Collection Summary
Title: Gordon Parks Papers
Span Dates: 1946-1991
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1960-1990)
ID No.: MSS83761
Creator: Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006
Extent: 7,900 items ; 39 containers plus 4 oversize ; 15.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Photographer, writer, filmmaker, and composer. Contracts, correspondence, financial records, production material, and scripts relating to Parks's books, films, speeches, and other writings.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.
Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006.

Organizations
Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress.

Subjects
American literature.
Ballet--United States.
Motion pictures, American.
Photography--United States.

Occupations
Authors.
Composers.
Motion picture directors.
Photographers.

Administrative Information
Provenance
The papers of Gordon Parks, photographer, writer, filmmaker, and composer, were transferred from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division in 1996. An addition was transferred in 2007.

Processing History
The collection was arranged and described in 2006. Additional material was processed in 2011.

Additional Guides
Transfers

The papers of Gordon Parks are part of the larger collection entitled The Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress. Manuscript music, sound recordings, and videotapes removed from the papers in the Manuscript Division have been transferred to the Music and Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound divisions where they are identified as part of the Gordon Parks Archives in the Library of Congress.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Gordon Parks in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Gordon Parks are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Gordon Parks Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912, Nov. 30</td>
<td>Born, Ft. Scott, Kans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Married Sally Alvis (divorced 1961)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Awarded Julius Rosenwald Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1944</td>
<td>Photographer, Farm Security Administration (later absorbed by the Office of War Information), Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1948</td>
<td>Freelance photographer, <em>Glamour</em> and <em>Vogue</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Published <em>Camera Portraits: The Techniques and Principles of Documentary Portraiture</em>. New York: Watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1972</td>
<td>Photographer, <em>Life</em> magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Photographer, <em>Life</em> magazine, Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Named Photographer of the Year, American Society of Magazine Photographers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Writer and director, <em>Flavio</em> (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married Elizabeth Campbell (divorced 1973)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received Notable Book Award, American Library Association, <em>A Choice of Weapons</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Published <em>A Poet and His Camera</em>. New York: Viking Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received Emmy Award, best television documentary, <em>Diary of a Harlem Family</em></td>
</tr>
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</table>
1969  Producer, director, and writer, *The Learning Tree* (film)

1971  Published *Born Black*. Philadelphia: Lippincott
Published *In Love*. Philadelphia: Lippincott
Director, *Shaft* (film)

1972  Director, *Shaft's Big Score* (film)

1973  Married Genevieve Young (divorced 1979)

1974  Director, *The Super Cops* (film)


1976  Director, *Leadbelly* (film)


1979  Published *To Smile in Autumn: A Memoir*. New York: Norton

1981  Published *Shannon*. Boston: Little, Brown

1984  Director, *Solomon Northup's Odyssey* (film)

Awarded National Medal of Arts

1989  Composer, *Martin* (ballet)


1997  Published *Half Past Autumn: A Retrospective*. Boston: Bulfinch Press


2006, Mar. 7  Died, New York, N.Y.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Gordon Parks (1912-2006) span the years 1946-1991, with the bulk of the material dating from 1960 to 1990. The papers are organized in the following series: Books; Stage and Screen; Other Writings; Miscellany, consisting of works about Parks, general correspondence, project proposals, and printed matter; and an Addition.

The Books series documents Parks's writing career. Books such as *Flavio* are based on his experiences as a photojournalist for *Life* magazine. Other books such as *Moments Without Proper Names* and *Whispers of Intimate Things* combine his skills as a poet and photographer. He also produced fiction and autobiographical works. Types of production material include contracts, correspondence, drafts, financial records, mock-ups, notes, proofs, and research material.

The Stage and Screen series reflects Parks's accomplishments as a producer and director of films. The largest body of material pertains to his ballet, *Martin*, which was filmed for public television. In addition to contracts, correspondence, and
scripts, production material includes set design and casting files, financial accounts, location arrangements, publicity, rehearsal and shooting schedules, and storyboards.

