

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

Guide to the

# Jesse J. Johnson military collection

1942-2003 Sc MG 200

Processed by Janice Quinter, April 2011.

# Summary

Creator: Johnson, Jesse J., 1914-2006

Title: Jesse J. Johnson military collection

Date: 1942-2003

Size: 9.42 linear feet (10 boxes, 1 oversize folder)

Source: Gift of Jesse J. Johnson, 1983 and 2003.

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

**Abstract:** An African American career soldier, Jesse J. Johnson authored eight books and several plays about the military service of black men and women. The Jesse J. Johnson military collection consists primarily of secondary sources and printed material, along with typescripts of his plays and one of his books.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Jesse J. Johnson military collection, Sc MG 200, 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 Janice Quinter, April 2011.

### **Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: drawing.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio materials. For more information, please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

# **Creator History**

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A career soldier, Jesse J. Johnson devoted a great part of his life to educating the public about the contributions of Black men and women to the armed forces in the United States. Over a twenty-seven year period, he authored eight books about the military service of Black men and women in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines from 1619 to the late 20th century. The books, *Ebony Brass, The Black Soldier, A Pictorial History of Black Soldiers, A Pictorial History of Black Servicemen* (Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines), *Black Armed Forces Officers, Black Women in the Armed Forces, Roots of Two Black Marines Sergeants Major*, and *The Soldier Samaritan*, were published between 1967 and 1994. Johnson published these books via his own company, Carver Publishing, Inc., a company he founded and headed, printing 1000-4000 copies of each title. In addition to writing these non-fiction works, he authored several plays with military themes, none of which were published. He also gave speeches, primarily at colleges and military forts, about the Black men and women who served in the armed forces.

Born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1914, Johnson earned his B.A. degree from Tougaloo College in 1929; his LLB degree from the American Extension School of Law, Chicago in 1950; and his M.A. degree from Hampton Institute in 1964. He was drafted into the Army in October 1942, soon after entering Officers Candidate School, and three months later was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps at Fort Lee, Virginia. He completed extension military courses in the First Lieutenant, Captain, and Major series from Fort Lee, Virginia, as well as language courses in Tagalog at Philippine University, Japanese in Korea, and German courses from the Armed Forces Institute in Germany.

Johnson served domestically and overseas, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1962. That same year, he began working for Hampton Institute in Virginia as its personnel officer. From 1967-1980, Johnson served as an education specialist at Fort Eustis where he revised and wrote home study correspondence courses on Army aviation. LTC Johnson died in 2006 in Hampton, Virginia.

### Scope and Content Note

The Jesse J. Johnson military collection consists primarily of secondary sources and printed material (many of which arecopies of documents held in public repositories) along with typescripts of his plays and one of his books. Johnson collected material about Black men and women in the U.S. military, and in wars ranging from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War, all branches of service, and a wide selection of related subjects. The bulk of the collection is research material about these topics. There are also interviews Johnson conducted in the 1970s-1980s with retired African American servicemen.

**Arrangement:** Collection arranged into three series: I. Personal papers; II. Writing; and III. Military history.

## **Key Terms**

#### **Subjects**

African American air pilots African American authors African American dramatists African American sailors African American soldiers African Americans -- Biography Air pilots, Military -- United States -- History Authors, Black United States. Army -- African American troops -- History

# **Geographic Names**

Fort Huachuca (Ariz.) United States -- Armed Forces -- African Americans -- History

### **Names**

Bradley, Ernest C., 1915-Brown, Roy, Major Johnson, Jesse J., 1914-2006

#### **Container List**

#### Personal 1942-2003

The Personal papers series, 1942-2003, contains biographical information and family history regarding property in Mississippi. Additionally, there is correspondence about Johnson's writing, sepaking engagements, and use of his collection for research.

