**Paul Robeson Concert Police Documents**

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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-renowned 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 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 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."

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.

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.

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.


For information, please contact us at:

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