Margaret Burroughs papers
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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

DuSable Museum of African American History
Chicago, IL

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Summary Information

Repository	DuSable Museum of African American History
Title	Margaret Burroughs Papers
Date [inclusive]	1937-2010
Extent	70.0 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs (1917-2011) was a prominent African American cultural and community leader. She was an artist, poet, writer, educator, and institution builder, best known for founding the DuSable Museum of African-American History, the Southside Community Arts Center and the National Conference of Artists. The Margaret Burroughs papers span from 1937-2010, and showcase the depth and diversity of her lifelong commitment to African American arts. The papers include personal correspondence, writings, documents originating from the DuSable Museum of African American History, personal material, publications, and photographs.

Biographical/Historical note

Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs (1917-2011), born Victoria Margaret, was an artist, poet, educator, and co-founder of the DuSable Museum of African-American History. Burroughs was born in Saint Rose, Louisiana, her family moved to Chicago when she was five years old. She received her elementary teacher's certificate from Chicago Normal College in 1937. In 1939, Burroughs helped found the Southside Community Arts Center, which served as a social center, gallery, and studio for African American artists and students. Burroughs received her Bachelor's of Arts in art education in 1946, and her Master's of Arts in art education in 1948, both from the Art Institute of Chicago. She went on to teach at DuSable High School from 1946-1969, and at Kennedy-King College from 1969-1979. In 1959, Burroughs became the executive director at the Negro History Hall of Fame, and in the same year she founded National Conference of Artists. In 1961, Margaret and her husband Charles founded the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art in their home at 3806 South Michigan Avenue. The museum was later renamed the DuSable Museum of African American History, and in 1973 it was relocated to its current location at 740 E. 56th Pl. in Washington Park. Burroughs served as Executive Director of the museum until 1984. Afterwards, she served as Director Emeritus and continued to stay active in the museum's operation and fundraising efforts. In 1985 she was appointed as a Chicago Park District Commissioner by Harold Washington, and served until 2010. Alongside her career as an educator and institution builder, Burroughs was a prominent author and artist who was known for expressing a strong African American perspective in her works. She exhibited her artwork throughout the world, including the Corcoran Art Galleries in Washington D.C., and the Studio Museum in New York. Her published writings include the children's book Jasper, the Drummin' Boy (1947), two anthologies: Did You Feed My Cow? (1955), and Whip Me Whop Me Pudding (1966), and the poem What Should I Tell My Children Who Are Black?, which was read into the congressional record on July 26, 1991. Burroughs received the President's Humanitarian Award in 1975, and February 1, 1986 was declared Dr. Margaret Burroughs Day by Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. Until her death in 2011, Burroughs remained active in the community, giving lectures and speeches, and lending her support to various causes.

Scope and Contents note

The Margaret Burroughs papers span from 1937-2010, and showcase the depth and diversity of her lifelong commitment to African American arts. The papers are arranged into eight series: "Correspondence," "Art and Writings," "DuSable Museum of African American History," "Personal," "Publications," "Photographs," "Charles Burroughs," and "Neal Burroughs." Material related to the DuSable Museum of African American History dates from its founding in 1961 through 2010, and provides insight into the administration and operation of the museum. Material from "Personal" and "Publications," such as event programs, awards, newsletters, and articles illustrate Burroughs' interest

in African American culture, and document her role as a cultural and community leader. Researchers interested in the DuSable Museum of African American History and African American arts in Chicago will find this collection useful.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

DuSable Museum of African American History

Restrictions

Series IV: “Personal”, Box 115, Folders 1192-1202

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Eugene Feldman papers, DuSable Museum of African American History Margaret Burroughs Collection, Koehline Museum of Art, Oakton Community College

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Burroughs, Charles Gordon, 1919-
- Burroughs, Margaret
- Burroughs, Neal
- Davis, Frank Marshall

Subject(s)

- African American art
- African American artists

Cited Works

Fleming, John E. and Burroughs, Margaret. “Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs: Artist, Teacher, Administrator, Writer, Political Activist, and Museum Founder.” The Public Historian, Vol. 21, No. 1, Winter 1999.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1937-2010, bulk 1960-1990 (Bulk, 1960-1990)

Scope and Contents note

This series includes Margaret Burroughs' correspondence with political and cultural figures, prison inmates, family, friends, and school children. Aside from letters, the series contains greeting cards, postcards, and invitations to community events. Notable figures present in the series include Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Frank Marshall Davis, Oprah Winfrey, and Chicago mayors Richard J. Daley, Michael Bilandic, Jane Byrne, Harold Washington, Eugene Sawyer, and Richard M. Daley.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence	1-45	1-366

Series II: Art and Writings, 1944-2007

Scope and Contents note

This series contains poetry, speeches, lectures, handwritten notes, and artwork. Notable items include an edited manuscript of Jasper the Drummin' Boy, galley prints of Did You Feed My Cow?, a transcript of an interview with Burroughs from 1973, and a manuscript of Burroughs' biography written by Eugene Feldman. Some artistic prints and sketches are present, but overall, Burroughs' artwork is not well represented. The series also includes writings by other authors, and manuscripts from Burroughs' friends and colleagues that she edited.

