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Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

James Haughton Papers

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Processed by Christine McKay.

Summary

Creator: Haughton, James

Title: James Haughton Papers

Abstract: The James Haughton Papers have been arranged in six series: Personal Papers; Negro American Labor Council; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Harlem Unemployment Center/Fight Back; Other Organizations and Committees; and Subject Files.

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Creator History

James Haughton, labor leader, social worker, and community activist, was the founder of Fight Back (originally the Harlem Unemployment Center), established in 1964 to combat racial discrimination in the building trades unions and construction industry. He was also active in the tenants rights, peace, and anti-apartheid movements. Haughton was born October 8, 1929 in Brooklyn, New York, the son of West Indian immigrants. He was educated at City College of New York (BSS, 1951), Princeton University, and New York University (MPA, 1960) and served as a lieutenant in the United States Army from 1951 to 1953, during the Korean War. From 1955 to 1960, Haughton worked with street gangs in New York and Los Angeles, serving as a counselor with the New York City Youth Board, Los Angeles County Probation Department, and East Harlem Youth Employment Service.

In November 1960, he joined the newly organized Negro American Labor Council (NALC), founded in May 1960 to increase support for equal job opportunity within organized labor, and served as assistant to its President, A. Philip Randolph. His duties included editing the newsletter and organizing annual meetings and conferences, including the Workshop and Institute on Racial Bias in Trade Unions, Industry and Government. This conference, held in Washington, D.C. in February 1961, was attended by Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Adam Clayton Powell, and officials of the new Kennedy Administration. Haughton also served on the Executive Board of the New York Chapter of the NALC. After a factional dispute resulting in the defeat of his slate of officers in October 1962, he left the NALC to become civil service coordinator for the Mobilization for Youth Job Center.

In 1963 and 1964, Haughton worked as a community organizer for the Lower Eastside Neighborhood Organization and served as chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee of the New York Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In late 1964, he organized a Rank and File Cement and Concrete Workers Caucus for Equal Opportunity, later renamed the Building Trades Caucus, to work with the Labor and Industry Committee in gaining jobs for minority construction workers, which had only token numbers employed on major construction projects in New York City.

In November 1964, frustrated by what he perceived as a lack of aggressiveness by established organizations in attacking racial barriers in employment, Haughton founded the Harlem Unemployment Center to expand the work begun with the Building Trades Caucus. By March 1965, he was devoting almost full time to Center and Caucus activities, including meetings with construction company and union officials and site visits to document discrimination and hear worker complaints, although he maintained ties to the NAACP for several additional months.

The Harlem Unemployment Center changed its name to Fight Back in October 1969. Supported financially by its membership and outside contributions, Fight Back provided job counseling and placement for victims of racial discrimination, particularly in the building trades, but was also active in the rank and file movements of the longshore, utility, transit, garment, and other industries. Its tactics included negotiation, lobbying, and coalition building, as well as lawsuits, boycotts, and demonstrations. Fight Back played an important role in creating equal employment opportunity programs, increasing minority hiring at construction sites, and forcing unions to open their membership rolls, although it also experienced numerous setbacks throughout the years.

In addition to his work at Fight Back, Haughton was active in numerous other committees and groups including the National Citizens' Lobby, which lobbied Congress for job creation in building housing projects; the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee and other anti-war and anti-nuclear groups; the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee; and the Committee for a Free South Africa. During the 1970s, he worked to establish a New York Working People's Party and the National Citizen's Party. He was also Adjunct Professor of Black and Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, a commentator for WNET Channel 13, a member of the New York Taxi and Limousine Commission, and a candidate for New York City Council in the 1973 Democratic Primary.

Haughton travelled extensively, including fact-finding visits to Africa, Cuba and Iran, wrote poetry, and lectured widely. He was married to the noted anthropologist and activist Eleanor Burke Leacock. He currently lives in New York City and maintains ties to many human rights organizations.

Scope and Content Note

The James Haughton Papers have been arranged in six series: Personal Papers; Negro American Labor Council; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Harlem Unemployment

Center/Fight Back; Other Organizations and Committees; and Subject Files.

