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Ethel Payne Papers Collection 239-1 to 239-11

Prepared by Ida E. Jones and Alhaji Conteh June 2016

Manuscript Division

Scope Note

The papers of Ethel Payne (1911 – 1998) commonly known as the "First Lady of the Black Press," reflect her personal and professional life as a journalist, White House correspondent and civil rights activist. The papers range from 1917 to 1980, and cover Ms. Payne's early life growing up in Chicago through her 30 plus year career as a journalist for the Chicago Defender and other news outlets. The bulk of the material in these papers span the late 1940s to the early 1970s. The papers include eight series; personal papers, family papers, correspondence, writings by Ethel Payne, writings by others, subject files, photographs and oversized items. The collection consists of 12 cubic feet of material. The papers were donated by Ethel Payne in February of 1977 and were received by Karen L. Jefferson of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. After her death, the remaining papers were donated to the Library of Congress by the Payne family.

The personal and family papers series contain biographical information regarding Ethel Payne as well as brief family histories. Included in the family papers are two issues of The Journal, a family publication exploring the lives of various members of the Payne and Austin progeny. Many of the personal papers detail the travels of Payne as a journalist in her later life.

Of particular importance in the Payne papers are the many writings by Payne during her extensive career as a journalist. As a journalist Payne covered a diverse array of topics including domestic civil rights struggles, labor rights struggles, global events and Washington, D.C. politics. Payne participated in the "Spectrum" series for CBS Radio in the early 1970s where she provided brief opinion pieces on current events and many of these transcripts are located in this series. The writings by Payne series also contains a few collections of articles that Payne wrote including; "Judgment Day for Dixie," that covered the civil rights movement in the South as well as the "A Look at the Republican Party," series which examined the trials and tribulations of the GOP in the late 1960s. Also prevalent in this series are the numerous writings by Payne about global issues such as African independence and the war in Vietnam.

The writings by others series includes articles, pamphlets, speeches and press releases that Payne utilized to write her articles during her career. Documents by Whitney Young, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Congressman Charles Diggs are of particular importance to civil rights in this series. Also prevalent among the writings by others are the numerous reports by agencies such as the U.N. and the Department of State that examine global issues.

The subject files series contains research materials collected by Payne for general interest and background information for future news articles. There are clippings on Black life, Black women, and journalism/journalists, international issues of justice and ephemera materials from various Black organizations such as Association for the Study of African American Life, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Business League, among others. Of special interest in this series are documents regarding Payne's international travel to destinations such as the Bandung Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 and to the Ghanaian independence celebration in 1957. The subject files series includes brochures, government reports, news clippings and other printed materials from Bandung, Ghana and various other locations from around the globe.

The photographs series contains a treasure trove of material relating to Payne's global travels. There are numerous photos of Payne's trips to Japan, Vietnam, Ghana, China and various other countries. Also of interest are various photos taken of Payne with civil rights activists, world leaders and U.S. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon at numerous events. Photos of everyday citizens and U.S. soldiers in Asia are also prominent.

The Ethel Payne papers provide a glimpse into the life and work of "the First Lady of the Black Press." With materials ranging a sixty-three year period of Payne's life, the collection provides researchers with numerous primary materials to better understand the life of Payne while simultaneously providing some insight into some of the major events of the 20th century.