b. 1 f. 1-4 Biographical information b. 1 f. 5-6 Family history 1993-2001 Correspondence b. 1 f. 7-8 "Gold Bars to Silver Stars" and other plays 1967-2003 Includes clippings. b. 1 f. 9 Printed matter on Johnson's writing 1975-1989 b. 1 f. 10 Speaking engagements 1975-1990 b. 1 f. 11 Research 1971-1994 b. 1 f. 12 Use of Johnson's photographs for publications 1993 Reference b. 1 f. 13 1973-1989 b. 1 f. 14 1991-1993 b. 1 f. 15 Jones, Jo 1982-1983 b. 1 f. 16-17 General 1968-1999 b. 1 f. 18 Grant application, Black Archives, Research Center and Museum, Florida

Writing 1966-1994

View A&M University 1988

This series consists of speeches, typescripts for eleven plays, and one short story with military themes. Johnson's last book, *The Soldier Samaritan: The Biography of Major Ernest C. Bradley*, is represented by numerous drafts, including Bradley's handwritten draft of his autobiography; documents relating to his military and civilian life; and correspondence between Bradley and Johnson (1969-1994). Files for Johnson's book *Ebony Brass* consist of a partial draft and a selection published in a book by another author.

b. 1 f. 19-20	Speeches 1975-1983
	Plays
b. 1 f. 21	"Black Brass: Black Wives and Military Brats", incomplete draft undated
b. 1 f. 22	"Black Military Valor" draft undated
b. 1 f. 23	"Court-Martial of Blacks in the Shadow of the Trees in the Civilian Conservation Corps" 1994
b. 1 f. 24	"Gold Bars to Silver Bars" undated
h 1 f 25	III is step ant Ocala Banala Count Martial!! 1999

b. 1 f. 25 "Lieutenant Ocala Bane's Court-Martial" 1990

b. 1 f. 26-28 "Stoney the Road" 1990-1991

Also includes material on attempts to produce the play.

b. 1 f. 29 "Then and Now: Black Male/Female Brass", television or video script 1990

b. 1 f. 30 "Tumult: A Roman Court-Martial" 1966

b. 1 f. 31 "The Trial of the Jadestone Doll", incomplete undated

b. 1 f. 32 Short story, "The Negro General" 1990

b. 1 f. 33 "Black Military Valor 1619 to 1865: Black Illustrated Military History" draft undated

Ebony Brass

	Writing (cont.) Ebony Brass (cont.)
b. 1 f. 34	Partial draft
	Also includes correspondence and printed matter.
b. 1 f. 35	Selection published in The Black Soldier: From the American Revolution to Vietnam, edited by Jay David and Elaine Crane
	The Soldier Samaritan: The Biography of Major Ernest C. Bradley
b. 1 f. 36	Photocopy of book 1994
b. 1 f. 37 b. 2 f. 1	Original typescript
b. 2 f. 2	Correspondence with Bradley 1968-1979
b. 2 f. 3	Bradley's scrapbook and captions
b. 2 f. 4	Agreements with Bradley 1978-1994
b. 2 f. 5-7	Documents/research material ca. 1940-1976
b. 2 f. 8	Civilian Awards 1959-1978
b. 2 f. 9	Relationship with the Chinese 1957-1960
b. 2 f. 10	Service in Vietnam 1968-1970
b. 2 f. 11	Speech on the Masons and Civil Rights
b. 2 f. 12	Bradley's handwritten manuscript 1978
b. 2 f. 13	Early typescript of several chapters
b. 2 f. 14	Chapter outline and related correspondence 1979
b. 2 f. 15	Early annotated draft
b. 2 f. 16	Editor's comments
2 f. 17-19	Annotated typescripts
b. 2 f. 20	Partial drafts
b. 2 f. 21	Typescript work copy, first draft print version
b. 2 f. 22	Correspondence on printing of book 1973-1995
b. 2 f. 23	First original camera ready with errors
b. 2 f. 24	Book agreement (photocopy) 1994
b. 2 f. 25	Book review and statistical summary 1971-1990
	Carver Publishing Company
b. 2 f. 26	"Cartoon Book" 1982-1983
b. 2 f. 27	Agreements 1992
b. 2 f. 28	undated

b.

