Fraser Drew/Langston Hughes Correspondence Collection
[1950-1967]

Descriptive Summary:

Title: Fraser Drew/Langston Hughes Correspondence Collection
Date Span: [1950-1967]
Acquisition Number: N/A
Creator: Fraser Drew; Langston Hughes
Donor: Fraser Drew
Date of Acquisition: ca. 1990
Extent: 1 folder; .25 linear ft.
Language: English
Location: Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State
Processed: 2007; Lauren Thompson, 2010

Information on Use:

Access: Fraser Drew/Langston Hughes Correspondence Collection is open for research.

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Biographical Note:

Langston Hughes was born on 1 February 1902 in Joplin, Missouri, and died on 22 May 1967. His maternal grandmother raised him in Lawrence, Kansas. According to Hughes, his grandmother inspired him to write, as she was a natural orator of black traditions. After his grandmother’s death, Hughes returned to his mother in Cleveland, Ohio, until he graduated from high school in 1920. In 1921, Hughes enrolled in an engineering program at Columbia University, but left after one year. For a few years, Hughes worked various blue- and white-collar jobs while he spent most of his time writing, as that was his passion. Langston Hughes began to publish numerous poems, and by 1926, he published his first book of poems, *The Weary Blues*. In 1929, he graduated from Lincoln University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Conscious of the importance of race relations and politics, Hughes published *The Way of White Folks* in 1934. The spectrum of Hughes’ writing grew as the years went by. He began to write many politically inspired poems, plays (such as *Mulatto* and *Don’t You Want to Be Free*?), and autobiographies. Hughes also wrote books that supported his consciousness of race relations like *Jim Crow’s Last Stand* and *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. Writing was Hughes’ main contribution to black history, though he also served as a social activist. He traveled the world, expanding his horizons on black issues and became well-known as a radical democrat. Langston Hughes faced many obstacles during the prime years of his publications as his critics viewed him as being too extreme. He was able to hurdle these obstacles as he persevered. Today, Hughes is remembered as an essential figure in black history. He had the ability of writing the relevant problems within that community at a time when the American public consciously ignored such issues. Langston Hughes devoted his time to writing poems, novels, dramas, and numerous articles.

Fraser Drew had the opportunity to keep in contact with Hughes during the peak of his career. Dr. Drew was a professor of English at SUNY Buffalo State for decades; he retired in 1983. He received his Ph.D. in English Literature from the University at Buffalo in 1952. His interest in African American literature motivated him to follow Langston Hughes’ career closely, and this led him to reach out to Hughes directly. Hughes responded by keeping open communication with Drew for a number of years. The SUNY Buffalo State Archives and Special Collections contains the correspondence between Drew and Hughes.

Scope and Contents:
10 letters; 6 postcards; 4 Christmas cards
**Arrangement:**
Letters arranged chronologically

**Inventory:**

**Folder 1:**

Ten letters:

- Letter written by Nate White on behalf of Langston Hughes. Acknowledgement of Fraser Drew’s request for Langston Hughes’ autograph on two books. Envelop included. 23 June 1950. TLS.
- Letter written by Langston Hughes. Acknowledgement of Fraser Drew as well as his students’ interest in obtaining Hughes’ autograph on copies of books written by Hughes. Envelop included. 5 October 1950. TLS.
- Langston Hughes advised Fraser Drew of his lack of first editions of his books. Envelop included. 9 January 1951. TLS.
- Langston Hughes provided Fraser Drew with a list of the foreign publication of his Knopf books for a student in Drew’s class. Envelop included. 22 March 1951. TLS.
- Langston Hughes advised Fraser Drew that he would like to meet the next time Drew is in New York City. Envelop included. 28 January 1957. ALS.
- Langston Hughes advised Fraser Drew that he was trying to contact him via telephone when Drew was in Manhattan, in an attempt to meet with him. Hughes offered to meet Drew in Buffalo, NY, on his next tour. Envelop included. 28 April 1959. TLS.
- Langston Hughes advised Fraser Drew of his upcoming trip to Buffalo, NY. 28 January 1960. TLS.
- Langston Hughes expressed his regrets to Fraser Drew, as he was recently in Buffalo, NY, and did not have time to meet with him. Envelop included. 18 June 1964. ALS.
- Letter from Raoul Abdul (Hughes’ assistant) informing Fraser Drew of Hughes’ private telephone number. 31 January 1967. TLS.

Additional materials: Correspondence between Langston Hughes and Fraser Drew, 1950-1967.

- Six postcards.
- Four Christmas cards, including personalized correspondence in ALS format.