
Finding Aid to the Marvin X Papers, 1965-2006, bulk 1993-2006

Collection Number: BANC MSS 2006/217

The Bancroft Library

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Finding Aid Written By:

Marjorie Bryer

Date Completed:

January 2007

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Marvin X papers

Date (inclusive): 1965-2006,

Date (bulk): bulk 1993-2006

Collection Number: BANC MSS 2006/217

Creators : Marvin X, 1944-

Extent: Number of containers: 8 cartons, 1 box Linear feet: 10.2

Repository: The Bancroft Library

University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, California, 94720-6000 Phone: (510) 642-6481 Fax: (510) 642-7589 Email: bancref@library.berkeley.edu URL: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/>

Abstract: The Marvin X Papers document the life and work of playwright, poet, essayist, and activist Marvin X during the nineties and the first decade of the 21st Century. The papers include correspondence; Marvin X's writings; materials related to the Recovery Theatre; works by his children and colleagues; and resource files. Correspondence includes letters, cards, and e-mails; correspondents include Amiri Baraka and other prominent African-American intellectuals. Marvin X's writings include notebooks, drafts, and manuscripts of poetry, novels, plays, essays, and planned anthologies. Documents from the Recovery Theatre include organizational and financial records and promotional material. Writings by others include essays, scripts, and academic papers by his three daughters. Resource files include academic articles, e-mails, flyers, news clippings and programs that contextualize and document Marvin X's involvement as an activist, intellectual, and literary figure in the African American community in the Bay Area in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Photographs include snapshots of family, friends, colleagues, and productions at the Recovery Theatre.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Restrictions also apply to digital representations of the original materials. Use of digital files is restricted to research and educational purposes.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Marvin X Papers, BANC MSS 2006/217, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Alternate Forms Available

There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Separated Material

Printed materials, including poetry broadsides, have been transferred to the book collection of The Bancroft Library. Videotapes and DVDs/sound recordings have been transferred to the Microforms Collections of The Bancroft Library.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

X, Marvin, 1944-

African American poets

African American dramatists

African American scholars

African Americans--California

Black Arts movement

Acquisition Information

The Marvin X Papers were purchased by The Bancroft Library in 2006.

Accruals

No additions are expected.

Processing Information

Processed at the container level by Marjorie Bryer in 2006.

Biographical Information

Poet, playwright and essayist Marvin X was born Marvin E. Jackmon on May 29, 1944 in Fowler, California. He grew up in Fresno and Oakland, in an activist household. X attended Oakland City College (Merritt College), where he was introduced to Black Nationalism and became friends with future Black Panther founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. X earned a B.A. and M.A. in English from San Francisco State University and emerged as an important voice in the Black Arts Movement (BAM), the artistic arm of the Black Power movement, in the mid-to-late Sixties. X wrote for many of the BAM's key journals. He also co-founded, with playwright Ed Bullins and others, two of BAM's premier West Coast headquarters and venues - Oakland's Black House and San Francisco's Black Arts/West Theatre. In 1967, X joined the Nation of Islam and became known as El Muhajir. In the eighties, he organized the Melvin Black Forum on Human Rights and the first Annual All Black Men's Conference. He also served as an aide to former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver and attempted to create the Marvin X Center for the Study of World Religions. In 1999, X founded San Francisco's Recovery Theatre. His production of "One Day in the Life," the play he wrote about his drug addiction and recovery, became the longest-running African-American drama in Northern California. In 2004, in celebration of Black History Month, X produced the San Francisco Tenderloin Book Fair (also known as the San Francisco Black Radical Book Fair) and University of Poetry. X has taught Black Studies, drama, creative writing, journalism, English and Arabic at a variety of California universities and colleges. He continues to work as an activist, educator, writer, and producer.

System of Arrangement

Arranged to the container level.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Marvin X Papers document the life and work of playwright, poet, essayist, and activist Marvin X in the nineties and the first decade of the 21st Century. The papers include correspondence; Marvin X's writings; materials related to the Recovery Theatre; works by his children and colleagues; photographs; and resource files. Correspondence includes letters, cards and e-mails; correspondents include Amiri Baraka and

other prominent African-American intellectuals. Marvin X's writings include notebooks, drafts and manuscripts of poetry, novels, plays, essays, and planned anthologies. Documents from the Recovery Theatre include organizational and financial records and promotional material. Writings by others include essays, scripts, and academic papers by his three daughters. Resource files include academic articles, e-mails, flyers, news clippings, and programs that contextualize and document Marvin X's involvement as an activist, intellectual, and literary figure in the African American community in the Bay Area in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Photographs include snapshots of family, friends, colleagues, and productions at the Recovery Theatre.

Series 1 **Correspondence 1974, 1977, circa 1998-2005**

Physical Description: Carton 1

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence. Correspondents include Amiri Baraka and other prominent African-American intellectuals; subjects include the 2004 San Francisco Tenderloin Book Fair and University of Poetry, Black Bird Press, and the Recovery Theatre.