#### Military history 1942-1996

This series includes the subseries Wars, consisting primarily of secondary source material. The Revolutionary War material focuses on the Battle of Yorktown, Virginia; the participation of Blacks in other aspects of this war is mentioned. Both printed matter and photocopies of documents relate to the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812. Black involvement in the Civil War is documented by photocopies of documents from the National Archives and Library of Congress and consists of both Confederate and federal correspondence, battle reports and resolutions regarding Black troops in 1865, the Reconstruction period, assorted documents concerning officers, and company muster rolls from the Louisiana National Guard. Additionally, there are claims for pensions for chaplains who were veterans of the Civil War as well as general information about Black participation. Johnson's research on the Spanish-American War consists of photocopies of military documents, correspondence about the appointment of Black officers in the Army, articles, and sections of books. World War II information includes two original war ration books, several shirt patches, a program, material regarding a 1993 Conference on Black Americans in World War II, and printed matter. Korean War material pertains to segregation, integration of forces on bases in the United States and overseas, and statistics concerning Black manpower. Correspondence discusses cases of alleged discrimination on Army bases. Many of the documents are copies of declassified material held by the Department of the Army.

The Branches of service subseries consists of information pertaining to specific branches, regardless of the time period or war. Of interest in the Air Force branch are interviews Johnson conducted with Robert and Betty Overby; Mr. Overby relates his experiences in the Korean War and in Vietnam, and Mrs. Overby touches upon her experiences in basic training during her stint as a medical technician. Army documents comprise the greatest amount of material in this subseries and begin with printed material about the Ninth Cavalry and the original Buffalo Soldiers. The Tenth Cavalry is represented by an interview with Milton Johnson in which he discusses his experiences after joining this unit in 1928 in Arizona; additionally, he discusses his role as a pitcher and manager of IBack GI baseball teams in Germany following the end of World War II, as well as the latter's military experience in Asia in the 1950s. A substantial amount of material refers to the service of the 92nd Infantry Division during World War II in the Ligurian Campaign in Italy, including copies of G2 and G4 Operations Reports. There is also material concerning the 92nd Infantry Division World War II Association Reunions. This subseries also includes the extensive memoir (1919-1948), as told to Johnson, of Major Roy Brown who was stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where all the Black 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions were trained. There are certificates aned a memoir of Sergeant George Weaver, who also served at Fort Huachuca. The all Black 24th Infantry Regiment and the controversy surrounding its performance and dissolution during the Korean War is represented in this subseries as well. Additional information about Black troops in the Army, 1891-1917, is provided by Marvin Fletcher's Ph.D. dissertation. Several articles discuss Blacks in the Coast Guard, and there are a number of publications and a memoir detailing the contributions of Black Marines. One folder each of material refers to Blacks in the Merchant Marines and the National Guard. A significant amount of information refers to Blacks in the Navy, including an interview Johnson held with Granville Parker, in which he described his naval experiences from 1917-1934 in the United States and overseas. Printed material on Black sailors, integration in the Navy, primarily during World War II, and the history of Blacks in the Navy going back to the American Revolution is included.

The Subjects subseries contains assorted printed material about a wide range of military topics. These include armed forces in film, chaplains, history, contemporary affairs of other countries and their armies, and military statistics (mostly from the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection and the Defense Manpower Data Center). There are files regarding World War I officers, General Colin L. Powell, quartermasters, and prisoners of war (their treatment and exchange during the Civil War, from the National Archives). Additional subjects relate to Blacks in the military and military bases in Virginia, West Point, and women in the military

The General subseries contains many publications about Blacks in the military, but not pertaining to any specific war or branch of service. There are several editions of the publication issued by the U.S. Department of Defense, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation*, in addition to statistics, papers concerning racial equality in the military and Black military valor, and bibliographies.

Arranged into 4 subseries: (1) Wars; (2) Branches of service; (3) Subject files; and (4) General.

