



Bernard Jaffe Papers

1955-2016

4 boxes (2 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 906

Collection overview

A New York native with a deep commitment to social justice, Bernard Jaffe was an attorney, confidant, and longtime friend of W.E.B. Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois. In 1951, Jaffe joined Du Bois's defense team at a time when the civil rights leader was under indictment for failing to register as a foreign agent. Forging a close relationship through that experience, he was retained as a personal attorney, representing the Du Bois family interests after they settled abroad. Jaffe was later instrumental in placing the papers of both W.E.B. Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois and served on the executive board of the W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation, set up by Shirley's son, David Graham Du Bois.

This rich collection centers on the close relationship between attorney Bernard Jaffe and his friends and clients, Shirley Graham Du Bois and W.E.B. Du Bois. Although there is little correspondence from W.E.B. Du Bois himself, the collection contains an exceptional run of correspondence with Shirley, from the time of her emigration to Ghana in 1961 until her death in China in 1977 and excellent materials relating to David Graham Du Bois and the work of the W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation.

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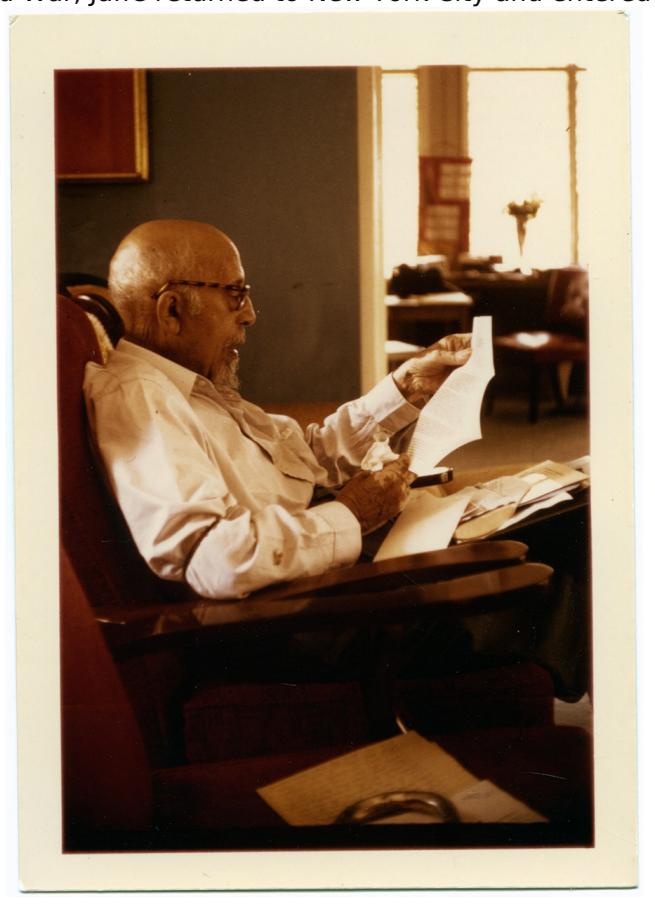
[Political activism](#) [Social justice](#)

Background on Bernard Jaffe

A New York native, Bernard Jaffe joined W.E.B. Du Bois' legal team in 1951, beginning a decades-long relationship as counsel, advisor, and close friend of the great civil rights leader and his wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois.

Born in the Bronx on May 23, 1915, one of two children of Russian immigrants Louis and Kate (Rosenberg) Jaffe, Bernard was an intellectual prodigy. Barely 18 when he graduated from Columbia University, he continued at Columbia for law school and by 21, he had secured his first professional position, working with the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration, a New Deal program designed to bring economic revitalization and modernization to the island.

After service in the Army Air Corps during the Second World War, Jaffe returned to New York City and entered private practice. Radical in his beliefs and politically engaged, Jaffe was asked to join the legal team of the National Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Associates in 1951, taking part in one of the signature civil liberties cases of the McCarthy era. Du Bois and his four co-defendants, all white, were officers of the Peace Information Center, an organization dedicated to nuclear disarmament, and at the high tide of the McCarthy-era, advocacy for peace and disarmament signified to the Justice Department that the defendants were acting on behalf of the Soviet Union. Already the for investigation by the FBI, Du Bois and his colleagues were charged under the McCormick Act of 1938 for failing to register as foreign agents. Although many of Du Bois's supporters distanced themselves, the legal team led by Congressman Vito Marcantonio, rallied support and ultimately succeeded in having the case dismissed.



W.E.B. Du Bois at home in Accra, 1963

From the time of the trial, Jaffe remained connected to Du Bois and his family, and when the Du Boises emigrated to Ghana at the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah, Jaffe was retained as personal attorney to handle the details. He served in that capacity until Du Bois' death in 1963, and thereafter continued as counsel and friend of Du Bois' widow, Shirley Graham DuBois, until her death in 1977. Trusted by both Du Boises intimately, Jaffe assisted the couple in a wide range of endeavors, playing a vital role in handling publication rights, helping Shirley find a publisher for an edited series of her husband's letters (edited by Herbert Aptheker), and assisting in placing the W.E.B. Du Bois Papers at UMass Amherst and the Shirley Graham Du Bois Papers at Harvard. Furthermore, Jaffe was a trusted advisor to David Graham Du Bois in managing his step-father's estate, serving on the executive board of the W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation for nearly thirty years.

