



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

Guide to the

**May M. Edel papers**

1933-1965

Sc MG 311

## Summary

**Creator:** Edel, May M. (May Mandelbaum), 1909-1964

**Title:** May M. Edel papers

**Date:** 1933-1965

**Size:** 3.92 linear feet (8 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Abraham Edel, November 1986.

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

**Abstract:** May M. Edel was an anthropologist who studied the Chiga people of western Uganda. This collection consists of stories, tales, field notes, correspondence, and various drafts of the manuscript about the Chiga people entitled "The Bachiga of East Africa".

**Conditions Governing Use:** Abraham Edel retains copyright to the manuscript, "The Bachiga of East Africa."

**Preferred citation:** [Item], May M. Edel papers, Sc MG 311, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English Material in English and Bantu.

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, November 1986.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

**Related Materials:**

May Mandelbaum Edel papers, 1928-1996, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

## Creator History

May Mandelbaum Edel was born on December 1, 1909, in New York. As a student at Barnard College, she took graduate anthropology classes at Columbia University under Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict. She continued her graduate studies at Columbia University and was awarded her Ph.D. in 1940. Her first fieldwork experience was with the Okanagan in 1930, and in the following year she conducted linguistic research among the Tillamook. As a fellow of the National Research Council, she traveled to Western Uganda in 1932, and stayed in the village of Bufuka (with the Bachiga people) where she did ethnographic work. In 1934, she married philosopher Abraham Edel, whom she would later collaborate with on the book *Anthropology and Ethics*. She taught anthropology at Brooklyn College and at the New School for Social Research, and in 1960, founded the Anthropology Department at Rutgers University. May Mandelbaum Edel passed away on May 23, 1964, at the age of 54.

## Scope and Content Note

The bulk of this collection consists of stories, tales, and various drafts of the manuscript about the Chiga people entitled "The Bachiga of East Africa". Also included are drafts of individual chapters and page proofs of her book, *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (1957), based on the manuscript. Additionally included are letters from several Africans to Edel, probably in Bantu; letters from Ruth Benedict concerning the manuscript, "The Bachiga of East Africa"; and reviews written by Edel. Lastly included are Edel's field notes of the Chiga (1933-1934), which consist of vocabulary lists and information about kinship and religion.

**Arrangement:** Arranged into 4 series: (1) Biographical; (2) Field work and research; (3) Correspondence; and (4) Writing.

## Key Terms

### Geographic Names

Africa -- Social life and customs

Uganda -- Languages

### Occupations

Anthropologists.

Ethnologists.

### Subjects

Bantu-speaking peoples

Chiga (African people)

Folk literature, African

Folklore -- Africa, East

### Names

Edel, May M. (May Mandelbaum), 1909-1964

## Container List

- b. 1 f. A Biographical information
  - Field work and research
- b. 1 f. 1 Notebooks 1932-1933
- b. 1 f. 2 Notes (in notebook) on kinship and community 1933
- b. 1 f. 3 Stories and tales notebook 1933
- b. 1 f. 4 Notes (in notebook) on religion
- b. 1 f. 5 Language notes
- b. 1 f. 6 Vocabulary lists
- b. 1 f. 7-9 Word list
  - Includes computer analysis.
- b. 2 f. 1 General notes
- b. 2 f. 2-26 Notes on stories and folk tales
- b. 2 f. 27 Proverbs, cases, and assorted notes
- b. 2 f. 28 Unanalyzed material
  - Research material
- b. 2 f. 29-31 Measurements and statistics
  - b. 3 f. 1
  - b. 3 f. 2 Witchcraft
  - b. 3 f. 3 Vocabulary of the Kru Society
- Correspondence
- b. 3 f. 4 Mbalinda, Blasio 1933
- b. 3 f. 5 Ndolwa, O 1933-1934
- b. 3 f. 6 Kayabutci, E 1933-1936
- b. 3 f. 7 1933-1935
- b. 3 f. 8 Mabula, Eseri 1934
- b. 3 f. 9 Bakesigaryi, K 1936
- b. 3 f. 10 Benedict, Ruth 1937-1942
- b. 3 f. 11 *Regarding galley proof for The Chiga of Western Uganda* ca. 1957
- b. 3 f. 12 Regarding corrections for manuscript
- Writing
  - Essays
- b. 3 f. 13 "Political Organization in East Africa" 1928
- b. 3 f. 14 "Amistic Belief in Northern West Africa" 1928
- b. 3 f. 15 "The Bolum Language: A Preliminary Analysis" (M.A. thesis) 1929
- b. 3 f. 16-17 "The Bachiga of East Africa" 1937
  - Includes draft and annotated galley.
- b. 3 f. 18 Review of "Anthropology in Action" by G. G. Brown and A. Mac D. Hutt 1937
- b. 3 f. 19 "Property among the Chiga" 1938
- b. 3 f. 20 "The Sinkaitk" 1939
- b. 3 f. 21 "The Sinkaitk or Southern Okanagon of Washington" with Leslie Spier, et. al

Writing (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 22-23     Reviews 1943
  - Includes reviews of *Native Standards of Living* by Margaret Mead, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education* by M. Fortes, and *Land Tenure in an Ibo Village* by M. M. Green.
  - "The Story of People" 1953
- b. 3 f. 24        Chapter 1
  - b. 4 f. 1        "Anthropology for Young People"
  - b. 4 f. 2        *The Chiga of Western Uganda page proofs*
  - b. 4 f. 3        "African Tribalism: Some Reflections on Uganda" 1965
  - b. 4 f. 4        "Bachiga Education"
  - "The Bachiga"
- b. 4 f. 5-9        Various drafts
- b. 5 f. 1-4        Includes a final draft.
  - b. 5 f. 5        Draft of chapter 2, Kinship
  - b. 5 f. 6        Draft on marriage
  - b. 6 f. 1        Draft on material culture
  - b. 6 f. 2        Draft on economics
  - b. 6 f. 3        Draft on religion
  - b. 6 f. 4        Drafts on character and attitudes
  - b. 6 f. 5        Draft on the social group
  - b. 6 f. 6        Drafts on kinship
  - b. 6 f. 7        Drafts on material culture
  - b. 6 f. 8        Drafts on economics
  - b. 6 f. 9        Drafts on marriage
  - b. 6 f. 10       Drafts on childhood
  - b. 6 f. 11       Drafts on sanctions
  - b. 6 f. 12       Drafts on religion
  - b. 6 f. 13       Draft
  - b. 6 f. 14       Drafts on marriage
  - b. 6 f. 15       Drafts on kinship
  - b. 7 f. 1        Drafts on character and attitudes
  - b. 7 f. 2        Drafts on economics
  - b. 7 f. 3        Drafts on religion
  - b. 7 f. 4        Drafts on social groups
  - b. 7 f. 5        Drafts on material culture
  - b. 7 f. 6        Omitted material
  - b. 7 f. 7        Fragments
  - b. 7 f. 8        Draft
  - b. 7 f. 9        Work by others: Kalibala, Ernest B. "Nakiraba"
- b. 8              Handwritten notes on index cards