FINDING AID FOR THE LOFTEN MITCHELL COLLECTION

Beth Turcy Kilmarx
Binghamton University, State University of New York
March 25, 1996

Contact Information

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Title
The Loften Mitchell Collection

ID

Extent
4.5 linear ft

Repository
Binghamton University, State University of New York
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Binghamton, NY 13902-6012

Abstract
Loften Mitchell, a renowned African American playwright and former faculty member in Binghamton University's Departments of Theater and Afro-American Studies, began donating his papers to the University Libraries in 1980, and he continued to do so until 1985. The Loften Mitchell Collection spans several decades from 1938 to 1985, and includes playscripts, reviews, production notes, lecture notes, personal correspondence, and memorabilia. The Loften Mitchell Collection was first organized by Richard Gannon, Associate Librarian, and Lisa Solo, a student intern. The original finding aid was completed by Ms. Solo in 1987. The entire collection was reorganized, and the finding aid revised and edited by Beth Turcy Kilmarx, Assistant for Special Collections and Preservation, in 1995.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: LOFTEN MITCHELL

Personal

1919 Born April 15, 1919, Columbus, North Carolina.
1943-? Served in the US Navy during World War II.
1948 Married Helen March.
1992 Married Gloria Anderson.

**Education**

1937-1938 City College, New York, New York.
1943 BA, Talladega College.
1951 MA, Columbia University.

**Career**

1938-1939 Performed with the Rose McClendon Players.
1955 *Star of the Morning* opened in Cleveland, Ohio.
1957 *A Land Beyond the River* opened at the Greenwich Mews Theatre.
1967 *Tell Pharaoh* opened at the Golden Theatre, Queens, College, New York, New York.
1975 *Voices of the Black Theatre* published.
1975 *Bubbling Brown Sugar* performed by the AMAS Repertory Theatre.
1971-1985 Professor, Department of Theater and Department of African-American Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton.
1985- Professor emeritus.

**Major Awards**

1958-1959 Guggenheim Award.
1974 Playwriting award, Research Foundation, State University of New York.
1976 *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, nominated for a Tony Award for Best Musical.
1977 *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, Best Musical of the Year Award.
1979 Outstanding Theatrical Pioneer Award.

Access: Unrestricted

BTK 3/25/96

**FINDING AID INDEX**

**Container Title**

Film, Theater and Television Scripts

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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Plays</th>
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<td>BOX 1</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Carver, lyrics for "Thru the Years, I will Remain with You", undated, photocopy. See BOX 12 for accompanying oversized musical scores for Items 18-20.
21. City Called Harlem, undated, photocopy.

BOX 2
7. A Gypsy Girl, partial copy, pgs. 1-1-1-1 to 1-1-6, undated, photocopy.
10. Her Stormy Weather, Scenes in the Life of Ethel Waters, first draft, 1/16/82, photocopy.
11. Her Stormy Weather, Scenes in the Life of Ethel Waters, copy 2, undated, photocopy.
12. I’m Sorry, undated, typescript original, script was first titled A City of Tears.

BOX 3
1. The Phonograph, Scenes in the Life of a Harlem Family, undated, photocopy.
2. The Phonograph, Scenes in the Life of a Harlem Family, signed copy, November 13, 1980, photocopy.
3. Sojourn to the South of the Wall, copy 1, March 25, 1971, photocopy.
5. Sojourn to the South of the Wall, Act II of an early script, May 28, 1979, photocopy.
7. A Song for Langston Hughes, undated, typescript original.
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<tr>
<th>Box 4</th>
<th>Star of the Morning, discarded page, <strong>undated</strong>, typescript original.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, copy 1, <strong>undated</strong>, typescript original and photocopies interleaved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, copy 2, <strong>undated</strong>, photocopy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, pgs. 28-41, <strong>undated</strong>, photocopy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, pgs. 1-5, <strong>undated</strong>, typescript original.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, copy 3, <strong>1981?</strong>, typescript originals and photocopies interleaved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Tell Pharaoh</strong>, lyrics, <strong>undated</strong>, typescript original.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The Vampires of Harlem, <strong>1972</strong>, photocopy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 5</strong></td>
<td>Loften Mitchell’s Writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Season is now: review of two plays, in <em>The Crisis, January/February 1967</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monographs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Clarendon County, section I, copy 1, signed, <strong>1958</strong>, carbon copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Clarendon County, section I, copy 2, missing page 6,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. The Negro in the American theater since 1948, in the Oxford Theater, undated, typescript original.
18. Voices of the Black Musical Theatre, revised copies of chapters 1-2, photocopy.