Brilliant and versatile, Jaffe was a legal generalist in his other work, handling a wide range of clients and causes, often emerging from his concern for people afflicted by poverty, political oppression, and racial inequality. Bernard Jaffe died at his home in Edgewater, N.J., on December 31, 2015.

Scope of collection

This rich collection centers on the close relationship between attorney Bernard Jaffe and his friends and clients, Shirley Graham Du Bois and W.E.B. Du Bois. Although there is little correspondence from W.E.B. Du Bois himself, the collection contains an exceptional run of correspondence with Shirley, beginning just prior to her

emigration to Ghana in 1961 and extending until her death in China in 1977. The collection offers insight into the Du Boises' time in Africa and Shirley's subsequent departure and resettlement in Egypt. The collection also includes a wealth of correspondence with David Graham Du Bois, along with materials from his work with the W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation.

Inventory

<i>Beyond the color line: 125th anniversary tribute to W.E.B. Du Bois</i> , Rob Okun, ed.	1993	Box 1: 1
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1975-1978	Box 1: 2
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1980	Box 1: 3
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1981	Box 1: 4
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1982	Box 1: 5
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1983-1984	Box 1: 6
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1985	Box 1: 7
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1986	Box 1: 8
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1987-1989	Box 1: 9
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1990	Box 1: 10
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1991	Box 1: 11
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1994	Box 1: 12
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1995	Box 1: 13
Correspondence: Du Bois, David Graham	1996-2004	Box 1: 14
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Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1965	Box 1: 20
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1966	Box 1: 21
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1967	Box 1: 22
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1968	Box 1: 23
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1969	Box 1: 24
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Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1971	Box 2: 2
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1972	Box 2: 3
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1973 Jan.-Apr.	Box 2: 4
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1973 July	Box 2: 5
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1973 Aug.-Dec.	Box 2: 6
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1974	Box 2: 7
Correspondence: Du Bois, Shirley Graham	1976	Box 2: 8
Correspondence: Du Bois, W.E.B.	1959	Box 2: 9
Correspondence: Kraus Reprint Co.	1970	Box 2: 10
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Correspondence: Kraus Reprint Co.	1972-1974	Box 2: 13
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Correspondence: Moos, Elizabeth	1963	Box 2: 15
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Correspondence: University of Massachusetts Press	1980-1984	Box 2: 20

Du Bois, David Graham: "Washington and Du Bois: two roads to freedom," talk at symposium of the Organization of American Historians and National Park Service	1998	Box 3: 1
Du Bois In Our Time [Exhibition]	2013	Box 3: 2
Du Bois Memorial Foundation	1969-1981	Box 3: 3
Du Bois, Shirley Graham: copyright	1976-1994	Box 3: 4
Du Bois, Shirley Graham: disposition of papers	1983-1986	Box 3: 5
Du Bois, Shirley Graham: power of attorney to Bernard Jaffe	1958	Box 3: 6
Du Bois, Shirley Graham: will	1961	Box 3: 7
Du Bois, W. E. B.: power of attorney to Bernard Jaffe	1958	Box 3: 8
Du Bois, W. E. B.: will	1961	Box 3: 9
Du Bois, W. E. B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois: tax returns	1958-1960	Box 3: 10
McCanns, Robert	1961-1962	Box 3: 11
McCanns, Robert	1963	Box 3: 12
McCanns, Robert	1964-1965	Box 3: 13
Miscellaneous	1980-2016	Box 3: 14
Permissions to publish requests	1976-1989	Box 3: 15
Permissions to publish requests	1995	Box 3: 16
Permissions to publish requests	1996	Box 3: 17
Permissions to publish requests	1998-2000	Box 3: 18
Permissions requests: U.S. Postal Service	1997-2000	Box 3: 19
Photographs	ca.1955-1992	Box 3: 20
Stuckey, Sterling, "Tragic scholarship: David Levering Lewis' W.E.B. Du Bois"	ca.2001	Box 3: 21
University of Massachusetts Amherst: acquisition of W.E.B. Du Bois Papers	1973-2001	Box 3: 22
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1979-1982	Box 4: 1
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1984	Box 4: 2
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1985	Box 4: 3
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1986	Box 4: 4
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1987-1988	Box 4: 5
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1990	Box 4: 6
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1991 Jan.-Apr.	Box 4: 7
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1991 May-Dec.	Box 4: 8
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1992	Box 4: 9
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1993-1995	Box 4: 10
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Administrative	1997-1999	Box 4: 11
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Brochures	ca.1990	Box 4: 12
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: By-laws	1991	Box 4: 13
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Founding	1985-1990	Box 4: 14
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Institute Without Walls	1999	Box 4: 15
W.E.B. Du Bois Foundation: Tribute (125th birthday commemoration)	1993	Box 4: 16
W.E.B. Du Bois Homesite (Great Barrington, Mass.)	1928-1987	Box 4: 17
W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre (Accra, Ghana)	1985-1999	Box 4: 18
W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Committee	2004	Box 4: 19
W.E.B. Du Bois reinterment ceremony	1986	Box 4: 20

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Jonathan Klate and Bernard Jaffe, April 2016.

Processing Information

Processed by I Eliot Wentworth, May 2016.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Bernard Jaffe Papers (MS 906). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Ghana--History--1957-
- Subject term

Contributors

- Jaffe, Bernard **[main entry]**
- Du Bois, David Graham
- Du Bois, Shirley Graham, 1896-1977
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963
- W. E. B. Du Bois Foundation

Genres and formats

- Photographs

Link to similar SCUA collections

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