



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.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: [http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request\\_access](http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request_access)

**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