Poems 1938-1978
22. untitled, 3 copies, undated, photocopy.
23. untitled, undated, typescript original.

Speeches 1972-1982
26. untitled, given at the 3rd Annual Community Awards Banquet, April 24, 1982, holograph.
27. "Father Langston, memories of a great writer", given at the twelfth anniversary of the Langston Hughes Library and the Black Heritage Center, signed copy, copy 1, April 26, 1981, photocopy.
28. "Father Langston, memories of a great writer", given at the twelfth anniversary of the Langston Hughes Library and the Black Heritage Center, signed copy, copy 2, April 26, 1981, photocopy.

Miscellaneous Writings
29. Death of a social investigator, undated, typescript original.
30. For David Rollius: memories of an extended brother, undated, typescript original.
32. The Lightning, November 14, 1985, photocopy.
33. Notes on a collection, October 16, 1985, copy 1, photocopy.
34. Notes on a collection, October 16, 1985, copy 2, photocopy.
37. Notes on Tell Pharaoh, undated, photocopy.
38. Personal notes on a writing course, undated (circa 1970), photocopy.
39. The Vampires of Harlem, undated, photocopy.
40. untitled, undated, photocopy.

BOX 6

Incoming Correspondence

1941-1969
5. A.C. Hall, December 1945, holograph.
7. State Senator Wyona Moore Lipman, April 14, 1941, holograph.
8. Mel, June 3, 1945, holograph.
13. W.L. Sutlet, March 5, 1943, typescript, original.

1973-78
23. Charles and Irene Hunter, March 5, 1976, holograph.
24. C. Peter Magrath, September 24, 1974, typescript original.
26. R. Baxter Miller, August 11, 1975, typescript original.
29. Pat Speyser, August 4, 1974, holograph.

1980-1981
35. William B. Branch, November 9, 1981, typescript original.
38. Carl P. Coates (student), September 16, 1981, holograph.
42. Dick, October 28, 1980, typescript original.
46. Marion Hanscom, November 18, 1981, typescript original.
52. Sally and William, October 14, 1981, holograph.
56. William H. White, February 8, 1980, typescript original.

