

**Alex Haley Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2023**

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2017086178>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms019009>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2019  
Revised 2023 May

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Alex Haley Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1831-2005

**Bulk Dates:** 1965-1981

**ID No.:** MSS86178

**Creator:** Haley, Alex.

**Extent:** 1,000 items

**Extent:** 3 containers plus 1 oversize

**Extent:** 1.2 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2017086178>

**Summary:** Author. Drafts, research material, and correspondence concerning Haley's writing projects.

## 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

Haley family--Genealogy.

Haley family.

Haley, Alex--Family.

Haley, Alex.

Haley, Alex. *Roots : the saga of an American family.* 1976.

Haley, Alex. *The autobiography of Malcolm X.* 1965.

Haley, Simon, 1892-1973--Correspondence.

Haley, Simon, 1892-1973--Family.

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965.

### Subjects

African American families--Genealogy.

African American families.

African Americans--Biography.

African Americans--Genealogy.

### Occupations

Authors.

## Acquisition Information

The papers of Alex Haley were given to the Library of Congress by Tim and Mitchell Gold in 2017.

## Processing History

The papers of Alex Haley were arranged and described by Amanda Loeb in 2019. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

## Other Repositories

Other papers of Alex Haley can be found in the Betsey B. Creekmore Special Collections and University Archives of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the New York Public Library.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Alex Haley in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Alex Haley 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, Alex Haley Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1921, 11 Aug.	Born, Ithaca, N.Y.
1939-1959	Enlisted, United States Coast Guard
1965	Published <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> . New York, N.Y.: Grove Press
1976	Published <i>Roots: The Saga of an American Family</i> . Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday
1977	ABC aired television adaptation of <i>Roots</i>
1977	Awarded special Pulitzer Prize for <i>Roots</i>
1977	Released <i>Alex Haley Tells the Story of His Search for Roots</i> , 2 disc LP recording, Warner Bros. Records
1979	ABC aired sequel miniseries, <i>Roots: The Next Generations</i>
1992, 10 Feb.	Died, Seattle, Wash.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Alex Haley (1921-1992) span the years 1831-2005, with the bulk of material dating from 1965 to 1981. The papers consist chiefly of drafts, research material, and correspondence regarding Haley's writing projects, particularly his *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*.

Material related to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* consists of nine undated typescript draft slips with ink annotations and corrections by Haley. Draft slips cover portions of chapter 10, "Satan," chapter 11, "Saved," and chapter 13, "Minister Malcolm X," but are not complete chapters. There are also two unidentified typescript fragments with attached annotations in Haley's hand.

Correspondence in the collection includes letters from Haley's father, Simon Haley, who assisted him in his genealogical research. Writing from Washington, D.C. during 1965, Simon Haley describes collecting photographs and material for "Before This Anger," an early working title for *Roots*. He also describes his search for information on Alex Haley's grandmother, Queen Jackson, and the Jackson family of Alabama, which would later contribute to Haley's posthumous

publication, *Queen: The Story of an American Family*. Other correspondence includes messages from publishers and letters from primary school students discussing the *Roots* miniseries.

Papers concerning Haley's 1976 monograph, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, consist of draft chapters and scattered fragments, research material, and some material concerning film adaptations of the novel. Draft pages include various complete and incomplete chapters from different parts of the book, as well as unlabeled sections and fragments. Drafts are typescript on yellow or white paper, and many are heavily annotated and corrected in ink. Some drafts include a note to the editor giving the date ranges covered and the ages of major characters in the chapter. Research material includes sources on West African languages, transcripts of oral interviews from the Gambia, and correspondence regarding the history of the slave ship *Lord Ligonier*. There are also a small number of original nineteenth-century documents that may have been used in research. Other research material includes a typescript *Roots* chronology from 1750 to 1920, photocopies of a Spotsylvania County, Va., deed book, and photocopied articles and book chapters concerning West Africa, the Gambia, and colonial American history. Much of the research material includes hand-written annotations. Assisting researchers represented in correspondence include Bakari Sidibe and Charles A. Gauld. Material related to film adaptations of *Roots* includes a shooting schedule for the first ten days of the 1977 miniseries, annotated script pages for the sequel, *Roots: The Next Generations*, and a 1977 memo to producer Stan Margulies.

Other writings in the collection include articles for newspapers and periodicals, a speech, and drafts of potential projects or publications. There are several typed draft copies of the introductory chapter to Haley's unpublished *Search For Roots*, some with annotations and corrections. There are also approximately twenty notebook pages with handwritten labels such as "NY Times January 10, 1964," "MX," "For The Negro Re Africans," and "Baldwin."

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type or title of material.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	The Autobiography of Malcolm X, undated <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 1	Biographical material, 1993-2005 , undated
	Correspondence
BOX 1	Family, 1965 , undated
BOX 1	General, 1967-1978 (2 folders)
	Other writings
BOX 1	"Beyond Roots," Parade, 19 Apr. 1981 , 4-7
BOX 1	Draft article, The London Observer, 1972
BOX 1	"Family: A Humanizing Force," speech, undated
BOX 1	"Memory" or "Mnemonics," 1975
BOX 1	"My Furthest-Back Person - 'The African'," New York Times Magazine, 16 July 1972 , 12-16 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 1	Notebook pages and fragments, undated
	Roots: The Saga of an American Family
BOX 1	Drafts, 1973-1975 , undated (8 folders)
BOX 2	Film adaptations, 1976-1977 , undated
	Research
BOX 2	African languages, 1967-1971 , undated
BOX 2	General material, 1970-1978 , undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Interviews, undated
BOX 2	<i>Lord Ligonier</i> slave ship, 1967 , undated
BOX 2	Original documents, 1831-1896 , undated <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 2	Spotsylvania County, Va., deed book (1766-1771), photocopies, 1968 <i>See Oversize</i>
	The Search For Roots
BOX 2	Bound volume, 1978
BOX 3	Drafts, 1978 , undated (6 folders)
	Oversize
	The Autobiography of Malcolm X (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	Chapter 10, "Satan", undated
BOX OV 1	Chapter 13, "Minister Malcolm X", undated
	Other writings (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	"My Furthest-Back Person - 'The African'," New York Times Magazine, 16 July 1972 , 12-16
	Roots: The Saga of an American Family(Container 2)
	Research
BOX OV 1	Original documents, 1855-1859
BOX OV 1	Spotsylvania County deed book (1766-1771), photocopies, 1968