The Other Writings series primarily contains texts of speeches made by Parks along with related correspondence and printed matter. In addition, there are a few magazine articles written by Parks.

The Miscellany series includes biographical material, primarily magazine and newspaper articles about Parks. Correspondence from friends and colleagues includes requests and arrangements for Parks's many public appearances as a keynote speaker and television talk show guest. Printed matter consists of articles on topics of interest to Parks.

The Addition series contains material relating to Parks’ books, films, and other writings, along with biographical material, general correspondence, and printed matter. The series is arranged to reflect the main body of the papers.

**Arrangement of the Papers**

The collection is arranged in six series:

- Books, 1959-1989
- Stage and Screen, 1963-1991
- Other Writings, 1964-1990
- Miscellany, 1946-1990
- Addition, 1961-1990
- Oversize, 1968-1975
## Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-22</td>
<td><strong>Books, 1959-1989</strong></td>
<td>Contracts, correspondence, drafts, mock-ups, and other production material relating to the publication of Parks's books. Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 22-32</td>
<td><strong>Stage and Screen, 1963-1991</strong></td>
<td>Contracts, correspondence, financial records, scripts, and other production material relating to Parks's films and to his ballet <em>Martin</em>. Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 32-33</td>
<td><strong>Other Writings, 1964-1990</strong></td>
<td>Magazine articles written by Parks and texts of his speeches along with related material. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 33-35</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1946-1990</strong></td>
<td>Contracts, general correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles about Parks, music copyrights and royalty statements, notes, project proposals, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 36-39</td>
<td><strong>Addition, 1961-1990</strong></td>
<td>Contracts, correspondence, drafts, and production material relating to Parks's books, films, and other writings. Arranged by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1-OV 4</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1968-1975</strong></td>
<td>Jacket designs, mock-ups, and page proofs relating to Parks's books as well as set designs and storyboards pertaining to his films. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</td>
</tr>
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## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-22</td>
<td><strong>Books, 1959-1989</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contracts, correspondence, drafts, mock-ups, and other production material relating to the publication of Parks's books.&lt;br&gt;Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td><em>Born Black</em>&lt;br&gt;Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1967-1981&lt;br&gt;Typescript, 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>Typescript, undated&lt;br&gt;Complete&lt;br&gt;Miscellaneous chapters</td>
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<td><em>Fashion Photography</em>, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>1976&lt;br&gt;1977&lt;br&gt;Mar.&lt;br&gt;(2 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>June&lt;br&gt;(2 folders)&lt;br&gt;Undated&lt;br&gt;(3 folders)&lt;br&gt;Financial records, 1977-1984&lt;br&gt;Layout designs, undated</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Page proofs, 1977
   (3 folders)

BOX 6
   Reader's Digest, 1977-1979
   Research material, 1961-1963
   (2 folders)
   Typescript, undated

In Love
   Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1970-1980
   Mock-ups, 1971 See Oversize
   Unbound book signatures, 1971

The Learning Tree
   Correspondence, 1963-1973

BOX 7
   Drafts, undated
   (7 folders)

BOX 8
   Galley proofs, 1963
   Notes, undated
   Royalty statements, 1968
   Malcolm X, research material, 1959-1963
   (2 folders)

Moments Without Proper Names
   Book jackets, 1975 See Oversize
   Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1972-1981 See also Oversize
   Mock-ups See also Oversize

BOX 9
   Page proofs, 1975

A Poet and His Camera
   Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1968-1969
   Mock-ups, undated
   Notes, 1968

Shannon
   Correspondence, 1979-1981
   Drafts, undated
   (3 folders)

BOX 10
   (6 folders)

BOX 11
   (2 folders)
   Galley proofs, 1981

BOX 12
   Notes
   (2 folders)

   Research material, 1972-1978
   Typescripts, undated
   Bound
   pp. 1-361
   (2 folders)

