

TUITT FAMILY PAPERS

The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, New York, 10037

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, New York 10037-1801

TUITT FAMILY PAPERS, 1931-2005
Sc MG 887

Bulk Dates:	1940 - 1958
Extent:	Shelving Unit: 13 boxes Linear feet: 4.8
Source and Date:	Gift of Patricia Tuitt, 2013
Processor's Name:	Edwina Ashie-Nikoi
Date Finding Aid Completed:	July 28, 2014
Abstract:	Correspondence, personal documents and genealogical research pertaining to the Tuitt family of Montserrat, the United States, and the USVI.
Access:	Unrestricted access
Reproductions:	All requests subject to limitations noted in divisional policies on reproduction.
Copyright:	Information on copyright (literary rights) available from repository.
Citation:	[Item], Errol Collymore Papers, Sc MG 888, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library
Index Terms	
Names:	Tuitt Family, Montserrat Charles Tuitt James Tuitt John Tuitt
Subject:	Montserratians -- New York Emigration and Immigration Families, West Indian Families, Black Montserrat -- Emigration and Immigration Montserrat -- Social Life and Customs Montserrat -- Economic Conditions Montserrat -- History -- 20th Century Soldiers, Black West Indians World War, 1939-1945 -- Participation, African American

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biography.....	1
Scope and Content.....	2
Container List.....	3
Separation Record.....	4

TUITT FAMILY PAPERS, 1931 - 2005, (bulk dates, 1940 - 1958)
13 boxes (1 linear feet).

Biographical Note:

The Tuitt family hailed from Harris Village, Montserrat but had members dispersed across the Caribbean and in the United States. Represented in the collection are New York residents Charles Alexander Tuitt and his sons John and James, Charles' sisters Jane Allen and Molly Tuitt Daley who lived in Montserrat, Victoria Tuitt James who had emigrated to St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), her daughter Gertrude, and two of Charles' nieces, Ann and Beatrice who sought better horizons in Trinidad and Antigua before landing in New York. Mentioned in the letters, but not correspondents are Charles' sister Roseanna and brother Philip who also lived in New York.

Born circa 1894, Charles Tuitt arrived in New York in 1914. He worked as a janitor in midtown Manhattan and, like many Caribbean immigrants of the time, resided in Harlem, in an apartment on 100 West 143 Street. He had two sons, John (born June 16, 1919) and James (born November 17, 1921), with Sarah Gage Tuitt who died in November 1944. Charles Tuitt passed away in October 1965.

After serving in the army during World War II, John Tuitt worked as a postal worker and, in the early 1950s, helped his cousins Frances and Beatrice immigrate to New York. When he and his wife Mirty purchased their home in Brooklyn, Ann and Beatrice moved into the Tuitts' former apartment on 100 West 143 Street. This led to a suit from landlady Jennie Batkin who charged that John had effectively subleased the apartment without giving her prior notice. John Tuitt died on October 20, 2005 in Barbados, where he had relocated with wife Mirty in 1993.

Like his older brother, sailor James Maxwell ("Nicky") Tuitt fought in World War II's Pacific theater. After his discharge, James became a firefighter in New York City's Fire Department for more than 20 years; he served as an aide to the Commissioner in his last five years. James Tuitt died September 1991.

Victoria Tuitt James and her husband Isaac Gatewood James, a chemist and entrepreneur credited with introducing canned juices and grafted mangoes to the USVI, owned a "5 and 10 cent" store in St. Croix.

Scope & Content:

The Tuitt Family Papers, 1931-2005, consist of correspondence and personal and other documents produced by and about Charles Tuitt and his sons, John and James Tuitt. Attached to many of these letters and documents in the collection are summaries or explanations written by Patricia Ann Tuitt, daughter of John Tuitt. Ms. Tuitt conducted extensive genealogical research on the Tuitts and the collection includes these materials.

The Charles Tuitt files consists of mostly letters to him from his sisters Jane Tuitt Allen, Molly Louisa Tuitt Daley, Victoria Tuitt James and nieces Ann and Beatrice Daley. Because all the correspondence is incoming to Charles Tuitt, they do not inform on his experiences as a Caribbean immigrant in New York. However, there are hints. Beatrice Daley's 1945 letter to her uncle Charles informing him that the United States Embassy in Antigua had denied her visa serves as one example. According to Beatrice, the embassy explained that they did not consider him financially capable of sponsoring her.

The letters to Charles Tuitt primarily cover family news, gossip, harsh weather events such as hurricanes and droughts, difficult economic conditions on Montserrat and the other islands where relatives had emigrated such as Antigua, Trinidad and the Virgin Islands and expressions of thanks to Charles for the financial assistance he proffered. Additionally, the letters from his nieces reveal the often circuitous route immigrants took to the United States. There are some documents concerning the suit against Charles Tuitt by his landlady.

The John Tuitt records include personal documents such as the last will and testament and power of attorney he prepared when going to war, original documents and research relating to his service during WWII.

James' Tuitt's folder contains letters written to his father while on assignment, research on his WWII service, two programs celebrating his volunteerism with boys' clubs and his obituary.

In addition to some anniversary programs, there are materials in the Montserrat Progressive Society of New York folder documenting members' visits of to their home island in 1969 and 1974. The Tuitts were members of the Society and Charles's son James Tuitt was involved in the latter visit (a newspaper article stored in oversized folder shows a photograph of him in the bottom left corner).

Container List

Box Folder

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Charles Tuitt |
| | Correspondence |
| 1 | 1931-1940 |
| 2 | 1941-1950 |
| 3 | 1951-1961 |
| 4 | Fragments, n.d. |
| 5 | Landlord Case, 1953-1958 |
| 6 | Ephemera |
| | John Tuitt |
| 7 | Personal Documents, 1942-1948; 2005 |
| 8 | World War II Documents, 1942-1944 |
| 9 | Post-war Documents |
| 10 | James Tuitt |
| 11 | Montserrat Progressive, 1969; 1974-1975; 1989;
2005; n.d.* |
| 12 | Tuitt Family Genealogical Research |

* Some materials stored in oversized folder

**SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH
IN BLACK CULTURE
MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES AND RARE BOOKS DIVISION
SEPARATION RECORD**

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers: Tuitt Family Papers

Accession Number: SCM 13-31

Donor: Patricia Tuitt

Date received: September 2013/ June 2014

Date transferred: November 2013 / July 2014

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division

Maps of Barbados, Montserrat and Trinidad; University Centre at Dagenham Booklet on 1974 Arts Festival; single issue of *Montserrat Mirror* (July 26, 1974)

Photographs and Prints Division

Two envelopes: photographs of Montserrat Progressive Society outings to Lake George and Forest Lodge; three loose photographs; one folder, mostly of John Tuitt military service

Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division

Three calypso 45's

Separated by: Edwina Ashie-Nikoi **Date:** 11/5/13, 5/30/14 and 7/28/2014