



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

Guide to the

Jean Blackwell Hutson papers

1902-1998

Sc MG 652

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Summary

Creator: Hutson, Jean Blackwell, 1914-1998

Title: Jean Blackwell Hutson papers

Date: 1902-1998

Size: 6.0 linear feet (6 boxes)

Source: Gift of the estate of Jean Blackwell Hutson, 1998.

Abstract: Jean Blackwell Hutson (1914-1998) was a librarian who served as curator of the Schomburg Collection from 1948 to 1972, then chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture from 1972 to 1980. The Jean Blackwell Hutson papers include materials relating to Hutson's personal life and family, library career at the Schomburg Center and the University of Ghana, and teaching, writing, and other activities.

Preferred citation: [Item], Jean Blackwell Hutson papers, Sc MG 652, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: portraits of Hutson, watercolor, kinte cloth, musical instrument, stool, coins. . Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound (MIRS) 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, including portraits, family photographs, and snapshots.

Transferred to the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division: books and serials.

Related Materials:

Andy Razaf papers, Sc MG 35, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Ellen Craft Dammond reminiscences, Sc MG 650, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Jean Blackwell Hutson oral history interview, Sc MG 673, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture records, Sc MG 44, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Creator History

Jean Blackwell Hutson (1914-1998) was a librarian who served as curator of the Schomburg Collection from 1948 to 1972, then chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture from 1972 to 1980. She was born on September 7, 1914, in Sommerfield, Florida, to parents Paul and Sarah Myers Blackwell, and at age four moved to Baltimore, Maryland. Hutson graduated valedictorian from Douglass High School in 1931, then attended the University of Michigan before transferring to Barnard College, from which she graduated in 1935, as the second Black woman graduate after Zora Neale Hurston. In 1936, she received a master's degree in library science from Columbia University, and that same year was temporarily hired at the 135th St. branch of New York Public Library (NYPL) to fill in for Catherine Latimer, who was on maternity leave. Over the next several years, she worked at various NYPL locations and as a school librarian and teacher at high schools in Baltimore and New Jersey, earning a teaching degree from Columbia in 1941. In 1948, she returned to 135th St. as curator of the Schomburg Collection after the departure of previous curator Lawrence Reddick.

As curator, she inventoried the collection and oversaw the publication of the *Dictionary Catalogue of the Schomburg Collection* in 1962. In 1964, she took a year-long leave of absence to work at the University of Ghana, building an Africana collection for their library at the behest of Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah, a former 135th St. branch patron. On her return to NYPL, Hutson worked to fundraise and lobby on behalf of the Schomburg Collection, which in 1972 was designated the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, one of NYPL's three research libraries. Hutson's advocacy resulted in federal funding to construct a new building to house the collection, which opened in 1981. In 1980, Hutson was transferred to a new role as assistant director for collection management, and Wendell Wray was hired as Schomburg director. Hutson retired from NYPL in 1984.

In addition to her work as a librarian, Hutson taught classes in Black history at City College during the 1960s and 1970s and at Westchester Community College in the 1980s. She authored articles that appeared in *Opportunity* and *Freedomways*, contributed to numerous biographies and encyclopedias of notable Black figures, and was herself profiled in *Who's Who* and *Notable Black American Women*. She was active in many professional and civic organizations, including the American Library Association, the Harlem Cultural Council, the National Urban League, and Delta Sigma Theta sorority. She received honors and awards from the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the New York Black Librarians Caucus, and the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, among others.

Hutson was married to poet and songwriter Andy Razaf from 1939 to 1947, then John Hutson from 1950 to his death in 1957. They had one daughter, Jean Frances Hutson (1952-1992). Hutson died in

Harlem in February 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The Jean Blackwell Hutson papers include materials relating to Hutson's personal life and family, library career at the Schomburg Center and the University of Ghana, and teaching, writing, and other activities.

Arrangement: The Jean Blackwell Hutson papers are arranged in five series: I. Personal II. Correspondence III. Professional and Civic Activities IV. Writings and V. Printed Matter

Key Terms

Subjects

African American librarians -- New York (State) -- New York
African American women librarians
Black author

Names

Dammond, Ellen Craft
Hutson, Jean Blackwell, 1914-1998
Razaf, Andy, 1895-1973
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Harlem Cultural Council
New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
University of Ghana

Container List

Personal 1902-1998

The personal files contain biographical material, including address books, diaries, ID cards, passports, and various biographies of and interviews with Hutson. There are also education files containing correspondence and newsletters from the alumni groups of Douglass High School and Barnard College, as well as class materials and notes from Hutson's time at Columbia's Teacher's College in the 1940s and oral history program in the 1980s. There is a significant amount of family papers and correspondence, particularly with Hutson's mother, Sarah Myers Blackwell, and daughter, Jean Frances Hutson. Finally, there are some financial papers, travel documents, and various certificates and plaques awarded to Hutson.

