

Collection #  
M1546  
OM0796

**CRYSTAL RHODES BLACK THEATER  
COLLECTION, 1945-2002**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Series Contents	4

Processed by

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August 2009

Revised October 2025

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Indiana Historical Society  
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

[www.indianahistory.org](http://www.indianahistory.org)

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	4 manuscript boxes, 1 half sized manuscript box, 1 oversized manuscript folder, 1 box of photographs, 1 videocassette tape, 9 digital files
COLLECTION DATES:	1945-2002
PROVENANCE:	Gift of Crystal Rhodes (IHS Clio Grant recipient), Indianapolis, IN
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Florabelle Wilson Collection, M731; Soul People Repertory Company, Inc., BV3422, SC2682
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2003.0068, 2005.0213, 2005.0326, 2022.0110; 2023.0053
NOTES:	

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Crystal Rhodes, an active participant in the Black theater scene and founder of the theater company Performance Plus, received an Indiana Historical Society Clio Grant to compile various items about the history of Black theater in Indianapolis.

Rhodes is a graduate of Arsenal Technical High School and Indiana University. She has a Masters' degree in sociology from Atlanta University. As child, she was part of Rev. Mose Laderson's Laderson Players group, which performed at Hillside Christian Church in the 1960s. Rhodes moved to the Bay Area in the early 1980s to pursue writing and while there she worked as a Public Relations Specialist, freelance writer, and playwright.

She returned to the Indianapolis area and brought the plays she had written in the Bay Area with her. She founded a theater company called Performance Plus but also was involved with Soul People Repertory Company and Asante Children's Theatre. Her plays *Stoops*, *Mama's Man*, *Crystal Palaces*, *The Trip*, *Blue Jazz Cabaret*, *Civil Wrongs*, *Who Killed Black Pride?* and *The Middle Passage* were staged in Indianapolis.

Rhodes is also a published author of two romance series, *Sin* and *The Stillwaters*. She also co-authors a cozy mystery series, *Grandmothers, Incorporated* with Lillie Barnett Evans under the name Evan Rhodes.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

"Welcome to the Writing World of Crystal V. Rhodes", [www.crystalrhodes.com](http://www.crystalrhodes.com)

"Q&A: Local Cozy Mystery Authors Team Up for New Thriller 'Retribution'." *Indianapolis Recorder*, 20 March 2025.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection was curated by Crystal Rhodes as part of a grant that the Indiana Historical Society received to document the history of Black theater in Indianapolis. Rhodes also contributed items from her personal collection acquired through her involvement in the Indianapolis theater scene. Of particular interest in the collection are nine oral history interviews and transcripts from notable individuals in the history of Black theatre in Indianapolis including Deborah Asante, Aquaila Barnes, Sandra Gay, Wilma Greene, Rev. Mose Laderson, Connie Oates-Allen, Crystal Rhodes, Ophelia Wellington, and Helen Whitelowe. Other items in the collection include correspondence, calendars, budgets, theatre programs, yearbooks, photographs, and newspaper clippings documenting Black theatre companies and performance spaces.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: History of Black Theatre in Indianapolis**

#### **CONTENTS**

Actors Ink

Actors Ink News Clippings

Afro American Children's Theatre

Afro American Children's Theatre

Asante Children's Theatre

Asante Children's Theatre, Contacts and Membership

Asante Children's Theatre, Grants and Development  
Plans, 1989–99

Asante Children's Theatre, General Correspondence,  
1996–99

Asante Children's Theatre Correspondence, re: SO-  
ACT, 1994–99

Asante Children's Theatre Correspondence, re: Budget  
and Finances

Asante Children's Theatre, Deborah Asante, founder

Asante Children's Theatre, Articles, 1989-2001

Asante Children's Theatre, Press Information, 1995–  
98

Asante Children's Theatre, Publicity and Programs,  
1990-1996

Asante Children's Theatre, Publicity and Programs,  
1997-2005

Asante Children's Theatre, Publicity and Programs,  
2014-2022

#### **CONTAINER**

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 1, Folder 12

Box 1, Folder 13

Box 1, Folder 14

Asante Children's Theatre, Yearbooks and Handbooks, 1995-2000	Box 1, Folder 16
Asante Children's Theatre, "The Middle Passage- A Live Historical Drama" videocassette	General Collection:
Black Arts Theatre, 1968-1972	Box 1, Folder 16
CLIO Grant: The History of African American Theatre in Indianapolis: 1960 to Present, 2001	Box 1, Folder 17
Freetown Village	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 3
Freetown Village Promotional Material	Box 2, Folder 1
Freetown Villager, 1985-2001	Box 2, Folder 2
Freetown Village News Clippings	Box 2, Folder 3
Laderson Family Players	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
Laderson Family Players, 1957-2000	Box 2, Folder 4
Performance Plus	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
Performance Plus, Correspondence, 1984-87	Box 2, Folder 5
Performance Plus, Correspondence, 1988	Box 2, Folder 6
Performance Plus, "Blue Jazz Cabaret"	Box 2, Folder 7
Performance Plus, "Crystal Palaces"	Box 2, Folder 8
Performance Plus, "Steal Away"	Box 2, Folder 9
Performance Plus, "Stoops"	Box 2, Folder 10
Performance Plus, "The Trip"	Box 2, Folder 11
Performance Plus, "Who Killed Black Pride?"	Box 2, Folder 12
Theatre Production Broad sides	OM0796 Folder 1 of 1
Theatre Related Clippings, 1960-1969	Box 2, Folder 13

