



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

Guide to the

**Riverton Houses collection**

1947-1982

Sc MG 462

## Summary

**Title:** Riverton Houses collection

**Date:** 1947-1982

**Size:** 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Arlene Bunn, secretary, Riverton Houses, May 1992.

**Abstract:** The Riverton was a seven-building complex built by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1947, one of four complexes they built during the 1940s. The complex was bounded by 135th and 138th Streets, Fifth Avenue, and Harlem River Drive. The Riverton Houses collection consists of a variety of material but does not constitute records of the Riverton. These files came from the Administration offices at 2156 Madison Avenue. Included is a file for Clifford L. Alexander, Sr., the first resident manager (1947-1964) of the complex. There are also miscellaneous files dealing with the management of the Riverton, including the position description for the resident manager; descriptive information regarding the Riverton; and letters regarding street lights, parking signs, and traffic conditions affecting the residents of the Riverton.

**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/divisions/scm/request\\_access](http://archives.nypl.org/divisions/scm/request_access)

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Riverton Houses collection, Sc MG 462, 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 Diana Lachatanere, JUne 1992.

## Creator History

The Riverton was a seven-building complex built by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1947, one of four complexes they built during the 1940s. The complex was bounded by 135th and 138th

Streets, Fifth Avenue, and Harlem River Drive.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Riverton Houses collection consists of a variety of material but does not constitute records of the Riverton. These files came from the Administration offices at 2156 Madison Avenue. Included is a file for Clifford L. Alexander, Sr., the first resident manager (1947-1964) of the complex. There are also miscellaneous files dealing with the management of the Riverton, including the position description for the resident manager; descriptive information regarding the Riverton; and letters regarding street lights, parking signs, and traffic conditions affecting the residents of the Riverton.

Of interest is a file concerning the article "Fifth Avenue Uptown" written by James Baldwin for the July 1960 issue of *Esquire*. Residents of upper Fifth Avenue, including Riverton tenants, took exception to Baldwin's characterization of the neighborhood. Clippings about housing issues, Harlem, and Alexander round out this collection, as do various publications dealing with development of the Riverton-Harlem River Park area during the 1960s.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African Americans -- Legal status, laws, etc

African Americans -- Segregation

African Americans--Housing

Community development, Urban -- New York (State) -- New York

Community organization -- New York (State) -- New York

Public housing

Urban renewal -- New York (State) -- Harlem (New York)

### **Geographic Names**

Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Social conditions

Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Social life and customs

### **Names**

Alexander, Clifford L. (Clifford Leopold), 1897-1989

Harlem River Park (New York, N.Y.)

Riverton Houses (New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Riverton management issues 1959-1982
- b. 1 f. 2 *Baldwin, James. "Fifth Avenue Uptown", Esquire controversy* 1960  
Alexander, Clifford
- b. 1 f. 3 Personal correspondence 1964-1965
- b. 1 f. 4 Clippings 1964-1972  
Includes clippings on Clifford Alexander, Sr. and Jr.
- b. 1 f. 5-6 Clippings on housing issues 1947-1960s
  - b. 1 v. 1 Offering plan to convert to cooperative ownership 1973
- b. 2 f. 1 Riverton Development Corp. Project
- b. 2 f. 2 Street diagrams of location of buildings
- b. 2 f. 3 Information on trees planted within Riverton Complex
- b. 2 f. 4 Harlem River Park development plan 1968
- b. 2 f. 5 Floor plans for apartments