1982

60. Cynthia Reasoner Bassiry, AKA Erica Copeland and Najima Bassiry, July 1, 1981, typescript original.
64. Mary Lynn Broe, March 8, 1982, holograph.
67. Hazel Bryant and Duane Jones, April 30, 1982, typescript original.
68. Dick Campbell, June 22, 1982, typescript original.
70. Arlene Caruso, April 28, 1982, typescript original.
71. Clifford D. Clark, March 25, 1982, typescript original.
72. Clifford D. Clark, October 22, 1982, typescript original.
75. Ossie Davis, July 20, 1982, holograph.
76. Elton C. Fax, February 12, 1982, typescript original.
82. Ja A. Jahannes, August 24, 1982, typescript original.
84. Ja A. Jahannes, November 18, 1982, typescript original.
86. Elaine Kuracina, October 15, 1982, holograph and newscutting.
89. Louis, June 3, 1982, typescript original.
91. The Right Reverend Paul Moore, Jr., April 28, 1982, typescript original.
93. Frederick O'Neal, September 21, 1982, postcard/holograph.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95.</td>
<td>Max J. Rosenberg</td>
<td>June 18, 1982</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>96.</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>April 27, 1982</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<td>97.</td>
<td>George H. Stein</td>
<td>January 4, 1982</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>98.</td>
<td>Ric Wellwood</td>
<td>November 3, 1982</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>99.</td>
<td>Frank Avellino</td>
<td>March 17, 1983</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<td>100.</td>
<td>John Bielenberg</td>
<td>February 4, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>101.</td>
<td>Cheryl Black</td>
<td>April 29, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>102.</td>
<td>Carole B. Davies</td>
<td>March 8, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>103.</td>
<td>Claude Fawcett</td>
<td>February 16, 1983</td>
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<td>Howard Gotlieb</td>
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<td>Rodger Allen Hall</td>
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<td>Ja A. Jahannes</td>
<td>February 10, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>107.</td>
<td>Ja A. Jahannes</td>
<td>March 16, 1983</td>
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<td>108.</td>
<td>ASJ</td>
<td>September 21, 1983</td>
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<td>110.</td>
<td>Susan Kinelson</td>
<td>May 18, 1983</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<td>111.</td>
<td>Jerry Lapidus</td>
<td>March 7, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>112.</td>
<td>Kenneth A. Marvald</td>
<td>May 2, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>113.</td>
<td>Mical</td>
<td>May 1, 1983</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<td>114.</td>
<td>Henry Miller</td>
<td>January 18, 1983</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>115a.</td>
<td>Frederick O'Neal</td>
<td>October 6, 1983</td>
<td>photocopy</td>
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<tr>
<td>115b.</td>
<td>Carole Powell</td>
<td>July 26, 1983</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<tr>
<td>115c.</td>
<td>Toy Cooke Thompson</td>
<td>December 1983</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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<td>116.</td>
<td>William Branch</td>
<td>January 28, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>117.</td>
<td>Ja A. Jahannes</td>
<td>April 23, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>118.</td>
<td>Eva Jessye</td>
<td>January 9, 1984</td>
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<td>119.</td>
<td>Eva Jessye</td>
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<td>typescript</td>
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<td>120.</td>
<td>Milton Meltzer</td>
<td>January 3, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>121.</td>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>May 17, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>122.</td>
<td>Audrey Smedley</td>
<td>November 29, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>123.</td>
<td>Percy Sutton</td>
<td>August 28, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>124.</td>
<td>Scott L. Ufford</td>
<td>January 25, 1984</td>
<td>typescript</td>
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<td>125.</td>
<td>Lucille Arazullo</td>
<td>February 7, 1985</td>
<td>holograph</td>
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126. Henri Brown, April 1, 1985, typescript original.
129. Clifford Clark, April 10, 1985, typescript original.
132. Dick Gaffield, August 27, typescript original.
140. Steve Park, April 26, 1985, holograph.
143. George Stein, May 1, 1985, typescript original.

Undated
144. Jerri Alexander, holograph on a brochure.
145. Bill, holograph on back of invitation.
146. Carol Dale, holograph.
147. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, signed portrait.
148. Francesca, holograph.
149. Gloria, holograph.
150. Bill Johnson, holograph.
151. Steve Koren, holograph.
152. Mel Leiman, holograph.
153. Michael D. Quinn, holograph on back of playbill.
154. Betsy Reinstein, holograph.
156. Roy, (James T. White Publisher), holograph.
157. Aaron Sugarman, holograph.
158. Vernon Washington, holograph and photocopy.

Greeting Cards 1947-1976 and undated
159. Lenore Wheatly, January 25, 1947, an envelope, no actual card.
163. Sister, August 6, 1974.
165. Sarah Wright, August 11, 1974.
167. Mother, undated.
170. Board of Directors, Library Action Committee or Corona-East Elmhurst, and the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center, undated.
171. Don, Jeanne, Joanne and Chuck, undated.
172. Ron Wiggins, undated.
173. Helen Steiner Rice, undated.
174. Doug and Sally Owen, undated.
175. Fritzie, undated.
176. Jay et al., undated.
177. Jeanne, undated.

1963-1971
1. Dr. Brummet, April 30, 1963, carbon copy.

1976-1978

1980-1981
17. John Bielenberg and Professor Muhammad, September 22, 1981, typescript original.
30. Mr. Quackenbush, November 12, 1981, carbon copy.
33. Larry Williams and Glen Belgrave, October 7, 1981, typescript original.
34. Unknown (re: Patricia Whittaker), October 22, 1981, carbon copy.
35. Unknown (Mr. President), November 11, 1981, carbon copy.

