

Collection #
M 1141

**MINNIE WHITE RANSOM
COLLECTION, CA. 1930–2001**

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Processed by

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 color photograph boxes, 1 manuscript box, 1 OVA photograph folder, 1 photograph box

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1930-2001

PROVENANCE:

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2001.0481

NOTES: Color photographs stored in cold storage and will require extra time for retrieval.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Minnie White Ransom (9 July 1913-1 February 2001), daughter of Tarsus and Minnie Branch White, was born in Arkansas. Minnie, her sister Mary White Young, and her brother Elijah Taylor White, were raised by their grandmother in Sedalia, Missouri where Minnie and her sister grew up playing the piano in church. Minnie graduated from the Julliard School located in the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. She entertained troops during World War II. Minnie, a talented musician, played professionally, traveling with the Nat Towles Orchestra. She also played with various groups as a pianist. While with Count Basie's orchestra, Minnie filled in as the main pianist when Basie became ill. Minnie met future husband, Frank B. Ransom, during their musical careers sometime around 1957.

Frank Breedlove Ransom (12 June 1913–20 November 1992), eldest of six children born to Freeman Briley and Nettie L. Cox Ransom, was born in Indianapolis. Freeman Briley (F.B.) Ransom was the longtime attorney and business manager for the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company. Frank attended Crispus Attucks High School and worked as a lifeguard at the Senate Avenue Young Men's Christian Association. After graduation from Attucks in 1930, Frank earned a Bachelor degree from Fisk University, and later a Masters degree from Valparaiso University. Frank also completed one year of law school in New York. He worked as a sales manager for the Walker Company in 1937 and served in the American Red Cross during World War II. Frank was a violinist. He and Minnie played in the jazz group, "Four Steps of Jive," Minnie as a pianist and Frank as the director and a violinist. Frank had two children from a previous marriage. Frank B. "Panky" Ransom, Jr. died in early childhood. Anthony E. Ransom, the second child, moved to Rhode Island. Frank retired as Supervisor of the Northwest Division of the Indiana Department of Corrections in 1982 after twenty-five years of service. Both Minnie and Frank were members of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

Minnie F. White Ransom Obituary in Black History Vertical Files, IHS

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Within the photograph collection there are approximately 700 images mostly of the Frank B. and Minnie White Ransom family and musicians. There are multiple articles removed from a scrapbook, mostly about the Four Steps of Jive band. There are 4 awards given to Frank Ransom, 1 diploma, 1 retirement autograph book, and funeral memorial programs.

The collection is divided into three series. The first contains items mostly pertaining to Minnie and Frank. There is a love letter from Frank to Minnie postmarked in May 1957. There are also several photographs of Frank and Minnie's house at Fox Lake located in Steuben County, Indiana, a popular resort area developed for African Americans during the 1930s. In this series there are also many pictures from different New Years parties and numerous images of Christmas decorations.

The second series focuses on Minnie and Frank's careers and musical acquaintances. There are many photographs of performers that have been signed and given to Minnie and/or Frank. Of significant note are photographs from Count Basie, Nat "King" Cole, Billy Eckstine, Lena (An early promotional photograph spelled her name with an additional "a" Leana.) Horne, and L.A. Smith. Also included are photographs from Minnie's tour with the Nat Towles Orchestra. Nat Towles was an African American jazz and big band leader who was especially popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The tour traveled through the United States, mostly in the Midwest and South.

The final series contains content of family and friends Minnie and Frank collected over the years. Included are individual and group photographs of children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other family and friends. There are also photographs from Robert W. Anderson, Camille Cox White, Oett "Sax" Mallard. Located in Box 1, Folder 15 is a photograph of "Sax" with a note from him to Minnie and Frank.

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Series 1: Frank B. and Minnie White Ransom

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Minnie White Ransom	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 1
Minnie White Ransom, et al.	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 2
Minnie White Ransom, et al.	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 2
Frank B. and Minnie White Ransom	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 3
Frank B. and Minnie White Ransom	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 3
Frank B. and Minnie White Ransom, et al.	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
Frank B. Ransom	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
Frank B. Ransom	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
Frank B. Ransom, et al.	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
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Crispus Attucks High School, 1930	Box1, Folder 2
Frank B. Ransom's Master's degree from Valparaiso University, 1975	Box 1, Folder 3

Indiana Correctional Association Award, 1980	Box 1, Folder 4
Commendation of Service Award, 1982	Box 1, Folder 5
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Funeral Condolence Cards, 1992	Box 1, Folder 7
Frank B. Ransom Funeral Memorabilia, 1992	Box 1, Folder 8
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Snow Storm, 1979	Color Photographs, Box 1, Folder 13
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Series 2: Music

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
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Opening of Music Headquarters	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 15
Nat Towles Tour 1942-Folder One of Three	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 16
Nat Towles Tour 1942-Folder Two of Three	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 17

Nat Towles Tour 1942-Folder Three of Three

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 18

Steps of Jive Newspaper Clippings

Box 1, Folder 11

Series 3: Individuals and Groups

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Palmer Family Photos

CONTAINER

Color Photographs,
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Barbara Boyd

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Obituaries

Box 1, Folder 12

Bethel A.M.E. Church

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Box 2, Folder 4

House Interior

Color Photographs,
Box 2, Folder 5

House Interior

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House Exterior

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Street Scenes

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Box 2, Folder 7