



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe manuscript and research collection**

1790-1986 [bulk 1984-1986]

Sc MG 343

## Summary

**Creator:** Moutoussamy-Ashe, Jeanne, 1951-

**Title:** Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe manuscript and research collection

**Date:** 1790-1986 [bulk 1984-1986]

**Size:** 2.29 linear feet (7 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, September 1986.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe is a photographer, author, and lecturer. This collection comprises Moutoussamy-Ashe's work in developing Viewfinders, a historiographic photoessay project for publication.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Two items have been redacted due to personal information.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe manuscript and research collection, Sc MG 343, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Willa Thomas Edomobi, September 1986.

### Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio materials. For more information, please contact the division at [schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org](mailto:schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org) or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

## Creator History

A photographer, Jeanne Moutoussamy's work has appeared in *Life*, *Smithsonian*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Ebony*, *Essence*, *People*, and *The New York Times*. She has shown in solo and group exhibitions around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY; The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; Galerie Herve Odermat in Paris, France; and The Excelsior in Florence, Italy. She is the author of five books, including *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers* (1986); the 25th Anniversary Edition of *Daufuskie Island: Photographs by Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe*, which won the 2008 Essence Literary Award in Photography; and most recently, *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA* (2019). Having devoted many years to civic causes in health, arts, and civil rights issues, Moutoussamy-Ashe's photography is interwoven with her activism. She has lectured at various educational and cultural institutions around the country and taught photography to high school and college students. In 1995, President Bill Clinton appointed her as an alternate representative of the United States to the United Nations General Assembly. In 2011, she traveled to Nepal on behalf of healthcare organizations to document healthcare workers' efforts to address medical issues in the country. In 2013, Moutoussamy-Ashe received a Ford Foundation grant to research photographs from the 1963 March on Washington and curate an exhibition to commemorate the its 50th anniversary; the exhibition was held at Leica Gallery. In 2014, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture obtained a series of her Daufuskie Island images as part of their permanent collection, which was originally conceived of and shot over five years in the late 1970s. Currently, she is a director of the Arthur Ashe Endowment for the Defeat of AIDS and served on the President's Council of The Cooper Union, of which she is also a former Alumni Trustee.

## Scope and Content Note

This collection comprises Moutoussamy-Ashe's work in developing *Viewfinders*, a historiographic photoessay project for publication. The manuscript and research materials are about African American women photographers in America from 1839 to 1985. While numerous professionals are cited, extensive interview materials are available on the Camera Girls (WACs), Hazel Shumate, Gladys Allen, Eslanda Goode Robeson, Mary Flenoy, Phillda Ragland-Njau, Wilhelmina Roberts, Elsie Forrest Harelson, Vera Jackson, Louise Martin, Louise Jefferson, Mary Warren, Colis Davis, Winifred Hall, and Elizabeth Williams. Transcribed interviews of these photographers are supplemented with interview tapes for Martin, Allen, Roberts, Robeson, Flenoy, and Williams, through dialogue either with the individual or an acquaintance. Additionally, background information, such as resumes and printed matter, is available for these photographers, some of whom are not included in the final book. Also included are various pre-publication manuscripts, photoprint galleys, proofs, correspondence, and research material, such as photocopied articles and book chapters. Finally, there are book review and book tour materials.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African American women authors  
African American women photographers  
Authors, Black

### Geographic Names

United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans

United States -- Armed Forces -- Women

**Names**

Agins, Michelle V.

Jefferson, Louise E.

Logan, Fern, 1945-

Moutoussamy-Ashe, Jeanne, 1951-

Robeson, Eslanda Goode, 1896-1965

Simpson, Coreen, 1942-

## Container List

### Manuscripts

- b. 1A f. 1-2 First pass manuscript proof from publisher with photoprints
- b. 1A f. 3-4 Manuscript draft with no preliminary pages or photoprints
- b. 1A f. 5-6 Manuscript draft with preliminary pages
- b. 1A f. 7 Bound uncorrected proofs
- b. 1B f. 1 First pass manuscript proof from publisher without photoprints
- b. 1B f. 2 Proposal

### African American women photographers files

- b. 2 f. 1 Camera Girls
- b. 2 f. 2 Shumate, Hazel
- b. 2 f. 3 Allen, Gladys
- b. 2 f. 4 Robeson, Eslanda Goode
- b. 2 f. 5 Flenoy, Mary E
- b. 2 f. 6 Hall, Winifred
- b. 2 f. 7 Ragland-Njau, Phillda
- b. 2 f. 8 Roberts, Wilhelmina
- b. 2 f. 9 Harleston, Elise Forrest
- b. 2 f. 10 Jackson, Vera
- b. 2 f. 12 Martin, Louise
- b. 2 f. 12 Jefferson, Louise
- b. 2 f. 13 Warren, Mary
- b. 2 f. 14 Davis, Colis

- b. 5 f. 7 Background information on additional African American women photographers

Includes resumes and printed matter for photographers included in the book, such as Michelle Agins, Emma Alice Downs, Barbara DuMetz, Fern Logan, Akili-Casundria Ramsess, and Coreen Simpson; and photographers not included in the book, such as Hattie Baker, Mrs. Walter Baker, Lucy Calloway, Sharon Farmer, Gertrude Lewis, Marilyn Nance, Jacqueline La Vetta Patten, Marie Simpson, Jo Moore Stewart, Laurel L. Stradford, Fannie J. Thompson, Elaine Tomlin, Ruby Washington, Jennie Welcome, and Emma Woodward.

- b. 2 f. 15 Photograph photocopies

- b. 2 f. 16 Miscellaneous

### Additional manuscripts

- b. 3 f. 1 Book proposal and incomplete draft marked "Kali's copy"
- b. 3 f. 2 First draft (photocopy with handwritten edits)
- b. 3 f. 3 Complete blues with handwritten edits

### Front and back matter drafts

- b. 3 f. 4 Permissions and rights 1985-1986  
Includes some correspondence.
- b. 3 f. 5 Lists of photographs, illustrations, and credits
- b. 3 f. 6 General listing (table of contents)
- b. 3 f. 7 Footnotes

Front and back matter drafts (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 8 Biographical index
- b. 3 f. 9 Geographical index
- b. 6 Galleys
- b. 3 f. 10 Agreement with publisher, Dodd, Mead and Co 1984 August
- b. 3 f. 11 Correspondence 1984-1986  
Mostly congratulatory letters on the book release, both personal and professional.
- b. 4 f. 1 Book tour information 1986  
Includes receipts and itineraries.
- b. 4 f. 2 Publicity material 1986  
Includes order forms, invitations, and exhibition flyers.
- b. 4 f. 3 Reviews
- b. 4 f. 4 General printed matter 1981-1984  
Includes articles, clippings, and exhibition material on earlier works by Moutoussamy-Ashe, including *Daufuskie Island: Photographs by Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe*
- Research material
- b. 4 f. 5 1850-1890
- b. 4 f. 6 1891-1910
- b. 4 f. 7 1911-1930
- b. 4 f. 8 1931-1949
- b. 4 f. 10 1970-1985
- Census information
- b. 4 f. 11 1790-1915
- b. 4 f. 12 1930-1939
- b. 5 f. 1 1950-1954
- b. 5 f. 2 1960-1963
- b. 5 f. 3 1970-1980
- b. 5 f. 4 Labor statistics 1885
- b. 5 f. 5 Charts on women photographers 1850-1940  
Compiled by Moutoussamy-Ashe.
- b. 5 f. 6 *The New York Times Index on photography* 1881-1910  
Includes notes.