Container List

b. 1 Personal Papers 1929-1982

The **PERSONAL PAPERS series, 1929-1981, (.5 linear feet)** consists of material documenting Haughton's activities in addition to his professional positions. It includes vital records, such as his birth certificate, passport, and resumes; scattered clippings and correspondence with family and friends; manuscripts and typescripts of poems and drafts of book reviews. The series also includes memoranda, syllabi, and student papers from his "Blacks in Labor and Politics" course taught at Hunter College; fliers and petition forms from his 1973 New York City Council primary campaign; and correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material from his term on the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. In addition, there is a miscellaneous folder of invitations and programs from award ceremonies, political dinners, and funeral services.

b. 1 f. 1 Biographical Information/Vital Records 1929-1977

b. 1 f. 2 Family Correspondence & Writings 1963-1982

b. 1 f. 3 General Correspondence 1960-1981

b. 1 f. 4 Hunter College, Department Of Black And Puerto Rican Studies 1970-1975

b. 1 f. 5 New York City Council Campaign 1973

b. 1 f. 6 New York City Taxi And Limousine Commission 1970-1974

Writings

b. 1 f. 7 Book Reviews

b. 1 f. 8 Poetry

b. 1 f. 9 Invitations & Programs

b. 2 Negro American Labor Council 1960-1964

The **NEGRO AMERICAN LABOR COUNCIL series, 1960-1964, (1 linear ft.)** contains correspondence, minutes, reports, newsletters, and programs documenting Haughton's position as Assistant to the President, A. Philip Randolph, and his activities with the New York Chapter. There is substantial correspondence and organizational material concerning the Workshop and Institute on Racial Bias in Trade Unions, Industry and Government organized by Haughton in Washington, D.C. in February 1961, whose speakers included Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Adam Clayton Powell, Thurgood Marshall, and members of the new Kennedy Administration.

Also of significance are correspondence, articles, and statements documenting the contested 1962 election of officers for the New York Chapter between an activist rank and file slate (Campaign for a Fighting NALC) and a more conservative one supported by the national leadership. The 1962 Annual Convention folder includes several drafts of Haughton's account which criticizes Randolph's role in the dispute.

The series also contains a folder of minutes, policy statements, and fliers, for the Emergency Committee for Unity on Social and Economic Problems, 1961-1962, chaired by A. Philip Randolph, whose members included Malcolm X, Lewis Michaux, and Percy Sutton. Other folders trace Haughton's battle against discrimination on the waterfront and include correspondence, articles, memoranda, legal documents, and fliers documenting his support for rank and file longshoremen, especially African Americans, in union elections and negotiations.

b. 2 f. 1 Minutes 1962

Committees

b. 2 f. 2 Actors' Equity 1962

b. 2 f. 3 Citizen's Committee For A \$1.50 Minimum Hourly Wage 1962

b. 2 f. 4 Committee On Job Advancement 1962-1963

Negro American Labor Council (cont.)
Committees (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 5 Emergency Committee For Unity On Social And Economic Problems 1961-1962
- b. 2 f. 6 Youth Committee 1962

Conferences

Workshop And Institute On Racial Bias 1960-1961

- b. 2 f. 7 Budget
- b. 2 f. 8 Correspondence
- b. 2 f. 9 Panels
- b. 2 f. 10 Planning File
- b. 2 f. 11 Speeches
- b. 2 f. 12 Miscellaneous

Conventions

- b. 2 f. 13 Founding Convention 1960
 - b. 2 f. 14 1961
 - b. 2 f. 15 1962
 - b. 2 f. 16 1964
 - b. 2 f. 17 Fundraisers
 - b. 2 f. 18 Grievances 1961
 - b. 3 f. 1 Newsletter 1961
 - b. 3 f. 2 Printed Material
 - b. 3 f. 3 Reports
 - b. 3 f. 4 Statements And Speeches By A. Philip Randolph
- New York Chapter
- b. 3 f. 5 Executive Board 1961-1962
 - b. 3 f. 6 Education Committee 1961
 - b. 3 f. 7 Correspondence 1962-1963
 - b. 3 f. 8 Newsletter 1960-1962
 - b. 3 f. 9 Unemployment Action Conference 1961
 - b. 3 f. 10 Campaign For A Fighting NALC 1962
 - b. 3 f. 11 Housewreckers Committee For Equal Opportunity 1962
 - b. 3 f. 12-13 Longshore Committee For Equal Opportunity 1961-1962

b. 4 National Association For The Advancement Of Colored People, New York Branch 1959-1965

The **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE series, 1959-1965 (1 linear ft.)** documents Haughton's tenure as Chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee of the New York Branch and member of the Executive Committee. As with his work at the Negro American Labor Council, he was concerned with job discrimination in a variety of industries, particularly longshore, garment, transit, and construction. There are minutes of Committee meetings discussing support for longshoremen and railroad workers, as well as other issues such as rent strikes, police brutality, and hiring practices at the New York World's Fair. Also included are several folders of complaint forms with supporting material for grievances brought to the attention of the Committee and a folder of minutes for the term of Haughton's predecessor as chairman, Odell Clark, 1959-1960, discussing discrimination in the wholesale liquor industry.

