



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

Guide to the

**Ka Morais papers**

1942-1981 [bulk 1970-1981]

Sc MG 493

## Summary

**Creator:** Morais, Ka, 1942-1981

**Title:** Ka Morais papers

**Date:** 1942-1981 [bulk 1970-1981]

**Size:** 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Michael Morais, August 1993.

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

**Abstract:** Kenneth Alan (Ka) Morais was an African American photographer and media artist. The Ka Morais papers include family, personal, and professional correspondence.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Ka Morais papers, Sc MG 493, 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 Berlena Robinson, June 1994, and Janice Quinter, December 2010.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artwork.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image 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

Kenneth Alan (Ka) Morais, born in 1942 in New York City, was an African American photographer and

media artist. He studied commercial and fine arts, photography, and film and television in New York and California. Morais's fine art photography included constructions and photomontages; his documentary work included images of New York City and abroad. He held a variety of short-term jobs doing commercial and public relations photography, had a number of solo and group exhibits primarily in New York and California, and had his work published in various magazines and newspapers. Morais died in 1981 in New York City.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Ka Morais papers include family, personal, and professional correspondence. Letters from his brother Michael discuss their collaborations, writing and illustrating poems, and other works. Morais's professional papers consist of letters of recommendation, honors and awards, programs and reviews of his exhibits, drawings, and news clippings about him and advertising courses that he taught. There are also a few manuscripts by Morais with illustrations (photographs and drawings). Of interest are original and photocopies of letters and postcards written to him by the photographer Ansel Adams, 1975-1981. Morais's best known photograph is a spoof of Adams's zone system, and Adams's comments on about it are mentioned in one letter (1977).

Also documented is Morais's involvement in the Bahai religion, his period as an English instructor in Japan (Ube Academy of Foreign Languages), his time as a volunteer worker at the United Nations refugee camps in Thailand, 1978-1981, and his medical malpractice suit against the United States government, 1975-1977.

**Arrangement:** Arranged into 2 series: I. Personal and II. Professional.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American authors  
African American Bahais  
African American families  
African American photographers  
Authors, Black

### **Names**

Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984  
Morais, Ka, 1942-1981

## Container List

### Personal 1942-1981

- b. 1 f. 1 Resumes
- b. 1 f. 2 1942-1980
- b. 1 f. 3 Education 1960-1978
- b. 1 f. 4 Certificates and diplomas 1966-1971
- b. 1 f. 5 United States Army 1964-1968
- Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 6 Outgoing 1965-1981
- b. 1 f. 7 Farrell, Christina (first wife) and Heng Tha (second wife) 1972-1981
- b. 1 f. 8 Morais, Cathryn (mother) 1979-1980
- b. 1 f. 9 Morais, Michael (brother) 1977-1980
- b. 1 f. 10 Knudsen, Lisa Morais (sister) 1971-1981
- b. 1 f. 11 Lyles, Victoria Heth 1973-1981
- b. 1 f. 12 Postcards 1973-1981
- b. 1 f. 13 1973-1978
- b. 1 f. 14-15 1979
- b. 1 f. 16 1980
- b. 1 f. 17 Sin, Sovi 1980-1981
- b. 2 f. 1 1981
- b. 2 f. 2 undated

### Professional 1968-1981

#### Correspondence

- b. 2 f. 3 Adams, Ansel 1978-1981
- b. 2 f. 4 Higgins, Michael and Marilyn 1978-1979
- b. 2 f. 5 1977-1980
- b. 2 f. 6 1981
- b. 2 f. 7 Letters of recommendation and review 1972-1979
- b. 2 f. 8 Honors and awards 1978
- b. 2 f. 9 Programs and reviews 1970s
- b. 2 f. 10 Plans, drawings, and labels
- b. 2 f. 11 News clippings 1968-1978
- b. 2 f. 12 Ube Academy of Foreign Languages, Japan, correspondence 1978
- b. 2 f. 13 Baha'i International Goals Committee correspondence 1978-1980
- b. 2 f. 14 Baha'is of the United States printed material 1979
- b. 3 f. 1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1979-1980  
Includes correspondence and introductions.
- b. 3 f. 2 Morais vs. U.S.A., U.S. District Court Kelly, Leal and Olimpia 1975-1977
- b. 3 f. 3 Illustrations

#### Writing

- b. 3 f. 4 Collaborations with Michael Morais

Professional (cont.)

Writing (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 5-6 "The Well of Zubeneshamali" with illustrations 1981
- b. 3 f. 7 "Themes in Azul, Bleu and Cyan", lyrics and photographs
- b. 3 f. 8 Writing with illustrations
- b. 3 f. 9-10 Miscellaneous