



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

Guide to the

James Reese Europe, Jr. papers

1942-1997 [bulk 1942]

Sc MG 629

Summary

Creator: Europe, James R. (James Reese), 1917-2001

Title: James Reese Europe, Jr. papers

Date: 1942-1997 [bulk 1942]

Size: 1 folder

Source: Gift, James Reese Europe, Jr., 1988-1997

Abstract: James Reese Europe, Jr., son of the well-known African-American musician James Reese Europe (1881-1919) and dancer Bessie Simms, was a seaman in the Merchant Marines during World War II. In 1942 the Marine Firemen's, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association attempted to have Europe discharged in direct violation of Presidential Order 8802 of the Fair Employment Act. With the support of the War Manpower Commission and many on board the ship, Europe was permitted to continue in his position. Over time he moved up from wiper (entry-level position) to deck engineer, and with his captain's recommendation he attended officer's candidate school and returned to sea as an ensign in the U.S. Maritime Service. By the time of his discharge in 1946, Europe had been promoted to lieutenant and had received recognition for his work in the Middle East, Pacific and Atlantic war zones. The James Reese Europe, Jr. Papers consists primarily of photocopies of documents related to a case of discrimination during World War II in direct violation of Executive Order 8802, involving James Reese Europe, Jr. and the Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association in San Francisco (1942). Several documents provide the details of the case from the perspective of the Bay Area Council Against Discrimination, which assisted Europe in presenting his case to the Committee on Fair Employment Practices and to the War Manpower Commission. The union's viewpoint is also represented. Included are originals and copies of certificates, awards, and discharge papers, in addition to letters and documents dealing with his termination from the New York City Police Department on charges of alleged subversive activities related to the aforementioned discrimination case.

Preferred citation: [Item], James Reese Europe, Jr. papers, Sc MG 629, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

James Reese Europe, Jr., son of the well-known African-American musician James Reese Europe (1881-1919) and dancer Bessie Simms, was a seaman in the Merchant Marines during World War II. In 1942 the Marine Firemen's, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association attempted to have Europe discharged in direct violation of Presidential Order 8802 of the Fair Employment Act. With the support of the War Manpower Commission and many on board the ship, Europe was permitted to continue in his position. Over time he moved up from wiper (entry-level position) to deck engineer, and with his captain's recommendation he attended officer's candidate school and returned to sea as an ensign in the U.S. Maritime Service. By the time of his discharge in 1946, Europe had been promoted to lieutenant and had received recognition for his work in the Middle East, Pacific and Atlantic war zones.

Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Subjects

African American sailors
African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Employment
African Americans -- Segregation
African Americans -- Social conditions
Discrimination in employment
Race discrimination -- California -- San Francisco
World War, 1939-1945 -- African Americans

Geographic Names

United States -- Race relations
United States -- Social conditions

Names

Europe, James R. (James Reese), 1917-2001
Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association
United States. Navy -- African Americans