Of particular significance is material relating to the organization of the Rank and File Cement and Concrete Workers Caucus, including Haughton's notes and correspondence after visits to construction sites and meetings with company and union officials. Material for the Longshore Committee for Equal Opportunity contains correspondence, memoranda, notes, and legal documents reflecting his continued fight for job security and stability for minority longshoremen.

- b. 4 f. 1 Executive Committee 1964
 - Labor And Industry Committee 1959-1965
- b. 4 f. 2 Agenda And Minutes 1959-1960
- b. 4 f. 3 Agenda And Minutes 1963-1965
- b. 4 f. 4 Correspondence And Memoranda 1963-1965
- b. 4 f. 5 Reports And Statements 1963-1965
 - Complaints 1963-1965
- b. 4 f. 6 New York Central
- b. 4 f. 7 New York World's Fair
- b. 4 f. 8 Talon Zipper
- b. 4 f. 9-10 Miscellaneous
 - b. 5 Conferences And Meetings
 - b. 5 f. 1 Job Crisis Conference 1964
 - b. 5 f. 2 Miscellaneous
 - b. 5 f. 3 Fliers And Brochures
 - b. 5 f. 4 Longshore Committee For Equal Opportunity 1963-1964
 - b. 5 f. 5 Rank And File Cement And Concrete Workers 1964-1965
 - b. 5 f. 6 Rank And File Committee Of The Transit Workers Union 1963-1965
 - b. 5 f. 7 Jobs Or Income Now (Join) 1964
 - b. 5 f. 8 March On Washington 1963
 - b. 5 f. 9 Rent Strikes
 - b. 5 f. 10 Printed Material
 - b. 5 f. 11 Miscellaneous

b. 6 Harlem Unemployment Center/Fight Back

The **HARLEM UNEMPLOYMENT CENTER/FIGHT BACK series, 1964-1983 (3 linear feet)** contains correspondence, memoranda, articles, newsletters, clippings, fliers, legal documents, financial records (including those of Fight Back's tax-exempt fundraising arm, the Equal Employment Council), and miscellaneous printed matter documenting Haughton's outspoken efforts to increase the number of minorities hired on construction projects in New York City. The series was organized to reflect both the activities of Fight Back and the written material produced by Haughton and his associates. There is significant documentation in the correspondence, articles, newsletters, and fliers of his work with unions, government officials, and corporate leaders to bring about changes in laws and policies through negotiations and lobbying, as well as demonstrations and boycotts. The correspondence includes letters to construction company officials discussing discriminatory hiring and the development of apprenticeship programs. There is also an exchange of letters with William L. Patterson, former International Labor Defense and Civil Rights Congress official, commenting on the draft of a 1972 article by Haughton and discussing issues of race and class. A miscellaneous folder of lists and notes indicates Haughton's organizational style, once described in a *New York Times Magazine* profile (September 14, 1969): "Tacked to a wallboard is his filing system - a maze of small slips of paper with names, phones numbers and assorted notes."

Several folders in the Programs and Projects sub-series trace the evolution of the New York Plan and its successors, as the City attempted to create standards for equal employment opportunity such as increased job training and regulations for minority representation in construction unions and projects.

In his role as Executive Director of Fight Back, Haughton also participated in numerous coalitions and committees concerning a variety of local and national employment issues. The Committees and Coalitions sub-series contains important material including newsletters, position papers, and fliers documenting the struggle of rank and file and minority caucuses in unions representing construction, transit, and auto workers, longshoremen, and farm laborers. Additional folders in the sub-series reflect his service on the Board of Directors of the National Employment Law Project and the National Citizen's Lobby (later renamed Confrontation with Congress), which lobbied for passage of the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act and for funding to provide minority construction jobs for the many new housing projects the Act generated.

Haughton also organized and attended numerous conferences and seminars related to minority employment issues, for which programs and background material are found in the Conference sub-series. The Rank and File Workers Conference folder contains minutes, statements, and correspondence regarding efforts by Haughton and others in 1969 to develop national rank and file movements in various unions and to associate them with the anti-war movement.