Military history (cont.) Wars 1963-1988 Arranged chronologically. Revolutionary War o. 1 Battle of Yorktown, Virginia Oversized folder 1 replaces box 2, folder 29. b. 2 f. 30-31 undated b. 2 f. 32-33 War of 1812, Battle of New Orleans b. 2 f. 34 Indian wars and Black Indians Civil War b. 2 f. 35-38 Confederate correspondence, resolutions, and federal battle reports on Black troops 1865 b. 3 f. 1-3 "Blacks in the Civil War", from the National Archives Veteran officers b. 3 f. 4 Fleetwood, Christian A b. 3 f. 5 Lewis, James, Martin Delaney, and others b. 3 f. 6 Douglas, H. Ford and Joseph W. Paine b. 3 f. 7 Singleton, Henry and Patrick H. Minor b. 3 f. 8 Williams, George Washington and William N. Reed b. 3 f. 9-10 Louisiana National Guard, Company muster rolls b. 3 f. 11 Roster draft by Johnson Chaplains b. 3 f. 12 LeVere, George W b. 3 f. 13 And other officers b. 3 f. 14-16 Claims for pensions b. 3 f. 17 Veterans b. 3 f. 18-20 undated Spanish-American War b. 3 f. 21 Officers b. 3 f. 22-23 undated b. 3 f. 24 Post-Spanish American War 1899-1905 b. 3 f. 25 World War I World War II b. 3 f. 26 Osur, Alan M. Blacks in the Armed Forces during World War II 1977 b. 3 f. 27 Conference on Black Americans and World War II 1993 b. 3 f. 28 undated b. 3 f. 29 Scrapbook b. 3 f. 30-32 Korean War 1950-1953 b. 4 f. 1-7 b. 4 f. 8 Vietnam War Branches of service 1942-1994 Arranged alphabetically by branch.

Air Force

Military history (cont.) Branches of service (cont.) Air Force (cont.) b. 4 f. 9 Overby, Robert and Betty 1989 b. 4 f. 10 Otey, Flem. "NATO and the United States Air Force in Europe" ca. 1967 b. 4 f. 11 1969-1981 b. 4 f. 12 1973-1994 b. 4 f. 13 undated Army b. 4 f. 14 Ninth Calvary, U.S. Army Fort D.A. Russell, Wyoming ca. 1910 b. 4 f. 15-16 Tenth Calvary, Buffalo Soldiers Johnson, Reverend Milton b. 4 f. 17 Certificates 1945-1961 b. 4 f. 18 Military story 1948-1976 Includes citations and correspondence (photocopies). b. 4 f. 19 Interview transcripts 1976 b. 4 f. 20 Wharfield, H. B. (Dave). "10th Cavalry and Border Fights" 1965 92nd Infantry Division, World War II Operations reports b. 4 f. 21 G2 1942-1945 b. 4 f. 22 G4 1942-1945 b. 4 f. 23 1945 April-May b. 4 f. 24 Operational highlights 1944-1945 b. 4 f. 25 Italian Campaign 1942-1945 b. 4 f. 26 Ligurian Campaign in Italy 1944-1945 b. 4 f. 27-29 Clippings 1944-1945 Includes map. b. 4 f. 30 1944-1945 b. 4 f. 31-32 Reports 1945 b. 4 f. 33 Clippings on Italy and elsewhere b. 4 f. 34-35 Goodman, Paul. "Fragment of Victory" 1952 b. 5 f. 1 Royal, Isaac J 1977-1980 Sergeant Major whose grandfather was a Cvil War Veteran. Includes research on his grandfather. b. 5 f. 3 Hargrove, Hondon P 1982-1988 Includes clippings on his book about Black soldiers. 92nd Infantry Division World War II Association b. 5 f. 4 Buffalo Newsletter 1975-1995 b. 5 f. 5 40th Anniversary Reunion 1982 b. 5 f. 6 41st Anniversary Reunion 1983-1984 b. 5 f. 7 1985-1987 b. 5 f. 8 Research correspondence and printed matter for planned book 1971-1982 b. 5 f. 9 History Fort Huachuca