1982

40. Clifford Clark, April 8, 1982, carbon copy.
42. Ja A. Jahannes, June 8, 1982, carbon copy.
43. Tom Kremer, March 1, 1982, carbon copy.
44. Michael (Pelter?), May 22, 1982, carbon copy.
50. To whom it may concern (re: George Brown), May 4, 1982, carbon copy and undated typescript original.
51. To whom it may concern (re: Kimberly Ann Constine), March 31, 1982, typescript original.
52. To whom it may concern (re: Eva Dunbar), February 3, 1982, typescript original.
53. To whom it may concern (re: Michael Pelter), May 21, 1982, carbon copies (2).
54. To whom it may concern (re: Clarissa Robinson), February 5, 1982, carbon copy.
55. To whom it may concern (re: Bernardo Rosa Jr.), April 6, 1982, carbon copy.

1983
58. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, July/August 1983?, carbon copy.
59. Kari, January 12, 1983, holograph on envelope and Bubbling Brown Sugar tour schedules of rehearsals, performances, and travel times.
60. Denise Josephs, August 8, 1983, photocopy.
63. Rory Monteith, April 29, 1983, holograph on manila envelope.
64. Scott Ufford, August 8, 1983, photocopy.

1984-1985
68. Christian P. Gruber, April 24, 1984, photocopy.
72. Unknown, June 28, 1985, photocopy.
73. Unknown, November 16, 1985, carbon copy.

Undated
74. Debbie, holograph.
75. Woodie, holograph.

Part 2

BOX 8 Third Party Correspondence

1946-1982
7. Ossie Davis to Joint Awards Council, October 31, 1973, typescript original.
10. Donald C. Farber to Ann Elmo, November 1, 1979, photocopy.
12. Margaret Halliwell to the People's Theatre, March 1, 1946, typescript original.
17. Leyzatta Morris (?), circa early 1940's, holograph.
19. Dyann Robinson to Arline Cone, January 30, 1979, typescript original.
22. Vernon Washington to the
1983-1985

24. Dick Campbell to invitees of the Sickle Cell Disease Foundation, July 1, 1983, photocopy.
27. Frederick O’Neal to Friend, January 4, 1985, photocopy.
29. Lhezia Thompson to Gladys Blair, April 15, 1983, typescript original.
30. A.S. to AAAS faculty, December 13, 1984, memo carbon copy.

Undated

32. Bill Mitchell to Friend of the NAACP, photocopy.
33. Asa T. Spaulding to Spaulding Family Member, photocopy.

Telegrams/Mailgrams

Incoming

40. The Tell Pharaoh Co., Brooklyn Center, Long Island University, March 2, 1976.
42. Leon Summit, telegram, March 2, 1976.
44. Ted Kennedy, October 23, 1981.
Outgoing

To members of the family of Claude Buddy Young from Horace Carter and Loften Mitchell, September 8, 1983, photocopy of mailgram.

Third Party

Clifford D. Clark to Warren M. Anderson, telegram, (with "Best Wishes" to Loften), undated.

BOX 9

Biographical Material

Articles, Interviews and Reviews

Cat from Harlem sees a oneness, in the Los Angeles Times, July 24, 1968. Article about Loften Mitchell by Cecil Smith, photocopy.

From Harlem to Broadway: Loften Mitchell offers students bubbling savvy, in SUNY - Inside, October 8, 1981. Article about Loften Mitchell by Hal Smith.


Newsmakers: from Harlem to Broadway, February 1985, photocopy. Publication and author unknown.

SHOWBIZ, copies from March, April, May, September and October 1985.

A word about American Folk Theatre, in the AFT Newsletter, 1986? Interview with Loften Mitchell.


Assorted newspaper reviews of Bubbling
Brown Sugar productions.

10c. Assorted newspaper reviews of Carver.

10d. Assorted newspaper reviews of A Land Beyond the River.


Miscellaneous Personal Materials


12. Church programs (2) from the U.S. Naval Hospital, Shoemaker, CA.

13. Part of class assignment by Miss Rowe Wright for Loften Mitchell's class in Professional Writing, 1946.

14. Banks Independent Political Association club card, June 8, 1944.


16. G. C. Dewey Corporation Common Stock dividend check for $0.75.

17. Note for Loften Mitchell with the business card for Edward W. Allen.

18. Contralto Carol Brice, newspaper and date unknown.

19. The Harlem Eye and Ear Hospital members card #34333.


22. 3rd Annual Community Awards Banquet program, April 24, 1982.