Biographical Sketch

Ethel Lois Payne	
1911 August 14	Born to William A. Payne and Bessie nee Austin Payne in Chicago, IL. She was the fifth of six children born to the Payne's.
1934	Attended Crane Junior College and Chicago Training School
1940s	Received a three-year certificate and went on to study at Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University
1948 May	Left position as Senior Library Assistant in Chicago Public Libraries to accept an assignment as Service Club Hostess with the Army Special Services in Tokyo, Japan.
1951 March	Returned to the United States and joined the staff of the <i>Chicago Defender</i> as a feature writer
1952	Won first prize from the Illinois Press Association for her stories on child adoption and Negroes in industry.
1953 November	Assigned by the <i>Chicago Defender</i> as the Washington correspondent representing four other papers in the chain the <i>Louisville Defender</i> , the <i>Michigan Chronicle</i> , the <i>Tri-State Defender</i> and the <i>Defender National Edition</i> .
1953	Won honorable mention in the Heywood Broun Memorial Award
1955	Sent by the <i>Chicago Daily Defender</i> to cover the first Asian-African Conference of 29 nations at Bandung, Indonesia she reported from 11 other countries in Asia and Europe. She was one of nine persons selected by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations for its Third Annual World Understanding Award. She was the only American woman reporter present at this historic first gathering of darker nations, representing two thirds of the world's population.
1956	Accredited to the White House and the Congressional Press galleries, the Department of Defense and the State Department
1956	Received the Third Annual World Understanding award by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations for coverage of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia
1957	Accompanied United States Vice President Richard M. Nixon to the Independence ceremonies for Ghana in Accra along with 34 other reporters.

Biographical Sketch continued

1957 1957	Selected by the Capital Press Club in Washington, DC as "Newsman's Newswoman." Also honored by the Windy City Press Club. Kenwood-Ellis Community Association, Chicago – Award for community services
1958	Accepted a position with the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education in Washington, DC as a staff writer. She served as an editor of Notes from COPE.
1962 May	Appointed vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Through this position she gained experience in organizing women's
1965	groups and directing voter registration drives. Metropolitan Women's Democratic Club, Washington, DC Testimonial Luncheon for Outstanding Service
1966	African Methodist Episcopal Church- Excellence in Journalism award
1966 January	Accepted a special assignment with the Social Security Administration to serve as a Consultant with the Medical Alert Program visiting 22 cities across the country.
1966 April 1966 June	Helped with the 1966 Campaign Conference for Democratic women Assisted in coordinating the White House conference To Fulfill These Rights.
1966 August	Traveled to Austin, Texas to serve as Assistant Coordinate in the Campaign of Attorney General Waggoner Carr for the United States Senate
1966 December	Left for Vietnam as a war reporter for the Chicago Defender
1967	"100 Outstanding Women," award, Operation PUSH Chicago
1967 March	She reported from Thailand, Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan before returning to the United States.
1969	Covered civil war in Nigeria with a focus on refugees.
1970	Accompanied Secretary of State William Rogers and Mrs. Rogers on their 10-nation tour of Africa.

Biographical Sketch continued

1971	Emergency trip to Lagos, Nigeria on Special Air Force Plane to return the remains of Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director of the National Urban League to the United States.
1971	Invited by President Richard Nixon to accompany him and Mrs. Nixon on Air Force One to internment for Whitney Young at Lexington, Kentucky.
1971	Accompanied the official U.S. delegation to Monrovia, Liberia for the funeral of President William V.S. Tubman.
1974	Visiting lecturer, Morris Brown College, Atlanta, GA. Visiting lecturer, sponsorship, U.S. Embassy of Stockholm, Sweden. Commencement speaker, Xavier University of Louisiana
1978	Lecturer, Suffolk Law School, Boston, MA. Speaker Freedom Fund dinner, NAACP San Diego
1979	Authored "Roots, Rewards, Renewal," a study of Black Colleges in the United States. Funded by Delta Sigma Theta and published through a grand by George Johnson of the Johnson Products Co., Chicago, IL.
1980s	Joined the anti-Apartheid movement enduring multiple arrests.
1990	Travelled to South Africa to meet Nelson Mandela after his release from prison.
May 28 1991	Died of a heart attack in Washington, DC; buried in Chicago, IL.

Series Description

Series A Personal Papers

Box 239-1 to Box 239-2 Included in this series are biographical narratives, employment applications, news clippings by Payne, guest books and a substantial amount of Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential inaugural materials. Of note are a variety of professional resumes and a Pulitzer Prize nomination portfolio. This series also contains material pertaining to the ancestry of the Payne and Austin families. Of interest is a narrative written by Thelma Elizabeth Gray, Ethel Payne's older sister. "Our Family Story," provides great genealogical information into the arrival of the Payne and Austin clans in Chicago, IL. There are two issues of *The Journal* a family publication exploring the lives of various members through joys and sorrows.

