

Ethel M. Washington Papers, 1942-2018*Ethel M. Washington***Overview of the Collection**

- Title:** Ethel M. Washington Papers, 1942-2018
- Creator:** Ethel M. Washington
- Accessions:** PPL-2021-032
- Size:** 0.8 linear feet, comprised of:
(2) letter-size document boxes
- Repository:** Plainfield Public Library, Local History Department, 800 Park Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060
- Abstract:** The Ethel M. Washington Papers document her research and the source material she used to write two books on the history of Black Americans in Union County: *Union County Black Americans* (2004) and *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War* (2011). The collection includes photographs, programs, handwritten notes, computer printouts, and scanned documents.
- Language:** The records are in English.

Biographical Information

Ethel Washington retired in 2018 as the Grants Manager for the City of Plainfield. Before that position, she was the History Programs Coordinator for the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs. She was also an appointed member of the New Jersey State Historical Records Advisory Board and the Plainfield Cultural and Heritage Commission. Ms. Washington is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Union County Women of Excellence Award, induction into the Linden Historical Society's Hall of Fame, and the Luminous Award from the Raritan Valley Chapter of Links, Inc.

Ms. Washington received her B.S. from Central State University of Ohio, a Master of Arts and a Master of Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She did post graduate work at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Social Work, where she also received a Museum Studies Certificate from the Graduate School of Art History. In 1993, Ms. Washington established the African American Design Archive at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution in New York City.

Ms. Washington is a historian dedicated to Black history, an avid collector of Black art and artifacts, and a published author. Her first book, *Union County Black Americans*, completed in 2004, chronicles the struggles and triumphs of the Black experience in the county from colonial times to present day, through the use of captioned images. *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War*, her second book written in 2011, discusses the contributions of Black servicemen in the North, fighting against slavery while still enduring discrimination in the ranks and at home. Extensive research for this book includes photographs, documents, and service records.

Scope and Contents

The Ethel M. Washington Papers include material dating from the 1940s through 2018. The majority of the collection consists of photographs, mainly reproductions. Most of the photographs of Civil War soldiers were originally framed and unframed upon donation. The collection also includes programs, handwritten notes, publications, computer printouts, and scanned documents. Research material and images related to the Civil War publication were saved to CDs and 3.5" floppy diskettes.

Arrangement

The Ethel M. Washington Papers are arranged into two series:

Series 1: *Union County Black Americans* Source Material

Series 2: *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War* Source Material and Research

Index Terms

People:

Washington, Ethel M.

Organizations:

Places:

Plainfield (N.J.)

Union County (N.J.)

Subjects:

African Americans--New Jersey--Union County--History.

African Americans--New Jersey--Union County--Social life and customs.

African American soldiers--New Jersey--Union County--History--19th century.

African American sailors--New Jersey--Union County--History--19th century.

Related Items

The following items are available through [Plainfield Public Library](#):

Books:

974.936 WAS *Union County Black Americans*, Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

973.74 WAS *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War*, History Press, 2011.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

The majority of this collection consists of materials, such as paper documents and photographs that do not require any additional technology for access. Images on CDs can be viewed via computer in the Plainfield Room. There is no equipment available to view the 3.5" floppy diskettes.

Series Description**Series 1: *Union County Black Americans* Source Material [1930s-2006]****Series Arrangement**

Series 1 is arranged by subject and the order it appears in the book and fills fourteen letter-size folders in a document box.

Description

Series 1 consists of photographs, programs, ephemera, and biographies.

Series 2: *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War* Source Material and Research [1993-2018]**Series Arrangement**

Except for one publication, most material in Series 2 was removed from six binders, but kept in its original order. Framed photographs were unframed and sleeved. Series 2 fills twelve letter-size folders in one-and-a-half document boxes. Note that the folder titles in quotation marks were taken from the original binder titles. Dates were determined from the computer printouts.

Description

Series 2 consists of a signed copy of the publication itself, photographs, computer printouts, handwritten notes, CDs, and 3.5" floppy diskettes.