25. Talladega College

26. Talladega College football squad roster for the Homecoming game, November 11, 1939.

27. Draft of letter requesting monetary contributions for a gift for departing friend, Dr. William Jacobs Knox, Jr., 1942.
28. Our Town program (stage managed by Loften Mitchell), April 24, 1943.
29. Note from the Registrar's Office to Loften Mitchell, May 14, 1943.
30. Voucher #25015 for check of $10.00 paid by Loften Mitchell to Talladega Reunion, August 7, 1981.
31. Edited pages (3-6) from the Talladega College reunion article, undated, typescript original.
32. Talladega College/Still Shinning Brightly, by Loften Mitchell, undated.
33. Talladega College Arts Festival 1979, program.
33a. standing in the middle of me, a literary magazine, Spring 1982.
34. Gramercy Park Cinema Program, 1938.
35. Two season tickets for The People's Theatre Repertory, 1946.
36. Poster for A Land Beyond the River.
37. Ticket to President Johnson's inauguration ceremonies, 1965.
38. Poster for Ballad Antiqua, October 1971.
40. Ticket from Game 3 of the Yankees 1978 Playoff series, undated
41. Ticket from The People's Theatre, undated.
42. Lyceum Series posters from Savannah State College, 1982-1983.
43. Cartoons for a Lunch Hour.
44. A Gypsy Girl.
45. Miss Waters, to you.
46. The Phonograph.
47. A Song for Langston Hughes.
48. Songs I Heard Mahalia Sing.
49. Tell Pharaoh, June 29, 1975.
51. Tell Pharaoh program draft.
52. Long Day's Journey into Night.
53. Symphony in Black.
53a. Timbuktu!
Department of African-American Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Tenth Anniversary Celebration.

Photographs

54. Loften Mitchell with Floyd Strayhorn, 1979 (color).

55. Loften Mitchell at the 20th Fine Arts Festival, Talladega College, 1979?, (bxw).

56. Loften Mitchell at the 20th Fine Arts Festival, Talladega College, 1979?, (bxw).


58. Lauren Ashley Williams, 1983, (color).

Awards (Personal)


61. Yearbook Dedication to Loften Mitchell by the S. Randolph Edmonds Players, 1980.

62. Black Student Union Award 1981-82.

Awards (Family)


64. Louis Mitchell, Educator of the Year. Newscipping from The Scranton Times, September 30, 1982.

BOX 10 Business Materials

1975-1976


1980-1982

4. Simulated backers’ audition, Theatre
Proposal for Playwright's Program at SUNY-Binghamton, September 1981 - June 1, 1982.


Receipts from Tell Pharaoh production. Letter of Agreement between Loften Mitchell and Irving Burgie for Ballad for Bimshire (2 copies).

President Clifford Clark, October 12, 1981 from Loften Mitchell concerning monetary loans for the production of Tell Pharaoh. Addendum: receipts for donations and payment of employees.


Correspondence concerning the legal issues between Loften Mitchell and the Atlanta Renaissance Theater, 1981-1982.

Pat Reynolds from Loften Mitchell, February 10, 1982.


Office of Sponsored Program Development monthly report.

Blank agreement and contract forms.

Constitutional information concerning the Playwrights Program.

Prospectus for funding The Martin Luther King, Jr. Theatre Inc.

Playwrights Program press releases, playbills, and posters.

Playwrights Program completed vouchers.

BOX 11 Miscellaneous Materials

1. Eva Jessye for Kansas Ambassador for the Arts materials.
3. Journals and publications.
4. Manuscripts written by former students. There are numerous term papers, essays,
digests and criticism of plays by Loften Mitchell's students. These are located in the last file drawer of the University Archives, and in alphabetical order by student name.


BOX 12

Oversized Materials


3. *Carver*, musical score for “Thru the Years, I will Remain with You”, undated, photocopy.

Revised BTK 1/95
MH: sks 4/9/87

Addenda

Box 2 Item 13 *Miss Ethel Walker*, undated photocopy

Box 9 Item 38b *Tell Pharaoh* poster drafts and notes

Item 65 "Stage Outlet for Mitchell's Writing Talent, " Vestal News, 3/17/83, photocopy

Prepared by: Julie Boerst
Date: 6/22/99