



Paul Robeson Concert Police Documents

Collection Summary

Title:	Paul Robeson Concert Police Documents
Call Number:	MS 86-12
Size:	1.5 linear feet
Acquisition:	Source unknown
Processed By:	Unknown, 1986; MN, 10-2008
Note:	None
Restrictions:	None

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Restrictions

None

Content Note

The Paul Robeson Concert Police Documents collection includes information about events preceding the September 4, 1949, Robeson concert in Peekskill, New York, and the concert itself. The information is in the form of police reports, bus driver statements, memos, letters, newspaper clippings, duty rosters, and communist propaganda.

Biography

Born in Princeton, New Jersey, on April 9, 1898, the son of an ex-slave, Paul Robeson became a world-renown scholar, actor, athlete and singer. At the pinnacle of his artistic career in the 1940s, Robeson turned his attention to human rights, becoming an eloquent, often controversial spokesperson against racism and discrimination. He died in 1976 in Philadelphia. (Source: Public Broadcasting System)

Detailed Description: Box and Folder Listing

Box 1	FF 1	Reports: (1) Police report, August 29, 1949 (standard form); (2) Police report, August 29, 1949 (standard form); (3) Police report, August 29, 1949 (standard form); (4) Police report presented to Thomas E. Dewey, September 6, 1949, from George M. Fanelli; (5) Police report presented to Thomas E. Dewey, September 9, 1949, from John A. Gaffney; (6) Police report presented to Thomas E. Dewey, September 9, 1949, from John A. Gaffney; (7) Statement by Governor Thomas E. Dewey, September 14, 1949; (8) Police report presented to Thomas E. Dewey, September 6, 1949, from George M. Fanelli; (9) Police report to Thomas E. Dewey, September, 8, 1949, from Fred W. Ruscoe (2 copies); (10) Press release "Statement by Governor Dewey" September 15, 1949; (11) Police report to Frederick Ruscoe for Lt. Louis Giancola, October 17, 1949.
Box 1	FF 2	Letter: (1) to Arthur G. Sammarco from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-12-49; (2) to unknown from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-15-49; (3) to Herbert C. Gerlach from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-15-49; (4) to Thomas Landy from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-19-49; (5) to Robert Gekert from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-19-49; (6) to Fred W. Ruscoe from Michael J. Brennan 9-12-45; (7) to B. Richter Townsend from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-22-49; (8) to Chief Louis Censaga from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-22-49; (9) to Fellow Officer from Fred W. Ruscoe 9-23-49.
Box 1	FF 3	Police Reports: (1) Police report, September 9, 1949; (2) Police report, September 10, 1949; (3) Police report, September 11, 1949; (4) Police report, September 12, 1949; (5) Letter: to Fred W. Ruscoe from Louis R. Yaguda, regarding complaint 2-2-50.
Box 1	FF 4	Miscellaneous: (1) Newspaper clipping, <i>New York Herald Tribune</i> , "Dewey Holds 'Red Guards' Incited Riots," 9-15-49; (2) Summary letter to Mr. Joseph Reed from State Police; (3) Police report, March 31, 1950; (4) Police report, March 31, 1950 (copy); (5) Police report, April 4, 1950.
Box 1	FF 5	Correspondence: (1) Police report, August 29, 1949; (2) Police report, August 29, 1949; (3) Police report, August 29, 1949; (4) letter: to John E. Hoy from John E. Loucher 9-2-49; (5) to John E. Hoy from John E. Loucher 9-2-49; (6) to Franklin Bowman from Anthony (no date); Memo from Edward M. Snyder 8-27-49; (7) List of 5 cars overturned 8-27-49 (license nos.); (8) Complaint report.
Box 1	FF 6	Meeting Information: (1) Summary of meetings and plans for Paul Robeson concert; (2) Police report to Thomas E. Dewey from Fred Ruscoe 9-8-49.
Box 1	FF 7	Bus Driver Interviews and Reports: (1) Eight memorandums to George Fanelli from John E. Hoy; (2) Police report, Demonstration, 7-28-49; (3) Police Report, Questioning of Bus Drivers and Officials, 9-29-49; (4) Police Report, Questioning of Bus Drivers and Officials, 9-29-49; (5) Police Report, Questioning of Bus Drivers and Officials, 9-29-49; (6) Five Police reports, 10-7-49, 10-7-49, 10-11-49, 10-14-49, 10-14-49 regarding buses used during Robeson concert; (7) Memo to Chief Criminal Investigator Franklin J. Bowman 9-27-49; (8) Report (2 copies) on buses hired out for concert; (9) Questionnaires for bus drivers of Robeson concert; (10) Bus driver statements; (11) Notes on lined papers written by hand on pencil.
Box 1	FF 8	Reports to Governor Dewey about Robeson Concert: (1) Letter to Fred Ruscoe from Louis Yaguda 8-31-49; (2) List of commands from Command