BOX 13
   pp. 362-634
   (2 folders)
   Miscellaneous pages
   (2 folders)

BOX 14
   Unbound
Books, 1959-1989

<table>
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<th>Container</th>
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|           | Set I
|           | (5 folders) |
| BOX 15 | Set II
|         | pp. 1-140 |
|         | pp. 141-554
|         | (3 folders) |
|         | Set III
|         | (3 folders) |
| BOX 16 | Sets IV-VI
|         | (5 folders) |
| BOX 17 | Silence
|         | Correspondence and notes, 1972 |
|         | Drafts, undated |
|         | To Smile in Autumn
|         | Contract, 1977 |
|         | Correspondence and notes, 1978-1988 |
|         | List of illustrations, 1979 |
|         | Mock-ups See Oversize |
|         | Proof sheets, 1979
|         | (3 folders) |
| BOX 18 | Typescripts
|         | Set I, 1979 |
|         | Set II, 1979
|         | pp. 1-300
|         | (2 folders) |
| BOX 19 | pp. 301-456
|         | Sets III-IV, undated
|         | (2 folders) |
|         | A Voice in the Air, undated |
|         | Voices in the Mirror
|         | Correspondence and printed matter, 1987-1989 |
| BOX 20 | Drafts
|         | 1987-1988 |
|         | Undated
|         | (5 folders) |
| BOX 21 | (1 folder)
|         | Notes, 1975-1989 |
|         | Typescripts
|         | Sets I-II, 1988
|         | (2 folders) |
| BOX 22 | Sets III-V, 1989
|         | (3 folders) |
|         | Whispers of Intimate Things, mock-ups, 1971
|         | (2 folders) |
| BOX 22-32 | Stage and Screen, 1963-1991
|         | Contracts, correspondence, financial records, scripts, and other production material relating to Parks's films and to his ballet Martin. |

Gordon Parks Papers 9
Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.

**BOX 22**
*Eagle in the Air*, script
*An Endless Silence*, script, 1972

**BOX 23**
*Leadbelly*
- Budget, 1973-1974
- Casting, 1974
- Contract, 1973
- Miscellany, 1974-1975
- Publicity, 1975-1979
- Research material, 1974
- Schedules
  - Call sheets, 1974
  - Shooting and post production, 1974-1975
- Scripts
  - Dialogue script, 1975

**BOX 24**
*Screenplay by Ernest Kinoy*, 1974

Set design

*The Learning Tree*
- Contracts, 1963-1968
- Correspondence, 1963-1969, 1989
  (4 folders)
- Financial records, 1963-1971
- Location arrangements, 1968-1969

**BOX 25**
*Music*, 1966-1985
*Publicity*, 1968-1969
*Scripts*
  - Drafts, 1968
    (2 folders)
  - Film editing, undated
  - Final, 1968
  - Treatment, undated
*Set design, 1968 See also Oversize*

**BOX 26**
*Shooting schedules, 1968*

*Storyboard, undated*

*Martin*
*Cast and crew*
- Choreographer, 1987-1989
- Dance companies, 1989
- Dancers, 1989
- Lists, 1989
- Miscellany, undated
- Photography, 1989

*Correspondence*
- 1986-1987

**BOX 27**
1988-1991
(5 folders)
Financial records
   Budget, 1986-1990
   Fund-raising, 1986-1989
   Invoices and purchase orders, 1986-1991
   Miscellany, 1989
   Statements, 1988-1989

BOX 28
Legal papers
   Contracts
      Children, 1989
      Choreographer, 1987-1989
      Community Television of Southern California, 1989
      Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1988-1989
      Crew, 1989
      Dancers, 1989
      Director, 1987-1989
      Feature titles and credits, 1989
      Miscellany, 1989
      Public Television International, 1991
   Copyrights, 1986-1990
   Permits, 1989
   Release forms, 1989
   Miscellany, 1987-1989