	Military history (cont.)
	Branches of service (cont.) Army (cont.) Fort Huachuca (cont.)
b. 5 f. 10-13	Brown, Roy 1919-1976 Includes oral history transcript (1919-1948), first and second drafts, and final version.
b. 5 f. 14	Weaver, George 1942-1975 Includes memoir and certificates.
	Troop reunion
b. 5 f. 15-16	1975
b. 5 f. 17	1977-1991
b. 5 f. 18	General
	24th Regiment
b. 5 f. 19	Korean War history
b. 5 f. 20	Reunions 1990-1994
b. 5 f. 21	24th Transportation Battalion 1992 Includes history and Johnson's address at reunion regarding the Berlin Airlift.
b. 5 f. 22	351st Field Artillery
	369th Field Artillery
b. 5 f. 23	Veteran's Association 1991
b. 5	Proposal for television film 1992
b. 5 f. 26	Infantry Regiment
b. 5 f. 27	555th Parachute Infantry Association (Triple Nickel)
b. 5 f. 28	Dunn, Steven. "Then Comes the Rain" (memoir) undated
b. 5 f. 29	Johnson, Richard (Captain)
b. 5 f. 30	Tuskegee Airmen
b. 5 f. 31	Fletcher, Marvin Edward. "The Negro Soldier and the United States Army: 1891-1917" (PhD dissertation) 1968
b. 5 f. 32-34 b. 6 f. 1	General
b. 6 f. 2-4	Coast Guard Includes annotated bibliography. Marines
b. 6 f. 5	Watson, James A., Sr. "Men of Adversity: Montford Point and the Black Marine Experience" (memoir) undated
b. 6 f. 6	Shaw, Henry I., Jr., and Ralph W. Donnelly. "Blacks in the Marine Corps" 1975
b. 6 f. 7-9	General
b. 6 f. 10	Merchant Marines
b. 6 f. 11	National Guard
	Navy
b. 6 f. 12	Secretary of the Navy ca. 1917-1942 Includes photocopy of index cards of Black related documents.
b. 6 f. 13	Beecher, John. All Brave Soldiers: The Story of the SS Booker T. Washington 1945
b. 6 f. 14	Nelson, D. Dennis. The Integration of the Negro into the United States Navy 1951
b. 6 f. 15	Black Americans in the Navy ca. 1977

	Military, history, (cost.)
	Military history (cont.) Branches of service (cont.) Navy (cont.)
b. 6 f. 16-19	1970s-1980s
b. 6 f. 20-21	Clippings 1970s-1995
b. 6 f. 22	Weems, John E. "Jesse Brown Story", permissions for film/video 1988
b. 6 f. 23-24	Research correspondence and printed material
	Parker, Granville
b. 6 f. 25-27	Interview transcript 1980 Includes two copies of the first draft, once corrected, and the final version.
b. 6 f. 28	Songs popular during World War I 1982
	Subject files 1946-1995
	Arranged alphabetically by subject.
b. 6 f. 29	African American Civil War Memorial 1988-1989
	Armed forces in film
b. 6 f. 30	Black soldiers
b. 6 f. 31	Korean War
b. 6 f. 32-34	Lists of films with Black military forces
b. 6 f. 35	Race relations
	Chaplains
b. 6 f. 36	Alexander, Charles. Battles and Victories of Allen Allensworth (photocopy) 1914
	Camp Campbell, Kentucky, South Area Chapel #2 programs
b. 7 f. 1	1946-1948 July
b. 7 f. 2	1948 August-1949
b. 7 f. 3	1949 September-1950 November
b. 7 f. 4	Air Force
b. 7 f. 5	Johnson, Leona and Milton 1946-1973
b. 7 f. 6	Clippings
	International armies
b. 7 f. 7	Asia
b. 7 f. 8	Central Africa
b. 7 f. 9	Cuba
b. 7 f. 10	East Africa
b. 7 f. 11	Ethiopia
b. 7 f. 12	Europe
b. 7 f. 13	Ghana
b. 7 f. 14	Haiti
b. 7 f. 15	Israel
b. 7 f. 16	Kenya
b. 7 f. 17	Latin America
b. 7 f. 18	Nigeria
b. 7 f. 19	Nigerian Army Museum
b. 7 f. 20	North Africa
b. 7 f. 21-22	Southern Africa

