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
Extent: 39 containers plus 4 oversize
Extent: 15.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm96083761
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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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.

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Copyright in the unpublished writings of Gordon Parks in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved.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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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, Glamour and Vogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Published Camera Portraits: The Techniques and Principles of Documentary Portraiture. New York: Watts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-1972</td>
<td>Photographer, Life magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Photographer, Life 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, Flavio (film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Published The Learning Tree. New York: Harper and Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married Elizabeth Campbell (divorced 1973)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received Notable Book Award, American Library Association, A Choice of Weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Published A Poet and His Camera. New York: Viking Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received Emmy Award, best television documentary, Diary of a Harlem Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Producer, director, and writer, The Learning Tree (film)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

1975
Published Moments Without Proper Names. New York: Viking Press

1976
Director, Leadbelly (film)

1978
Published Flavio. New York: Norton

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

1981
Published Shannon. Boston: Little, Brown

1984
Director, Solomon Northup's Odyssey (film)

1988
Producer, Gordon Parks: Moments Without Proper Names (film)
Awarded National Medal of Arts

1989
Composer, Martin (ballet)

1990
Published Voices in the Mirror: An Autobiography. New York: Doubleday

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

2000

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

Container Series
BOX 1-22 Books, 1959-1989
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.

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.
Arranged alphabetically by title and therein alphabetically by type of material.

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.

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 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 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.
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 1-22  | **Books, 1959-1989**  
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. |
| BOX 1     | *Born Black*  
Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1967-1981  
Typescript, 1970 |
| BOX 1     | *A Choice of Weapons*  
Drafts, undated  
Excerpts, undated  
Galley proofs, 1965  
Notes, 1965-1969  
Screenplay by Gilbert Moore, 1970 |
| BOX 2     | Typescript, undated  
Complete  
Miscellaneous chapters |
| BOX 2     | *Fashion Photography*, undated |
| BOX 2     | *Flavio*  
Correspondence, 1961-1978  
(3 folders)  
Drafts  
1968  
1976  
1977  
Mar.  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 3     | June  
(2 folders)  
Undated  
(3 folders)  
Financial records, 1977-1984  
Layout designs, undated |
| BOX 4     | Magazine and newspaper articles, 1960-1966, 1974  
(4 folders)  
Notes, 1968-1977  
Proofs  
Blueprints, 1978 |
<table>
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<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 6     | Page proofs, 1977  
            | (3 folders)  
            | *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  
            | BOX 10    | *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 11    | (6 folders)  
            | BOX 12    | (2 folders)  
            | Galley proofs, 1981  
            | BOX 13    | Notes  
            | (2 folders)  
            | Research material, 1972-1978  
            | Typescripts, undated  
            | *Bound*  
            | pp. 1-361  
            | (2 folders)  
            | BOX 14    | pp. 362-634  
            | (2 folders)  
            | Miscellaneous pages  
            | (2 folders)  
            | Unbound  

Gordon Parks Papers
### Container | Contents
--- | ---
Set I | (5 folders)
Set II | pp. 1-140
**BOX 15** | 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*.
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)
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<td>- Fund-raising, 1986-1989</td>
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<td>- Invoices and purchase orders, 1986-1991</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Miscellany, 1989</td>
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<td>- Statements, 1988-1989</td>
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<td>BOX 28</td>
<td>Legal papers</td>
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<td>- Children, 1989</td>
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<td>- Choreographer, 1987-1989</td>
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<td>- Community Television of Southern California, 1989</td>
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<td>- Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1988-1989</td>
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<td>- Crew, 1989</td>
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<td>- Dancers, 1989</td>
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<td>- Director, 1987-1989</td>
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<td>- Feature titles and credits, 1989</td>
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<td>- Miscellany, 1989</td>
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<td>- Public Television International, 1991</td>
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<td>- Copyrights, 1986-1990</td>
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<td>- Permits, 1989</td>
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<td>BOX 29</td>
<td>Notes, undated</td>
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<td>Production reports, 1989</td>
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<td>- Brochures, 1989</td>
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<td>- Interviews, 1989-1990</td>
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<td>- Newspaper and magazine clippings, 1986-1990</td>
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<td>- Press kit, undated</td>
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<td>- Preview, 1989,</td>
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<td>- Screenings, 1989-1990</td>
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<td>Research material, 1986-1989</td>
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<td>Schedules</td>
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<td>- Calendar, 1989</td>
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<td>- Call sheets, 1989</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Rehearsals, 1989</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Shooting schedule, 1989</td>
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<td>BOX 30</td>
<td>Time sheets, 1989</td>
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<td>Scripts, 1986</td>
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<td>Storyboard <a href="#">See also Oversize</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Moments Without Proper Names*

- Contracts and correspondence, 1983-1988
- Drafts, undated
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<tr>
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| BOX 31    | 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  
|           | 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  

Gordon Parks Papers
### Container Contents

<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
| 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) |
| 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

Container | Contents
--- | ---

Budget, 1986-1989
Fund-raising, 1985-1990
Legal papers
Contracts
Choreographer, 1987-1989
Community Television of Southern California, 1989
Dancers, 1989
Director, 1989
Feature titles and credits, 1989
Miscellany, 1989
Public Television International, 1990
Miscellany, undated
Production reports, 1989
Proposal, 1986
Publicity, 1986-1990
Schedules
Call sheets, 1989
Rehearsals, 1989
Shooting schedule, 1989
Time sheets, 1989

**BOX 39**
Storyboard, undated
(2 folders)
*Moments Without Proper Names*, 1984
*Shaft*, 1971-1972
*Solomon Northup's Odyssey*, undated

Other writings
Articles, 1970
Miscellaneous pages, undated
Poetry, undated
Speech file, 1984
Miscellany
Biographical material, 1965-1988
(2 folders)
Correspondence, 1968-1990
Guest appearances, 1966-1990
Insurance, 1989
Printed matter, 1968

**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*
Oversize, 1968-1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 2</td>
<td>Mock-ups (Container 8)</td>
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<td>BOX OV 3</td>
<td>To Smile in Autumn Mock-ups (Container 17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX OV 4</td>
<td>Stage and Screen The Learning Tree Set Design Blueprints, 1968 (Container 25) Martin Storyboard (Container 30)</td>
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</table>

Mock-ups, 1971 (Container 6)

Moments Without Proper Names Book jackets, 1975 (Container 8)

Contracts, correspondence, and royalty statements, 1972-1981 (Container 8)