Correspondence

b. 6 f. 1 1964-1966

b. 6 f. 2 1967-1969

b. 6 f. 3 1970-1975

b. 6 f. 4 1976-1979

b. 6 f. 5 1980-1983

b. 6 f. 6 Lists, Notes & Fragments

Financial

b. 6 f. 7 Bank Statements And Ledger 1964-1981

b. 6 f. 8 Equal Employment Council 1968-1983

b. 6 f. 9 Grant Proposals 1968-1980

b. 6 f. 10 Insurance And Leases 1972-1979

b. 7 f. 1 Meetings 1965-1972

b. 7 f. 2 Articles And Statements 1964-1982

b. 7 f. 3 Articles And Statements - Drafts And Outlines 1970-1980, n.d.

Harlem Unemployment Center/Fight Back (cont.)

Broadcasts And Speeches

- b. 7 f. 4 Channel 13 1968-1970
- b. 7 f. 5 Miscellaneous 1969-1970
- b. 8 f. 1 Newsletters 1965-1972
- b. 8 f. 2 Newsletters - Correspondence And Drafts 1965-1969
- b. 8 f. 3 Position Papers
- b. 8 f. 4 Press Releases

Printed Material

- b. 8 f. 5 Clippings And Articles 1969-1982
- b. 8 f. 6 Fliers And Brochures-Fight Back
- b. 8 f. 7 Fliers And Brochures-Miscellaneous
- b. 9 Committees And Coalitions
 - b. 9 f. 1 Black Workers Organizing Committee 1980-1981
 - b. 9 f. 2 Coalition Of Community Construction Workers' Organizations 1982-1983
 - b. 9 f. 3 Committee For Action On Unemployment 1983
 - b. 9 f. 4 Harlem Coalition For Job Equality At City College 1972-1973
 - b. 9 f. 5 Harlem Political Action Coalition 1971
 - b. 9 f. 6 Human Interest Regarding Employment (HIRE) 1969-1971
 - b. 9 f. 7 Jobs Or Income Now (JOIN) 1968-1983
 - b. 9 f. 8 Longshore Committee For Equal Opportunity 1965-1970
 - b. 9 f. 9 Mississippi Farm Labor Union 1965
 - b. 9 f. 10 National Citizen's Lobby/Confrontation With Congress 1968-1973
- National Employment Law Project 1969-1982
 - b. 9 f. 11 Correspondence And Reports
 - b. 9 f. 12 Briefs
- b. 10 f. 1 Rank And File Committee For A Democratic Union Within The New York City Transit Authority 1965-1972
- Other Rank & File Committees And Black Caucuses
 - b. 10 f. 2 Auto Workers 1968-1969
 - b. 10 f. 3 Miscellaneous 1968-1982
 - b. 10 f. 4 Sydenham Hospital Coalition 1979
 - b. 10 f. 5 Unity Committee 1973
 - b. 10 f. 6 Miscellaneous
- Conferences
 - b. 10 f. 7 Black Leader's Seminar, Cuba 1972-1973
 - b. 10 f. 8 Rank And File Workers Conferences 1968- 1970
 - b. 10 f. 9 Unity Conference Against Racial Polarization 1973
 - b. 10 f. 10 Other
- Programs And Projects
 - b. 10 f. 11 Brooklyn Fight Back
 - b. 10 f. 12 Cactus Contractors

Harlem Unemployment Center/Fight Back (cont.)
Programs And Projects (cont.)

- b. 11 Equal Employment Programs/New York Plan
- b. 11 f. 1 Agreements And Executive Orders 1968-1974
- b. 11 f. 2 Government Regulations And Policies 1968-1982
- b. 11 f. 3 Martin Luther King High School 1971
- b. 11 f. 4 Plumbing Training Program 1968
- b. 11 f. 5 Other Construction Projects 1968-1980
- b. 11 f. 6 Fight Back For Children
- b. 11 f. 7 Programs Outside New York City
- b. 11 f. 8 Government Reports
- b. 12 f. 1 Hearings 1971-1979

