

LUVENA W. DETHRIDGE COLLECTION, 1927-1954

Collection #s:

M 523

OMB 56

Table of Contents

[User Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Box and Folder Listing](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by:
Wilma L. Gibbs
3 October 1995

USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: .5 manuscript box; 1 oversize box

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1927-1954; Bulk 1927-1935

PROVENANCE: Elizabeth H. Kelley, New Paris, Ohio

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 95.0760X

NOTES: The Luvena Wallace Dethridge Collection was donated during the Black Women in the Middle West Project.

The Black Women in the Middle West Project was a collecting effort to gather primary source materials of African-American women in Illinois and Indiana. The project, spearheaded by Darlene Clark Hine and Patrick Bidelman at Purdue University, was conducted in three phases from 1977-1985. Project records are located at five repositories within two states including the Indiana Historical Society (IHS) [also houses the project's administrative records], Calumet Regional Archives, and the Northern Indiana Historical Society in Indiana and the Chicago Historical Society and the Illinois State Historical Society in Illinois. (Although the implementation phase of the project was from 1984-1985, several of the collections were donated to IHS in 1986).

Additional information about the project is contained in *The Black Women in the Middle West Project: A Comprehensive Resource Guide, Illinois and Indiana* (E 185.6 .B53 1986), edited by Hine and Bidelman, et. al. and Wilma L. Gibbs's article, "In Retrospect: The Black Women in the Middle West Project at the Indiana Historical Society," *Indiana's African-American Heritage: Essays from Black History News & Notes* (E 185.93 .I4 B52 1993).

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Mary Luvena Wallace Dethridge (most commonly known as Luvena Wallace Dethridge) was born in Richmond, Indiana on 22 March 1894. Her parents were Luther and Laura Wallace. She was married to Boston Dethridge, a worker at Reid Memorial Hospital who died in 1979.

Dethridge attended public schools in Richmond. She studied with Samuel Garton, one-time Department of Music chairperson at Earlham College. Under Garton's tutelage, she spent time in Italy in 1929 and again in 1930, as a student and singer.

From 1919 to 1944, Luvena Dethridge worked at Reid Memorial Hospital as a cook, laundress, and maid and as a piston inspector for Perfect Circle, a Richmond plant. During the late 1920s through the 1940s, she also performed as a lyric soprano. She was an accomplished singer who performed at church and school programs, concerts, conventions, and plays.

Some of Dethridge's affiliations included the Sojourner Truth Club, National Association of Colored Women Clubs, Home Extension Club and Chorus, Readers Expression Club Guild, Richmond Senior Citizens Center and the Order of Eastern Star. She was a member of Mount Moriah Church in Richmond. A committed church woman from her youth, Dethridge regularly attended church, regardless of where she was Sunday morning. A concert in 1953 netted \$350 toward the construction of the Mary E. Hill Nursing Home for Aged Colored Women in Richmond. Luvena Dethridge died 27 September 1988.

Sources: Materials in the collection

The Black Women in the Middle West Project: A Comprehensive Research Guide, Illinois and Indiana (E 185.93 .I4 B52 1993).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection (.5 manuscript box and one oversize box) contains material related to the life and career of Mary Luvena Wallace Dethridge, a lyric soprano from Richmond, Indiana.

Folders 1 and 2 contain biographical information and photographs of Dethridge. The correspondence in folder 3 mostly pertains to her work as a musician. There are several programs, the majority of which list Dethridge as a participant. Dated from 1927 to 1954, they document Dethridge's participation in church and school programs, benefit concerts, conventions, meetings, and plays. A scrapbook (OMB 56, folder 3) containing programs and newspaper clippings provides evidence of the singer's activities between 1927-1944. Of particular note is time she spent in Italy in 1929 and again in 1930 as a student and singer. There is Italian identification and a passport in folder 5. Another scrapbook (OMB 56, folder 4), circa 1935, contains material related to the National Association of Colored Women. It includes information about Indiana and other state affiliations of the organization.

Dethridge worked at the Perfect Circle factory in Richmond. A 1944 edition of the company's newsletter, The Victory Circle is in folder 14. The collection also contains Central Baptist Theological Seminary correspondence (folder 15) and proceedings and a program booklet (folder 16) of the Central District Baptist Association.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box 1 Biographical Information; Correspondence; Programs; Advertisements; Scrapbooks FOLDER CONTENT

- 1 Biographical Information
- 2 (VC) Photographs of Luvena W. Dethridge
- 3 Correspondence, 1930-1941
- 4 Correspondence, 1945-1948, n.d.
- 5 Italian Identification and Passport
- 6 Receipts
- 7 Advertisements
- 8 (OMB 56) Advertisements (folders 1 and 2)
- 9 Programs including Dethridge, 1927-1954, n.d.
- 10 Other Programs, 1946-49
- 11 Clippings
- 12 (OMB 56) Personal Scrapbook (folder 3)
- 13 (OMB 56) Book of Honor An Album of the Builders of the National Association of Colored Women, ca. 1935 (folder 4)
- 14 Victory Circle newsletter, 1944
- 15 Central Baptist Theological Seminary
- 16 Central District Baptist Association

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Dethridge, Luvena Wallace (Mary Luvena Wallace), 1894-1988

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Dethridge, Luvena Wallace (Mary Luvena Wallace), 1894-1988--Photographs

Black Women in the Middle West Project

Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Indiana

Perfect Circle Companies

National Association of Colored Women

Afro-American singers--Indiana--Richmond

Sopranos (Singers)--Indiana--Richmond

World War, 1939-1945--Indiana

Concert programs

Richmond (Ind.)

END