Biographical 1914-1998

- b. 1 f. 1-2 Address Books 1914-1998
- b. 1 f. 3 Astrology Reading 1990
- Diaries
 - b. 1 f. 4 1931
 - b. 1 f. 5 1964-1965
These diaries cover the period when Hutson was in Ghana.
 - b. 1 f. 6 1975-1984
- b. 1 f. 7 ID Cards
- b. 1 f. 8 Passports 1930-1998
- Writings about and Interviews with Hutson
 - b. 1 f. 9 *I Dream A World Portrait* 1989-1990
Includes correspondence and press about *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*, a exhibition of photos of Black women by Brian Lanker.
 - b. 1 f. 10 "History of Harlem," Interview with Aldora Britton, College of New Rochelle 1990
 - b. 1 f. 11 "Seven Library Women Whose Humane Presence Enlightened Society in the Harlem Renaissance Iconoclastic Ethos," PhD Dissertation by Marilyn Nelson 1996
 - b. 1 f. 12 Miscellaneous Biographical Entries 1973-1998
Correspondence and biographical information for Hutson's entries in the *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, *Who's Who of American Women*, and *Minority American Women: A Biographical Directory*.
 - b. 1 f. 13 Interview with Martin Duberman 1984

Education 1936-1992

- b. 1 f. 14 Douglass High School 1981-1983
Contains materials for the 50 year reunion of Hutson's graduating class.
- b. 1 f. 15 Barnard College 1936-1992
- b. 1 f. 16 Columbia University Teachers College 1941-1942
- Columbia University Oral History Program 1981
 - b. 1 f. 17 Class Notes 1981
Includes Hutson's proposal and notes for an interview, and critiques and feedback from Hutson's classmates.
 - b. 1 f. 18 Transcript of Interview with Ellen Craft Dammond 1981

Family 1902-1992

- b. 2 f. 1 Blackwell, Amelia (Cousin) Correspondence 1967-1986
- Blackwell, Sarah Myers (Mother) 1902-1973

Personal (cont.)

Family (cont.)

Blackwell, Sarah Myers (Mother) (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 2 **Correspondence 1902-1949**
Includes Hutson's report card for a semester at the University of Michigan (1933-1934).
- b. 2 f. 3 **Education 1903-1927**
- b. 2 f. 4 **Estate 1949**
- b. 2 f. 5-6 **Estate 1964-1973**
Receipts from Florence Snowden, for renting out Sarah Blackwell's house in Baltimore.

Blackwell Family

- b. 2 f. 7 **Family Reunions and Correspondence 1970-1992**
- b. 2 f. 8 **Herald News Bulletin 1989-1990**
- b. 2 f. 9 **Doswell, Thelma (Cousin) 1968-1986**
Hutson, John Oscar (Husband) 1942-1957
- b. 2 f. 10 **Correspondence 1949-1953**
- b. 2 f. 11 **NYPL 1942-1957**
Hutson, Jean Frances (Daughter) 1952-1992
- b. 2 f. 12 **General 1952-1982**
- b. 2 f. 13 **Letters**
- b. 2 f. 14 **Letters to Jean Blackwell Hutson 1967-1988**
- b. 2 f. 15 **Cards to Jean Blackwell Hutson**
- b. 2 f. 16 **Letters from Jean Blackwell Hutson 1960-1985**
- b. 2 f. 17 **Death 1992**
- b. 2 f. 18 **Other Family Correspondence 1951-1974**
- b. 2 f. 19 **Financial 1961-1991**
- b. 2 f. 20 **Travel**
- b. 2 f. 21 **Certificates and Plaques 1979-1992**

Correspondence 1932-1994

The correspondence includes a mix of personal and professional content, from friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Includes a large number of cards Hutson received upon her retirement from NYPL in 1984.

Arranged alphabetically by last name. Correspondents with a more significant volume of letters are in their own folders. The retirement cards are grouped together at the end of the series.

