

CAPE ANN Museum

Library & Archives

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HAZEL MAE ROTIMI COLLECTION

Creator:	Hazel Mae Rotimi; various
Dates:	1997-1998
Quantity:	0.5 linear feet (1 manuscript container)
Acquisition:	Accession #: 2008.48 ; Donated by: Sawyer Free Library
Identification:	A54 ; Archive Collection #54
Citation:	[Document Title]. The Hazel Mae Rotimi Collection, [Box #, Folder #, Item #], Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
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Language:	English
Finding Aid:	Processed 2009 by Peter Brown. Updated by Karla Kaneb, June 2020.

Biographical Note

Hazel Mae Rotimi was born in 1942 to Lane's Cove lobsterman Arthur Gaudreau and his wife Edna Ruth. Growing up in Lanesville was a major factor in shaping her life. She became acquainted with local artists such as Walker Hancock, Paul Manship, Leon Kroll, and Aristides Dimetrios, all of whom encouraged her artistic bent. It was local jazz trumpeter, Sylvester Ahola, who having heard her sing, invited the young Hazel to join him and his accordionist, Miriam Lane, in their concerts.

Finishing high school and following her father's wish, she applied for and was accepted at MIT and BU where she had planned on being a math major and physics minor. Showing a streak of

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independence, she enrolled instead at BU's School of Fine Applied Arts. It was here that she met and later married Olawale Emmanuel Rotimi in 1965. After the birth of their first child, the couple moved to Nigeria, where Hazel lived for the next 22 years. She immersed herself into the local culture, learning the language and performing in choral and dance groups. Founding her own group "The Brothers in Song," she produced the album "All My Father's Children." Hazel Mae also continued her interest in native pottery and taught creative arts at a local university. Increased violence in Nigeria prompted her return to Lanesville in 1989. Since then, she taught classes in Nigerian pottery techniques, organized concerts of African music, and presented dramatizations of Nigerian Folktales. She electrified an audience when she sang with the women's group Leven, giving a unique interpretation of a wolf woman. Hazel Mae passed away in 1999 at the age of 57.

Scope and Content of the Collection

The Sawyer Free Library gave the Rotimi papers to the Cape Ann Museum. Her hand-written biography spans the early Lanesville years to her marriage and life in Nigeria and her return to Gloucester. It details the artistic and cultural achievements in both Nigeria and Gloucester.

Upon her return to the United States, she formed a performance group, The Minori Miracles, which presented programs of Nigerian culture. The notebook "Nigerian Folktales" is the script for a program of stories for use in American schools. The notebook also contains many photos of Nigerian culture. The videos and cassettes also reflect her interests and accomplishments.

Series Description

- I. Series I: Documents, Manuscripts, Photos
 - II. Series II: Recordings: Videos and Cassettes
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Container List

Box I

Series I

1. Autobiography
2. Artists statement
3. Notebook Nigerian Folk Tales
4. Photos of Nigeria with comments
5. Nigerian Songs
6. Nigerian Costumes, textiles, styles
7. Pamphlet: A Family Covenant Honoring Mothers
8. Pamphlet: Ritual Drum Workshop

Series II

Videos

1. Muddy Waters Ogoni Pottery Festival 1 1998
2. Muddy Waters Ogoni Pottery Festival 2 1998
3. Abiku (Born to Die) Nigerian Folk Opera
4. African Folk Tales 1997
5. Old Befana (2 copies)

Cassettes

1. Igbako Orogun Mi & Duein Ilolo “MY Co-Wife’s Calabash”
2. A Family Concert Honoring Mothers
3. Singing Games
4. Legends of Old Women, Side A: Old Befana, Side B: La loba- Wolf Woman
5. Celebrating Rock and Water I: Ritual Drum Rhythms: Festival for the Goddess of Clay
6. Celebrating Rock and Water II: Ritual Drum Rhythms: Festival of the Goddess of Clay