Legal

- b. 12 f. 2 Briefs And Decisions
- b. 12 f. 3 Grievances
- b. 12 f. 4 Legislation
- Research Material
- b. 12 f. 5 Construction Industry
- b. 12 f. 6 Other Industries
- b. 12 f. 7 NAACP
- b. 12 f. 8 Miscellaneous

b. 13 Other Organizations And Committees

The **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES series, 1963-1983 (1 linear ft.)** includes correspondence, minutes, articles, position papers, and printed material reflecting Haughton's activities outside his roles with the NALC, NAACP, and Fight Back. His participation in the anti-Vietnam War movement is documented in the folders of the Black United Action Front and the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee. He also joined several efforts by coalitions of movement groups, including the New American Movement, National Interim Committee, and Congress of Afrikan Peoples (headed by Amiri Baraka), to establish a third political party in the 1970s and 1980s. Material relating to these efforts may be found in the Third Political Parties sub-series for specific organizations such as the Citizen's Party, National Coordinating Committee for a 1976 Electoral Strategy, and the New York Working People's Party. There is also a miscellaneous folder which contains printed material from the New American Movement and minutes and background papers from a 1973 strategy meeting attended by Haughton, Barry Commoner, Bobby Rush, Lawrence Guyot, Arthur Kinoy, David Dellinger, and others. The Anti-Nuclear Movement folder contains notes of meetings which reflect Haughton's desire to link the fight against racism to anti-nuclear causes.

- b. 13 f. 1 African Scholarship Fund 1974
- Anti-Nuclear Movement
- b. 13 f. 2 Miscellaneous Committees And Coalitions 1973-1982
- b. 13 f. 3 22nd World Conference Against A & H Bombs, Japan 1976
- b. 13 f. 4 Black United Action Front/Black Anti-Draft Union 1965-1967
- b. 13 f. 5 City Club 1970-1973
- b. 13 f. 6 Committee For A Free South Africa 1970-1978
- b. 13 f. 7 Committee For American Iranian Crisis Resolution 1979
- b. 14 f. 1 Harlem Committee For The Defense Of Free Speech 1965-1966
- b. 14 f. 2 Lower Eastside Neighborhood Council 1963-1964

Other Organizations And Committees (cont.)

- b. 14 f. 3 National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee 1969-1970
- b. 14 f. 4 Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee 1973-1982

Third Political Parties

- b. 14 f. 5 Citizen's Party 1979-1980
- b. 14 f. 6 National Coordinating Committee For A 1976 Electoral Strategy 1975-1976
- b. 14 f. 7 New York Working People's Party 1978-1980
- b. 14 f. 8 Miscellaneous 1972-1983
- b. 14 f. 9 Vietnam Peace Parade Committee 1969-1971

b. 15 Subject Files

A **SUBJECT FILES series (1 linear ft.)** has been created to reflect the variety of printed material Haughton received and retained regarding numerous political and social issues of the 1960s through 1980s, particularly concerning opposition to racism, nuclear development, and the increasing military budget. There are pamphlets, newsletters, and fliers in the Politics - South Africa folder concerning anti-apartheid movements in the United States and Africa, including the African National Congress, the Unity Movement of South Africa, the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of South Africa, and the South African Military Aid Fund. The Black Political Movements folder also contains miscellaneous pamphlets, newsletters, and fliers from a variety of groups including the Black Panthers, African Nationalist Pioneer Movement, Freedom Now Party, Charter Group for a Pledge of Conscience, Black United Front, and others, as well as prison letters discussing race, politics, and prison life in the late 1960s. The Housing and Tenants Rights folder reflects Haughton's association with Jesse Gray, Director of the Community Housing Council and the Harlem Tenants Union. Other references to Gray may be found in the Rent Strikes folder of the NAACP Series and scattered throughout the Harlem Unemployment Center/Fight Back Series.

- b. 15 f. 1 Black Political Movements
- b. 15 f. 2 Communism/Marxism
- b. 15 f. 3 Criminal Code Reform Act 1978-1982
- b. 15 f. 4 Education
- b. 15 f. 5 Health And Safety
- b. 15 f. 6 Housing And Tenant's Rights
- b. 15 f. 7 Nuclear Development
- b. 16 Politics
 - b. 16 f. 1 Africa 1961-1983
 - b. 16 f. 2 Caribbean 1968-1983
 - b. 16 f. 3 Europe And Asia 1966-1982
 - b. 16 f. 4 Latin America 1974-1982
 - b. 16 f. 5 Middle East 1961, 1975-1984
 - b. 16 f. 6 South Africa 1974-1983
 - b. 16 f. 7 United States 1970-1981
 - b. 16 f. 8 Socialism