BOX 29
Music, undated

BOX 30
Time sheets, 1989

Scripts, 1986

Storyboard See also Oversize

Moments Without Proper Names
   Contracts and correspondence, 1983-1988
   Drafts, undated
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| Notes, undated  
Script, undated  
**Shaft**  
Contracts, 1971  
Financial records, 1986-1987  
Newspaper clippings, 1971  
Preview, 1971  
Script, 1970-1971  
**Shaft's Big Score**, contract, 1971-1972 |
| **BOX 31** | **Solomon Northup's Odyssey**  
Cast, undated  
Contracts and correspondence, 1982-1983  
Notes, undated  
Schedules, 1983  
Scripts  
Screenplays  
By Lou Potter, 1983  
(2 folders)  
Revised, 1983 |
| **BOX 32** | Shooting script, undated  
Treatment, undated |
| **BOX 32-33** | **Other Writings, 1964-1990**  
Magazine articles written by Parks and texts of his speeches along with related material.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically. |
(3 folders)  
Speech file  
1964-1985  
(10 folders) |
| **BOX 33** | 1988  
(2 folders) |
| **BOX 33-35** | **Miscellany, 1946-1990**  
Contracts, general correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles about Parks, music copyrights and royalty statements, notes, project proposals, and printed matter.  
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein chronologically. |
| **BOX 33** | Appointment book, 1982  
*Audience* magazine, 1969  
Biographical material, 1965-1990  
(5 folders)  
Contracts, 1966-1973  
Correspondence  
1965-1968 |
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| BOX 34    | 1969-1990  
(4 folders)  
Guest appearances  
1946, 1962-1985  
(5 folders) |
| BOX 35    | 1986-1988  
(3 folders)  
*Life* magazine, 1966-1979  
Music royalty statements, 1971-1987  
Notes, 1983  
(2 folders)  
Projects, 1968-1974 |
| BOX 36-39 | **Addition, 1961-1990**  
Contracts, correspondence, drafts, and production material relating to Parks's books, films, and other writings.  
Arranged by type of material. |
| BOX 36    | Books  
*Born Black*, 1973  
*Flavio*  
Drafts, 1976-1977  
(6 folders)  
*A Poet and His Camera*, 1968-1969  
*Shannon*, 1978  
*Silence*, undated  
*To Smile in Autumn*  
Drafts, undated  
(1 folder)  
(3 folders) |
| BOX 37    | Miscellaneous pages, 1976  
(2 folders)  
Stage and Screen  
*The Big Bamboo*, 1971  
*An Endless Silence*, 1972  
*Leadbelly*, 1979 |
| BOX 38    | *The Learning Tree*, 1968-1969  
*Martin*  
Cast and crew  
Choreographer, undated  
Dancers, 1989  
Lists, 1989  
Correspondence, 1969, 1986-1989  
Financial records |
Addition, 1961-1990

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 39    | Storyboard, undated  
            (2 folders)  
            *Moments Without Proper Names*, 1984  
            *Shaft*, 1971-1972  
            *Solomon Northup’s Odyssey*, undated |
| BOX OV 1-OV 4 | Oversize, 1968-1975  
                        Jacket designs, mock-ups, and page proofs relating to Parks's books as well as set designs and storyboards pertaining to his films.  
                        Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed. |
| BOX OV 1  | Books  
                *In Love* |
<table>
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<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Mock-ups, 1971 (Container 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Moments Without Proper Names</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book jackets, 1975 (Container 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1972-1981 (Container 8)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 2</td>
<td>Mock-ups (Container 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX OV 3</td>
<td><em>To Smile in Autumn</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mock-ups (Container 17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX OV 4</td>
<td>Stage and Screen</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><em>The Learning Tree</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Set Design</td>
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<td>Blueprints, 1968 (Container 25)</td>
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<td><em>Martin</em></td>
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<td>Storyboard (Container 30)</td>
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