- b. 3 f. 1 **A 1966-1989**
- b. 3 f. 2 **Amedekey, Kate and Eddie 1965-1975**
- b. 3 f. 3 **Andrews, Regina 1973-1982**
- b. 3 f. 4 **Arkhurst, Joyce 1964-1991**
- b. 3 f. 5 **B 1965-1991**
- b. 3 f. 6 **Barthé, Richmond 1966-1973**
- b. 3 f. 7 **Bearden, Romare 1973-1988**
- b. 3 f. 8 **Berry, Faith 1971-1983**
- b. 3 f. 9 **Boromé, Joe 1965-1991**
- b. 3 f. 10 **Burrows, Vinie 1984-1990**
- b. 3 f. 11 **C 1964-1991**
- b. 3 f. 12 **Canegata, Juanita 1981-1988**

Correspondence (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 13 Cato, Lillie 1964-1991
- b. 3 f. 14 Chavers-Wright, Madrue 1973-1985
- b. 3 f. 15 Cohen, Maxwell T 1975-1985
- b. 3 f. 16 D 1966-1992
- b. 3 f. 17 Davis, Julia 1987
- b. 3 f. 18 Doares, Juanita 1979-1991
- b. 3 f. 19 E 1965-1989
- b. 3 f. 20 F 1966-1991
- b. 3 f. 21 G 1966-1992
- b. 3 f. 22 Garvey, Amy Jacques 1968-1973
- b. 3 f. 23 H 1963-1994
- b. 3 f. 24 Harding, Vincent 1968-1991
- b. 3 f. 25 Heyward, Samuel 1959-1982
- b. 3 f. 26 Hill, Hilda Anderson 1932-1957
- b. 3 f. 27 Huston, Jean (Outgoing Letters) 1973-1991
- b. 3 f. 28 Ives, Patricia Carter 1981-1984
- b. 3 f. 29 J 1975-1991
- b. 3 f. 30 Jefferson, Louise 1975-1987
- b. 3 f. 31 K 1965-1985
- b. 3 f. 32 L 1963-1992
- b. 3 f. 33 M 1949-1990
- b. 3 f. 34 McNeil, Genna Rae 1980-1984
- b. 3 f. 35 N 1974-1986
- b. 3 f. 36 O 1972-1992
- b. 3 f. 37 Obi, Dorothy 1965-1991
- b. 4 f. 1 P 1964-1990
- b. 4 f. 2 Porter, Dorothy 1968-1983
- b. 4 f. 3 Quam, Mary 1968-1978
- b. 4 f. 4 R 1972-1987
- b. 4 f. 5 S 1967-1990
- b. 4 f. 6 Samkange, Tommie 1984-1991
- b. 4 f. 7 Scott, Ida 1984-1991
- b. 4 f. 8 Sharp, Bobby 1980
- b. 4 f. 9 Sheftell, Minto Cato 1982-1984
- b. 4 f. 10 Solomon, Ruth 1957-1985
- b. 4 f. 11 T 1957-1990
- b. 4 f. 12 Taylor, Lois 1968-1984
- b. 4 f. 13 Thomas, Evelyn 1966-1975
- b. 4 f. 14 Thompson, Doris 1974-1992
- b. 4 f. 15 U-W 1962-1992
- b. 4 f. 16 Wadia, Curshed 1965-1982

Correspondence (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 17 Watts, A. Faulker 1977-1990
- b. 4 f. 18 Wray, Wendell 1964-1981
- b. 4 f. 19 Wright, Constance 1976-1993
- b. 4 f. 20 Y-Z 1968-1991
- b. 4 f. 21-22 Retirement Cards 1984
- b. 4 f. 23 Unidentified Correspondents

Professional and Civic Activities 1948-1993

This series documents Hutson's career at NYPL and the University of Ghana, as well as her other professional activities and the community and civic organizations to which she belonged and conferences and events she attended.

The NYPL files include memos, reports, and press clippings from Hutson's tenure at the Schomburg Center. (Extensive files on her activities there can also be found in the Schomburg Center institutional records.) Particular Schomburg personnel controversies, including the firing of archivist Laureore St. Juste, the hiring of white archivist Robert Morris, and Hutson's own clashes with NYPL administration and 1980 reassignment are all documented. Meeting minutes and memos detailing the fundraising and construction of the 1981 Schomburg Center building can be found in the Schomburg Corporation files.

This series also includes correspondence, memos, and travel documents relating to Hutson's year-long term at the University of Ghana; memos, lecture notes, and syllabi for the classes she taught at City College; and correspondence, meeting notes, and other materials relating to other organizations in which she was active, such as Delta Sigma Theta sorority, the Harlem Cultural Center, and the National Urban League.

Arranged alphabetically.