Theatre Related Clippings, 1970-1979	Box 2, Folder 14
Theatre Related Clippings, 1980-1989	Box 2, Folder 15
Theatre Related Clippings, 1990-1994	Box 2 Folder 16
Theatre Related Clippings, 1995-1999	Box 3, Folder 1
Theatre Related Clippings, 2000-2001	Box 3, Folder 2
Soul People Repertory Theatre	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 6
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Correspondence, 1968-1986	Box 3, Folder 3
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Helen Whitelowe Memorial, 2014	Box 3, Folder 4
Soul People Repertory Theatre, History	Box 3, Folder 5
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Florabelle Wilson	Box 3, Folder 6
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Programs, 1945-1988 (1 of 2)	Box 3, Folder 7
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Programs, 1945-1988 (2 of 2)	Box 3, Folder 8
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Scripts	Box 3, Folder 9
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Articles	Box 3, Folder 10
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Indianapolis Star Articles	Box 3, Folder 11
Soul People Repertory Theatre, Images	Box 3, Folder 12
Spotlighters Dramatic Club	Box 3, Folder 13
Walker Theatre, 1987-2005	Box 3, Folder 14
Exteriors of Walker Theatre Building, 1979	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 7
Other programs and announcements	Box 3, Folder 15

## **Series 2: History of Black Theatre Oral Histories**

### CONTENTS

Deborah Asante, Transcript

Deborah Asante

Aquaila S. Barnes, Transcript

Aquaila S. Barnes, Independent Producer

Aquaila S. Barnes

Sandra Gay, Transcript

Sandra Gay

Wilma Greene, Transcript

Wilma Greene

Rev. Mose Laderson, Transcript

Rev. Mose Laderson

Connie Oates-Allen, Transcript

Connie Oates-Allen

Connie Oates-Allen, NAPI

Crystal Rhodes, Transcript

Crystal Rhodes

Ophelia Wellington, Transcript

Ophelia Wellington

Helen Whitelowe, Transcript

Helen Whitelowe

### CONTAINER

Box 3, Folder 16

[See digital file]

Box 3, Folder 17

Box 3, Folder 18

[See digital file]

Box 3, Folder 19

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 1

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 2

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 3

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 4

Box 4, Folder 5

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 6

[See digital file]

Box 4, Folder 7

[See digital file]

### Series 3: Crystal Rhodes Papers

#### CONTENTS

Scripts, "The Trip", n.d.

Professional Headshots, n.d.

Funeral Programs, ca. 1930s-2020

Family History, Hattie Williams Abstract of Title,  
1948

Fine Arts Guild Formal Tea at Reed's Hall, 1952  
[Florabelle Wilson]

Awards and Certificates, 1972-2011

"The Trip", Black Repertory Theatre, Berkeley,  
California, 1979

Publicity and Programs, [Performances outside  
Indiana] ca. 1979-1993

Journalism and Public Relations Work, 1979-2001

Correspondence, Center Stage: An Anthology of 21  
Contemporary Black-American Plays, 1981

"Getting By" Television Series, 1981

Pan Am Games Ceremonies, 1982

"Proud" After Party, San Francisco, California, 1982

"Stoops" Opening Night, San Francisco, California,  
1983

Rev. Jesse Jackson at St. John's Baptist Church, April  
1984

Production of "Steal Away", 1988

#### CONTAINER

Box 4, Folder 8

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 8

Box 4, Folder 9

Box 4, Folder 10

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 9

Box 4, Folder 11

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 10

Box 4, Folder 12

Box 4, Folder 13

Box 4, Folder 14

Box 4, Folder 15

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 11

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 12

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 13

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 14

Photographs,  
Box 1, Folder 15

Correspondence, Theatre Submissions and Permissions, 1988-2023	Box 4, Folder 16
Crispus Attucks Class of 1944, 50 <sup>th</sup> Reunion, 1994 [Florabelle Wilson]	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 16
Publicity and Programs, [Performances outside Indiana], 1995-2020	Box 4, Folder 17
Correspondence, Styx Mlhanga Residency, 1997-1998	Box 5, Folder 1
National Black Theatre Festival, 1999	Box 5, Folder 2
Book Program at Glendale Library, ca. 2000s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 17
Go on Girl! Book Club Nationals Convention, Indianapolis, ca. 2000s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 18
INCR Writers Conference, ca. 2000s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 19
Publicity, Sin Series, 2000-2010	Box 5, Folder 3
Book Signing for “Sin”, Elevator Book Store, Lafayette Square, 2001	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 20
Urban Arts Consortium Writing Group, 2001 [Crystal Rhodes & Nikki Giovanni]	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 21
Book Signing, Danner’s Book Store and Coffee Shop, 2003	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 22
Marguerite Press, Small Press Awards, 2003	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 23
Publicity, Grandmothers Incorporated, 2005-2023	Box 5, Folder 4
Correspondence, Script to Screen Experience, 2007	Box 5, Folder 5
Publicity, Singing a Song & Stillwaters Series, 2009-2022	Box 5, Folder 6
Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship Award, 2019	Box 5, Folder 7

