



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

Guide to the

Tuitt Family papers

1931 - 2005 [bulk 1929 - 1971]

Sc MG 887

Processed by Edwina Ashie-Nikoi in October 2014.

Summary

Creator: Tuitt, Charles, 1894-1965

Title: Tuitt Family papers

Date: 1931 - 2005 [bulk 1929 - 1971]

Size: 1 linear foot (1 record carton)

Source: Gift of Patricia Ann Tuitt, 2013 and 2014.

Abstract: This collection includes correspondence, personal documents, and genealogical research pertaining to the Tuitt family of Montserrat, the United States, and the US Virgin Islands.

Preferred citation: [Item], Tuitt Family papers, Sc MG 887, 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: Processed by Edwina Ashie-Nikoi in October 2014.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division: maps of Barbados, Montserrat and Trinidad; University Centre at Dagenham Booklet on 1974 Arts Festival; and a single issue of *Montserrat Mirror* (July 26, 1974)

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs of Montserrat Progressive Society outings to Lake George and Forest Lodge; three loose photographs; and one folder, mostly of John Tuitt's military service.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: three calypso 45s

Creator History

The Tuitt family hailed from Harris Village, Montserrat, but certain members also lived in the Caribbean

and United States. Represented in the collection are New York residents Charles Alexander Tuitt and his sons, John and James; Charles's sisters, Jane Tuitt Allen and Molly Tuitt Daley, who lived in Montserrat; another sister, Victoria Tuitt James, who emigrated to St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and her daughter, Gertrude; and two of Charles's other nieces, Ann and Beatrice, who moved to Trinidad and Antigua before landing in New York. Born circa 1894, Charles Tuitt arrived in New York in 1914. He worked as a janitor in midtown Manhattan and, like many Caribbean immigrants of the time, resided in Harlem in an apartment on 100 West 143 Street. He had two sons, John (born June 16, 1919) and James (born November 17, 1921), with Sarah Gage Tuitt, who died in November 1944. Charles Tuitt passed away in October 1965. After serving in the army during World War II, John Tuitt worked as a postal worker and, in the early 1950s, helped his cousins, Frances and Beatrice, immigrate to New York. When he and his wife Mirty purchased their home in Brooklyn, Ann and Beatrice moved into the apartment the Tuitts had shared with Charles on 100 West 143 Street. This led to a suit from landlady Jennie Batkin who charged that Charles had effectively subleased the apartment without giving her prior notice. John Tuitt died on October 20, 2005, in Barbados, where he had relocated with wife in 1993. Like his older brother, sailor James Maxwell ("Nicky") Tuitt fought in World War II's Pacific theater. After his discharge, James was a firefighter in New York City's Fire Department for more than 20 years; he served as an aide to the Commissioner in his last five years. James Tuitt died September 1991. Victoria Tuitt James and her husband, Isaac Gatewood James, a chemist and entrepreneur credited with introducing canned juices and grafted mangoes to the US Virgin Islands, owned a "5 and 10 cent" store in St. Croix.

Scope and Content Note

The Tuitt Family papers, 1931-2005, consist of correspondence, personal material, and other documents produced by and about Charles Tuitt and his sons, John and James Tuitt. Attached to many of these letters and documents in the collection are summaries or explanations written by Patricia Ann Tuitt, daughter of John Tuitt. Ms. Tuitt conducted extensive genealogical research on the Tuitts and the collection includes these materials. The Charles Tuitt files consist mostly of letters to him from his family in Montserrat, Antigua and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They cover topics such as family news, gossip, and the difficult economic conditions on these islands. Additionally, the letters from his nieces reveal the often circuitous routes that Caribbean immigrants took to the United States. The collection also contains materials relating to the military service during World War II of Charles's two sons, John and James. The John Tuitt records include personal documents such as his last will and testament and power of attorney. James Tuitt's folder contains letters written to his father while on assignment; research on his WWII service; two programs celebrating his volunteerism with boys' clubs; and his obituary. Also, there are files documenting the visits of the Montserrat Progressive Society, of which the Tuitts were members, to their home island in 1969 and 1974.

Key Terms

Subjects

Black author
Caribbean Americans -- New York (State) -- New York
Families, Black -- New York (State) -- New York
Montserratians -- New York (State) -- New York
Soldiers, Black
West Indians
West Indians -- New York (State) -- New York

Geographic Names

Montserrat -- Economic conditions
Montserrat -- Emigration and immigration
Montserrat -- History -- 20th century
Montserrat -- Social life and customs

Names

Daley, Ann.
Daley, Beatrice
Tuitt Allen, Jane
Tuitt Daley, Molly
Tuitt James, Victoria
Tuitt, Charles, 1894-1965
Tuitt, James, 1921-1991
Tuitt, John, 1919-2005
Tuitt Family
Montserrat Progressive Society of New York

Container List

Charles Tuitt

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 1931 - 1940
- b. 1 f. 2 1941 - 1950
- b. 1 f. 3 1951 - 1961
- b. 1 f. 4 Fragments
- b. 1 f. 5 Landlord case 1953 - 1958
- b. 1 f. 6 Ephemera

John Tuitt

- b. 1 f. 7 Personal documents 1942 - 2005
- b. 1 f. 8 World War II documents 1942 - 1944
- b. 1 f. 9 Post-war documents
- b. 1 f. 10 James Tuitt
- b. 1 f. 11 Montserrat Progressive Society 1969 - 2005
- b. 1 f. 12 Genealogical research