- b. 4 f. 24 Association of College and Research Libraries China Library Conference Trip 1983-1984
- b. 4 f. 25 Central Harlem Meals-on-Wheels 1990
- City College 1967-1973
- b. 4 f. 26 Administrative Memos 1969-1973
- b. 4 f. 27 Syllabi 1967
- b. 5 f. 1 Lecture Notes
- b. 5 f. 2 Columbia University Teacher's College 1969-1970
- b. 5 f. 3-4 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority 1968-1993
- b. 5 f. 5 *Dollars and Sense* 1985-1988
- b. 5 f. 6 Fine Arts Federation of New York 1985-1991
- b. 5 f. 7 Greater Harlem Guidance Center 1987-1988
- b. 5 f. 8 Harlem Cultural Council 1965-1991
- b. 5 f. 9 *Harlem on My Mind Exhibition, Metropolitan Museum of Art* 1969
- b. 5 f. 10 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions 1982-1984
- b. 5 f. 11 Ira Alridge Society 1966
- b. 5 f. 12 Jackson State College 1973-1975
- b. 5 f. 13 Martin Luther King, Jr. Center 1980-1992
- b. 5 f. 14 National Urban League/New York Urban League 1973-1991
- New York Public Library - Schomburg Center 1949-1990
- b. 5 f. 15 General 1954-1990
- b. 5 f. 16 St. Juste, Laureore 1972-1975

Professional and Civic Activities (cont.)
New York Public Library - Schomburg Center (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 17 Wray/Morris Controversy 1982-1984
- b. 5 f. 18 Retirement 1984
- b. 5 f. 19 Newsletters 1948-1990
Includes 1948 issue of *Branch Library Book News* featuring a bibliography on foreign policy by Jean Blackwell Hutson.
- b. 5 f. 20 Press Clippings 1949-1990
Includes two articles by Hutson, "Portrait of the Schomburg Collection" (1949) and "Schomburg Collection--Treasure of History" (1966), both from the *Amsterdam News*.
- b. 5 f. 21 Schomburg Advisory Committee 1979-1980
- b. 5 f. 22 Schomburg Commission 1987
Schomburg Corporation 1975-1992
- b. 5 f. 23 1975-1985
- b. 6 f. 1 1986-1992
- b. 6 f. 2 St. Philips Church 1963-1991
- b. 6 f. 3 Teaneck Public Library 1980
- b. 6 f. 4 Third World Archives Session, "Preserving Women's History" Conference, Smith College 1984
- b. 6 f. 5 "Time, Space and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League" First International Conference on Marcus Garvey, Glassboro State College 1990
University of Ghana 1954-1966
- b. 6 f. 6 1963-1964
- b. 6 f. 7 1964-1966
- b. 6 f. 8 Pamphlets 1954-1963
- b. 6 f. 9 Westchester Community College 1988
- b. 6 f. 10 World Festival of Negro Arts 1966

Writings 1945-1992

This series contains drafts and published versions of Hutson's articles, bibliographies, and biographical entries; as well as correspondence and materials relating to two books for which she served on advisory boards, *Notable Black American Women* and *Who's Who Among Black Americans*. There are also some writings by others, including a typescript of "Poems for a Mixed-Up World" by Hutson's first husband Andy Razaf.

Writings by Hutson 1945-1992

- b. 6 f. 11 "A Bibliography of Langston Hughes"
- b. 6 f. 12 "Harlem: A Cultural History. Selected Bibliography" 1968
Published in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* New Series 27, No. 5
- b. 6 f. 13 "The Negro in the American Scene: A Selective Bibliography"
- b. 6 f. 14 "Choosing Books for Harlemites" 1939 May
In *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*
- b. 6 f. 15 "The Art and Artifacts of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture"
- b. 6 f. 16 "The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture" 1979-1990
Multiple versions, including article reprints from *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (1979) and edited manuscript for *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors* (1990), with related correspondence.
- b. 6 f. 17 "Overdue Books: An Evaluation of Various Means of Recovering Them" 1945 August

Writings (cont.)

Writings by Hutson (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 18 *"Addie D. Waites Hunton" entry in Dictionary of American Negro Biography* 1980-1992
- b. 6 f. 19 *"Bessye Beardon" entry in Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* 1991
- b. 6 f. 20 *Notable Black American Women Advisory Board* 1989-1991
- b. 6 f. 21 *Who's Who Among Black Americans Advisory Board* 1984-1991
- b. 6 f. 22 June Jackson Christmas Research File
- b. 6 f. 23 Miscellaneous Writings and Notes

Writings by Others 1962-1989

- b. 6 f. 24 Brown, Augustus C. "African Art Collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture" 1980
- b. 6 f. 25 Prestwidge, K.J. "Bibliography of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics in Engineering Science and the Health Professions" 1989
- b. 6 f. 26 Razaf, Andy. "Poems for a Mixed-Up World" 1962
- b. 6 f. 27 Wickes, Frances G. "The Inner World of Man"

Printed Matter 1938-1995

Contains invitations, programs, and press clippings.

- b. 6 f. 28 Invitations and Programs 1938-1995
- b. 6 f. 29 Press Clippings 1964-1991