Administrative Information**Access & Restrictions**

The Ethel M. Washington Papers are available for research.

Access is restricted to materials prepared by the Local History department staff. All materials must be viewed in the Plainfield Room and may not be removed to another area of the library without permission of the Library Director or designee. Materials must be handled carefully and kept in order. Materials must not be leaned upon, altered, folded, ripped, or traced upon. Marks may not be added or erased from materials. Materials must be returned directly to Local History department staff and inspected before the researcher leaves the Plainfield Room.

One photocopy may be made (by Plainfield Public Library staff) of each document for the purpose of research; official Local History departmental reproduction fees may apply. Permission to publish must be obtained by the Plainfield Public Library Board of Trustees as delegated to the Library Director. Permission to publish does not constitute a copyright clearance. The researcher is responsible for further copyright restrictions. The Plainfield Public Library is not responsible for the misuse of copyrighted material.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item; Date (if noted); "Ethel M. Washington Papers", Box and Folder Number, Local History Department, Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield, New Jersey.

Acquisition Information

Part of the collection was originally on loan from Ethel Washington for a 2012 Black history exhibit at the Library. The remainder of the collection and the loaned portion were donated by Ethel Washington in September 2021.

Processing Information

This collection was inventoried and processed by Sally Weiner in October 2021. The finding aid was written by Sally Weiner in February 2023. Finding aid content follows the guidelines suggested by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: *Union County Black Americans Source Material [1940s-2006]*

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	1	Photograph, Plainfield City Hall workers [Paul Collier, photographer]	1940s
	2	Photographs and bio, Mills Barnes	1940s, 1998
	3	Photograph, tea party at Moorland Branch, YWCA	1940s
	4	Program, Black Cultural & Historical Society of Union County, Frederick Douglass Awards Dinner Dance	1986
	5	Photograph, young man from Moorland Branch, YMCA	1940s
	6	Photograph [photocopy], Lisa Daltius	2000s
	7	Theater programs, Kean-Brown Centre Stage (Grant Avenue Community Center)	1991-1992
	8	Program, Noel Pointer at Kean-Brown Center Stage (Grant Avenue Community Center)	[1988]
	9	Photograph, Donald Van Blake in uniform	[1942]
	10	Photograph, Tuskegee Airmen (Warren Edward Henry)	1940s
	11	Photograph, bio, clippings, James Franklin (Frankie) Boyce	1966, 2000
	12	Photograph, bio, ephemera, Joe Black	1980s, 1993
	13	Photographs [1 copy], Everett Lattimore and family	1970
	14	Bios and information, Parliament-Funkadelic	2006

Series 2: *Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War* Source Material and Research [1993-2018, undated]

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	15	Book, <i>Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War</i> [inscribed by author to Plainfield Public Library]	2011
	16	"Cemetery Burial Sites, Union County Civil War Veterans"	2003-2017
	17	"Union County Civil War, Union Navy Soldiers, U.S. Military History Institute, U.S. Library of Congress"	2009-2018
	18	"6 th New York Independent Battery of Light Artillery, aka "Bramhall's Battery", organized at Rahway, New Jersey, mustered into service: 6/15/1861"	2009
	19	"Union County Civil War Documents, Research, Handwritten Notes and Related Materials"	1993-2015
	20	"Union County Civil War Soldiers, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania" [1 of 2]	2011-2013
2	1	"Union County Civil War Soldiers, U.S. Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania" [2 of 2]	2011-2013
	2	"Union County Civil War Soldiers, New Jersey State Archives" [1 of 2]	2009-2013
	3	"Union County Civil War Soldiers, New Jersey State Archives" [2 of 2, CDs and disks]	2008-2012
	4	Reproduction photographs, used in <i>Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War</i> [1 of 3]	undated
	5	Reproduction photographs, used in <i>Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War</i> [2 of 3]	undated
	6	Reproduction photographs, used in <i>Union County's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War</i> [3 of 3]	undated