Carton 1, Folder 1-3 **Letters circa 1998-2005**

Carton 1, Folder 4 **Letters #4 - Black Radical Book Fair (San Francisco Tenderloin Book Fair) circa 2000-2004**

Carton 1, Folder **Letters circa 1998-2005**

5-14

Series 2 Writings circa 1993-2006

Physical Description: Cartons 1-6

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of notebooks, fragments, typescripts, manuscripts, page proofs, drafts, production notes, grant materials, and publicity materials. Includes poetry, drama, essays, novels, the literary journal Chickenbones, broadside poems, his autobiography, Somethin' Proper, and his long-running play about addiction and recovery, One Day in the Life.

Carton 1-3	Notebooks - #1-60 circa 1993-2006
Carton 3	Production Notes circa 2001
Carton 3	Writings/Notes - #1-6 circa 1993-2006
Carton 3	Chickenbones: A Journal and Broadside Poems circa 1995-2005
Carton 4	In the Crazy House Called America: Essays - Drafts and Page Proofs 2002
Carton 4	Somethin' Proper: The Life and Times of a North American African Poet - Drafts and Page Proofs 1994-1998
Carton 4	Muslim American Literature (Printed Texts, Compiled for an Anthology) undated
Carton 4	One Day in the Life (A Drama of Addiction and Recovery) - Draft 1996
Carton 4	"In the Name of Love: A Poetic Drama" - Typescript 1999
Carton 4	"Book Project #4: Fables Parables" - Manuscript and Typescript 1999, undated
Carton 5	Abstract for a Publishing Grant 2006
Carton 5	In the Crazy House - Drafts (#1 and Final) 2002
Carton 5	Love and War: Poems - Corrected Page Proofs 1995
Carton 5	"Why Don't You Say You Love Me" (Poem) - Manuscript (Photocopy) 2005
Carton 5	Mama Said: A Novel (Photocopied Manuscript) and Manuscript (Books 1-3) circa 2006
Carton 5	"Marvin X: 5 Plays" (Flowers for the Trashman, Take Care of Business, Blackbird, One Day in the Life, and Sargeant Santa) circa 1965, 1997, 2002, undated
Carton 5	Sweet Tea, Dirty Rice: Poems - Manuscript and Typescript undated
Carton 5	Toward Radical Spirituality - Parts 1 and 2, Manuscript 2005
Carton 6	"Marvin X: A Critical Look into the Mouth of a Poet" (A Collection of Essays About and Reviews of Marvin X) undated
Carton 6	Up from Ignorance: Essays (Manuscript and Typescript) circa 2003-2006
Carton 6	In Sha' Allah: A Personal History of Black Muslims in the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area - Typescript circa 2003
Carton 6	Press Releases circa 1998
Carton 6	Promotion (Includes Playbills) circa 1997-1998

Series 3 Recovery Theatre circa 1998-2004

Physical Description: Carton 6

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of materials related to the San Francisco Tenderloin Book Fair and University of Poetry, organizational records, grant applications, financial records, and programs, playbills and promotional materials for Kings and Queens of Black Consciousness and One Day in the Life.

Carton 6	Recovery Theatre #1 - Black Book Fair 2004
Carton 6	Recovery Theatre #2-#10 circa 1998-2004
Carton 6	Programs, Playbills and Promotional Materials 1998, 2000-2001

Series 4 **Writings by Others 2003, undated**

Physical Description: Carton 7

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of manuscripts by Marvin X's three daughters, Amira Jackmon, Muhammida El Muhajir and Nefertitti Rhodes and a film script based on Marvin X's play, Flowers for the Trashman.

- Carton 7 **Amira Jackmon - "Notes from San Diego" and "Reparations for African Americans: A Distributive Justice Model" 2003, undated**
- Carton 7 **Muhammida El Muhajir - Color Lines and Around the Way Girl undated**
- Carton 7 **Nefertitti Rhodes - "This Is His Love" undated**
- Carton 7 **Mel Stewert [Stewart?] - "Flowers for the Trashman, a Film Script" undated**

Series 5 **Resource Files circa 1993-2006**

Physical Description: Cartons 7-8

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of approximately 26 folders organized by Marvin X as "Articles, Leaflets" and "Ephemera." These consist of news clippings, academic articles, programs, brochures, e-mails, flyers, ephemera, and Xeroxed photographs. These materials document Marvin X's involvement as an activist, intellectual, and literary figure in the African American community in the Bay Area and cover a broad range of topics, including the Black Panther Party, African American writers, African American politics, the Black Arts Movement and African liberation movements.

Carton 7-8	Articles, Leaflets circa 1993-2006
Carton 8	Marvin X - Ephemera circa 1999-2002
Carton 8	Marvin X - Literary Biography circa 2001-2003

Series 6 **Photographs circa 1993-2006**

Physical Description: Box 1

Arrangement

Arranged in order received.

Scope and Content Note

Consists of snapshots and Xeroxed copies of photographs of family, friends, and colleagues, as well as photos of productions at the Recovery Theatre and Kings and Queens of Black Consciousness.

Box 1	Family Photos circa 1993-2006
Box 1	Recovery Theatre circa 1998-2004
Box 1	Kings and Queens of Black Consciousness circa 2001
Box 1	Black Radical Photos circa 1993-2006