Post 9-4-49; (3) Excerpts from police report 9-4-49; (4) Letter 9-6-49 to George Fanelli from John Sheridan; (5) Report 9-6-49 to Governor Dewey from George Fanelli concerning riotous situations; (6) Letter 9-8-49 to Sheriff from John McCloskey regarding proper training received by his men for mass disorder; (7) Memorandum to Sheriff Fred Ruscoe from John Hoy regarding an attempted arson; (8) Report to Governor Dewey from Fred Ruscoe regarding preparation of crowd control at Robeson concert; (9) Letter to Fred Ruscoe from Lawrence V. Bird relating thanks for protection during concert 9-9-49; (10) Report to Governor Dewey from John Graffney regarding preparation of crowd control at Robeson Concert; (11) Statement by Governor Dewey regarding meeting of communist party 9-14-49; (12) Letter: to William Slater from John Hoy regarding expenditures 9-19-49; (13) to The Superintendent from John Hoy regarding expenditures 9-19-49; (14) to Highland Press Commercial Printers from John Hoy concerning expenditures 9-19-49; (15) to Mr. Maurice Gross from John Hoy concerning expenditures 9-19-49; (16) to Joseph Ponko from Fred Ruscoe relating appreciation for thanks from V.F.W. Post 3083 for police protection (letter of thanks attached) 9-23-49; (17) Handwritten note to unknown from FJR regarding unpaid office for Robeson concert duty 9-26-49; (18) Police report to George Fanelli from John Hoy concerning Robeson concert 9-26-49; (19) Police report to George Fanelli from John Hoy concerning Robeson concert 9-26-49 (different from previous report); (20) Memorandum to all court officers; (21) Handwritten note to Lieutenant Jacoba from unknown regarding "Red Remarks."

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| Box 1 | FF 9 | Policeman Covering Robeson Concert: This folder contains the police officer assignments made to work at the Robeson Concert. The folder also contains handwritten notes on initial assignment of duty. |
| Box 1 | FF 10 | Preliminary Data Reports Concerning Robeson Concert of 9-4-49: (1) Map of area in which concert was to be held (town of Courtlandt); (2) Map of concert area with roads and police posts stationed for concert; (3) Schedule of Patrol Posts; (4) Police Report of 9-8-49 to Governor Dewey from Fred Ruscoe concerning incidents of Robeson concert 9-4-49; (5) List. Distribution of Police Officers to posts. |
| Box 1 | FF 11 | Police Reports of Robeson Concert of 9-4-49: (1) Letter of unknown date to John Hoy from William Comey listing officers who report hearing "inflammatory remarks and verbal attacks" on veterans by speakers at concert; (2) Peekskill Report by John Hergenhan concerning incidents at concert; (3) Police Report of 9-19-49 to John Donegan from John Parly, #16 about concert; (4) Police Report of 9-29-49 to Chief of Police - Hastings on Hudson from Walter Bassett, #20 about concert; (5) Police Report of 9-29-49 to Chief Donegan from Henry Hecht, #24 about concert; (6) Police Report of 9-29-49 to John Donegan from George Lotito, #15 about concert; (7) Police Report of 9-30-49 to John Hoy from George Burrows about concert; (8) Police Report of 10-4-49 to Fred Ruscoe from Sergt. P. Bradley about concert; (9) Police Report of unknown date to Fred Ruscoe from Frank Nask about concert; (10) Police Report of 10-12-49 to Chief Spencer from Patrolman Henry Norman concerning concert; (11) Police Report 10-19-49 to Fred Ruscoe from Patrolman Alvin Pulliam concerning concert; (12) Police Report of unknown date to Act. Chief Spencer from Officer Bora, #7 concerning concert; (13) Police Report of unknown date to Sheriff Ruscoe from Sergeant Oscar Granath concerning concert. |

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| Box 1 | FF 12 | Letters concerning Case #875: (1) Letter of 8-28-49 to President of Peekskill Chamber of Commerce from Arthur Behrstock; (2) Letter of 8-28-49 to Editor of Peekskill Star from Arthur Behrstock regarding acts of fascism; (3) List of biblical verses and their application to the government (no date); (4) Memo of 10-10-49 to H. Ryder from Horace with attached propaganda from communist party; (5) Postcard to Fred Ruscoe from Mrs. M. Syd showing her displeasure about events at Peekskill. |
| Box 1 | FF 13 | John Spanko Statement: (1) Police Report of 12-20-49 including personal background of John Spanko's physical make-up, nationality and profession; (2) 2 copies of John Spanko's statement concerning place of work and plans made there for Robeson concert. |
| Box 1 | FF 14 | Biographical Information on Paul Robeson: Photocopied pages from <i>Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man</i> by Virginia Hamilton. |

For information, please contact us at:

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