Military history (cont.) Subject files (cont.) International armies (cont.) b. 7 f. 23 Ebong, Maravia Reid. "Memos from the Motherland" (newspaper column) b. 7 f. 24-25 General b. 7 f. 26 Gault, Charleyne Hunter (news correspondent, MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour) Military bibliographies b. 7 f. 27 Pappas, George S. U.S. Army Unit Histories: A Military History Research Collection Bibliography 1971 Slonaker, John b. 7 f. 28 The U.S. Army and the Negro: A Military History Research Collection Bibliography 1971 b. 7 f. 29 The Volunteer Army: A Military History Research Collection Bibliography 1972 b. 7 f. 30 Sommers, Richard J. Manuscript Holdings of the Military History Research Collection 1972 b. 7 f. 31 Kelly, Thomas E., III. Bibliography for The U.S. Army and the Spanish-American War Era, 1895-1910, Parts I and II 1974 b. 7 f. 32 Oral History, Parts I and II bibliography 1976-1977 b. 8 f. 1 Military history 1977 Includes A Tour of Historic Carlisle Barracks. Military statistics b. 8 f. 2 1970s b. 8 f. 3-5 Department of Defense, "Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System" 1985-1987 b. 8 f. 6 Minority Officers Association Military Civil Rights Revitalization Act of 1989 (Captain Joyce Griggs) 1989 b. 8 f. 7 National Minority Military Museum, Foundation Economic Impact Analysis 1982 Officers b. 8 f. 8 Means, Mary C. Negro Officers in the First World War 1977 b. 8 f. 9-11 World War I b. 8 f. 12-13 Powell, General Colin L. clippings 1987-1993 b. 8 f. 14 Black officers as conference speakers 1993 b. 8 f. 15-17 General b. 8 f. 18 Historical and pictorial review of Replacement Training Center, Fort Lee, Virginia 1941 b. 8 f. 19-20 Quartermaster Professional Bulletin 1988-1992 b. 8 f. 21-23 Prisoners of war, treatment and exchange, from the National Archives 1862-1869 b. 8 f. 24 Songs Virginia b. 8 f. 25 Camp Lee 1943 b. 8 f. 26 Fort Monroe b. 8 f. 27-28 Blacks in the military b. 8 f. 29 War medals and decorations

Military history (cont.) Subject files (cont.) Virginia (cont.) b. 8 f. 30-31 War Memorial Museum of Virginia, Black Solider Galley Committee 1993-1995 West Point b. 9 f. 1-2 Flipper, Henry Ossian Includes "Henry Ossian Flipper: Black Man in Blue, 1856-1882", thesis by Renee Hope Gledhill, 1970 (folder 1). b. 9 f. 3 Marszalek, John F., Jr. Court-Marshall: A Black Man in America (photocopy) 1972 About Johnson Whittaker. Women in the military b. 9 f. 4 National WAC (Women's Army Corps) Veterans Association 1970 Black women b. 9 f. 5 Statistics 1972-1974 b. 9 f. 6-8 World War II WACS 1942-1946 b. 9 f. 9 1990s b. 9 f. 10 General Miscellaneous b. 9 f. 11 1980s-1990s b. 9 f. 12-13 undated General 1966-1996 b. 9 f. 14 Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Conference 1996 Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation by U.S. Department of Defense b. 9 f. 15 1981 b. 9 f. 16 1982 b. 9 f. 17 1985 b. 9 f. 18 1991 b. 9 f. 19 Craig, Barry P. (collector) b. 9 f. 20 Moskos, Charles, Jr. Articles on Blacks in the military 1966-1980 b. 9 f. 21 Statistics of composition of military service 1991 b. 9 f. 22 Brown, Linda C. "The Role of the U.S. Military as a Testing Ground for the Concept of Racial Equality in the United States from the Colonial Period of World War II" 1990 b. 9 f. 23 Miscellaneous b. 10