	Box	Folder
Art and Writings	46-49	367-421

Series III: DuSable Museum of African American History, 1963-2010

Scope and Contents note

Material in this series documents the operation and administration of the DuSable Museum of African American History. There are correspondence, meeting minutes, policy manuals, director and annual reports, calendars of events, program flyers, exhibition brochures, newsletters, financial documents, committee lists, member directories, and press releases. Major events that are well represented in the series include various fundraising efforts throughout the 1970s as the museum transitioned to its current location in Washington Park, the Writer's Seminar and Poetry Festival from 1982-1985, the 1986 Teaching About Africa Seminar, and the 2003 Freedom Schooner Amistad exhibition. "DuSable Museum of African American History" is arranged chronologically.

	Box	Folder
DuSable Museum, 1963-2010	50-90	422-1025
DuSable Museum, undated	91-95	1026-1068

Series IV: Personal, 1949-2008

Scope and Contents note

This series documents the activities and interests of Burroughs beyond her role as director of the DuSable Museum of African American History. The bulk of material in "Personal" comes from events that Burroughs spoke at or attended. These include art exhibitions, memorial services, festivals, banquets, award dinners, and commencements. Other material relates to the South Side Community Arts Center, the Chicago Park District, and professional associations that Burroughs participated in, including the National Conference of Artists, the Frank London Brown Historical Association, and the National Council of Soviet Friendship. The series also includes press clippings and publicity about Burroughs, biographical material, datebooks, calendars, financial documents, handwritten notes, and material from

Series IV: Personal,

Margaret's personal travels. Of note in the collection are Margaret and Charles' wedding vows. One box of personal material is restricted.

	Box	Folder
Events, 1960-2007	96-106	1069-1142
		Box
Datebooks, 1963-2004		107-108
	Box	Folder
Chicago Park District, 1980-2008	109	1143-1149
Southside Community Arts Center, 1941-1998	110	1150-1154
Associations, 1961-1998	111	1155-1167
Frank London Brown Historical Association, 1962-1972	112	1168-1183
		Box
Lake Meadows Art Fair, 1956-1967		113
	Box	Folder
Publicity, 1951-1999	114	1184-1191
Restricted, 1949-2007	115	1192-1202
Personal, 1949-2007	116-122	1203-1276

Series V: Publications, circa 1950-2010

Scope and Contents note

This series contains local and national publications pertaining to African American arts and culture. Local publications document the activities in Chicago related to African American art, history, literature, and dance from the 1950s to 2000s, while national publications primarily address social and political issues of the time period. “Publications” also contain corporate and government reports relevant to the operation of the DuSable Museum of African American History. “Publications” is arranged by type of material.

	Box	Folder
Newsletters, circa 1950-2010	123	1277-1296
Articles, circa 1950-2010	124	1297-1316
Reports, circa 1950-2010	125	1317-1335
Flyers, circa 1950-2010	126	1336-1341
Magazines, circa 1950-2010	126-128	1342-1386
Catalogs, Directories, Travel, circa 1950-2010	129	1387-1402
Journals, circa 1950-2010	130	1403-1416
Brochures, circa 1950-2010	131	1417-1426

Box

Newspapers, circa 1950-2010	132-136

Series VI: Photographs, undated

Scope and Contents note

The photographs in this series are primarily from Burroughs' travels and exhibits at the DuSable Museum of African American History. There are also photos of Burroughs' house. Individual photographs are primarily unidentified.

	Box	Folder
Photographs	137-140	1427-1465

	Box
Photographs	141-143

Series VII: Charles Burroughs, 1945-1991

Scope and Contents note

Charles Burroughs married Margaret Burroughs in 1949. Margaret had previously been married to Bernard Goss from 1939 to 1947. This series contains writings and notes by Charles, some of which are in Russian, newspaper clippings, correspondence, biographical information, and certificates.

	Box	Folder
Charles Burroughs	144-145	1466-1489

Series VIII: Neal Burroughs, circa 1950

Series VIII: Neal Burroughs,

Scope and Contents note

Neal Burroughs was Charles Burroughs' brother. This series contains writings by Neal, some of which are in Russian, newspaper clippings, and correspondence.

	Box	Folder
Neal Burroughs	146-147	1490-1508