chronological approach that affords readers an opportunity to begin discovering the active, generative role blacks have played in the making of America as we know it today. It also reveals the ways in which blacks' attempts to make America live up to its founding creed have kept them on the path to "Becoming American."
Price \$13.95



African Americans in Politics
Postcard Book

A special commemorative postcard book, produced by the Schomburg Center and Pomegranate Communications, features 30 cards highlighting individuals and events of the black experience in American politics. This postcard book also serves as a companion piece to the Schomburg Center exhibition, *African Americans and American Politics*.
Price: \$9.99



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March 15
Spelman Jazz Ensemble

March 22
Somi

Hansberry, Continued from page 9

1964, Hansberry was already battling cancer. The play was scheduled to close soon after opening because of a lack of financial support. Celebrities such as James Baldwin and Shelley Winters contributed money and encouraged many others to do so, including members of the audience, keeping the play alive for several weeks. Finally, on January 12, 1965, after 101 performances, Hansberry passed away, and *Brustein*, at last, closed on Broadway.

Hansberry's Words, Our Gifts

But the curtain did not and could not close on Hansberry, or her work. Indeed her spirit lives in the Lorraine Hansberry Papers located in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The papers chronicle the life of the award-winning playwright, her activities during the Civil Rights Movement, and documents her legacy largely amassed and constructed by her late former husband, Robert Nemiroff, and his third wife, the late Jewell Gresham-Nemiroff. The collection includes virtually all of Hansberry's writings, autobiographical materials, journals, diaries, personal and professional correspondence, and related materials generated by the executors of the Lorraine Hansberry Estate.

Scholars will find Hansberry's papers exceptionally rich. Few collections can boast the depth and range of materials. The largest and most substantive papers, Writings, contains the bulk of Hansberry's play scripts, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and *Les Blancs*, plus production files for each play, as well as other produced, unproduced, and incomplete plays among them *Toussaint*, *The Drinking Gourd*, *What Use Are Flowers?*, and *Masters of the*

Dew. There are drafts with Hansberry's and Nemiroff's edits for most titles. Researchers will find the original 1957 version of *A Raisin in the Sun* with annotations, deleted scenes, and notes offering a sense of what the playwright envisioned as she created the world of the Youngers, a working-class family living on the Southside of Chicago. Similarly, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* was originally called *The Sign in Jenny Brustein's Window*, and the original play script can also be found in the collection.

The lectures and speeches Hansberry gave primarily as the result of the success of *A Raisin in the Sun* reveal a fascinating intellect and hunger for social justice. She wrote a variety of articles as a journalist and editor for *Freedom* newspaper, *Freedomways*, and *The New York Times*, and there are files for the book, *The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality*, for which Hansberry wrote the text. In addition there are short stories, poems, and letters Hansberry penned from 1947 to 1964.

The collection also includes correspondences and materials that illuminate Hansberry's activism with Camp Unity, the Labor Defense League, and the Inter-American Peace Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay. The Legacy papers were created by Robert Nemiroff to document Hansberry's contribution to American letters, and includes files detailing his activities as the executor of the Lorraine Hansberry Estate, including three major projects, the plays *To Be Young*, *Gifted and Black* and *Raisin*, and the project "All The Dark and Beautiful Warriors."

The audio visual component of the collection includes films, filmstrips, reel-to-reels, and record albums featuring Hansberry and cast recordings of her plays including *A Raisin in the Sun*, and the musical *Raisin*. Cast photographs and a few photos of Hansberry are in the collection. Also included are Han-

sberry's FBI file, interviews with the writer, and biographical information about Hansberry during her life and posthumously can also be found in the papers.

In December 1955, Hansberry wrote a diary entry in the late hours of Christmas that is as haunting as it came to be prophetic:

"Such are my days...longings, longings, longings, longings....I want the world to love my singing. Whether I am less for it or no – I want it!"

A copy of the finding aid is available by sending an e-mail request to scmarbref@nypl.org. For more information, please call (212) 491-2224.

*Processed the Lorraine Hansberry Collection along with Janice Quinter, Nurah-Rosalie Jeter, and Diana Lachatanere, with assistance from Lisann Lewin and Artis Q. Wright

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AFRICANA HERITAGE

2010 Volume 10, Number 1

Africana Heritage is a quarterly publication of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for members who contribute \$35 or more annually. The Schomburg Center is one of the Research Libraries of The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

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AFRICANA HERITAGE

The Schomburg Center for
Research in Black Culture
The New York Public Library
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
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