Series B Correspondence

Box 239-2

The bulk of this series contains correspondence involving various aspects of journalistic endeavors such as travel, tips and organizational events. There are items from former two United States President's and their wives: Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon. There are letters from notable publishers and social and political figures: Enoch Waters, John Sengstacke, Charles Diggs and Dorothy I. Height.

Series C Writings by EP

239-3

This series contains the published, draft and clippings of Payne's writings. Her journalistic beat followed international events throughout Asia and Africa from military activity to civilian life. She also covered a wealth of national matters that involve the civil rights movement, its leadership, political struggle and historical roots. These articles provide great insight into her life and professional activities. Most articles are arranged thematically, geographically or by format.

Series D Writings by Others

Box 239-4

Files include articles, pamphlets, speeches and press releases documenting events that Payne used during her career. Many topics revolve around justice for Black people domestically and internationally.

Series Description

Series E Subject files

Box 239-5 to Box 239-9 This series contains research materials collected by Payne for general interest and background information for future news articles. There are clippings on Black life, Black women, and journalism/journalists, international issues of justice and ephemera materials from various Black organizations. Of special interest are a small cache of African newspapers that cover local, national and international news from an African perspective. This section is also arranged geographically and thematically.

Series F Photographs

Box 239-9 to Box 239-10 Included in this series are various photos taken and/or collected by Payne in her role as a journalist. Many of the photos are from nations outside the U.S. as Payne covered global events. Photos from Vietnam, Ghana, Japan, Eastern Europe and the Bandung conference are of particular interest. Also of interest are various photos taken of civil rights leaders, world leaders and U.S. Presidents Kennedy, Eisenhower and Nixon at numerous events. Photos of everyday citizens and U.S. soldiers in Asia are also prominent.

Series G Oversize

Box 239-11

This series contains a few items which were too big to be included in the previous series. Included are scrapbooks of Payne articles, a program from a conference that Payne attended, an oversized photo of Payne and a couple of other documents.

Series A **Personal Papers** Folder Box 239-1 1 Biographical statements 2 Biographical narrative fragments 3 Ghana narrative, nd 4 Confidential report, nd Poem about Payne, nd 5 Congressional Record memorial by Louis Stokes 6 Washington correspondent applications, ca. 1966 Employment contract Oklahoma Eagle Publishing Co., October, 1953 8 Tokyo Army Club Director application, January 1949 – July 1950 10 Defense Information School application and materials, May 1974 Journalism school articles and syllabus, ca. 1940s 12 News clippings by and about Payne, 1954-1974 13 Memos by Payne, 1966 -1973 14 Payne itineraries, 1966 15 Payne travels to China instructions and itinerary, 1973 16 Payne travels to China, notes, nd 17 Payne travels to China, news clippings, 1973 18 Payne travels to China, materials concerning women, nd 19 Payne travels to China, Lil Roberts news clipping, Apr. 26, 1973 20 Payne journal field notes from Vietnam, ca. 1960 21 Payne itinerary, memos and questions re: Vietnam, ca. 1966-1967 22 Bandung itinerary, notes and correspondence, 1955 23 Certificates and membership badges, 1947 & 1972 24 Press passes, 1955 & 1957 25 Programs with Payne speaking, 1972 – 1977 26 Programs and flyers, various events, 1961, 1965, 1974 27 National Press Club, guest book, Jun. 26, 1973 28 Pulitzer Prize nomination scrapbook, Feb. 4, 1971 29 White House press office materials, 1963, 1970, 1972 30 Remarks of the President, "The American Promise," Mar. 15 1965 (signed)

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	33 Ke- Kl
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	48 Vockerodt, Victor
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	3 "Black Conventions Rack Up Millions," Aug. 8, 1970
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	7 "Black Women on Capitol Hill," Series Jan-Mar., 1969
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	18 G.I. and Military Articles, 1960s-1970s
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21	"Hot Cakes with Bullets," nd
22	"Impressions from Col. Ray" notes, December 28, 1970
23	"Internal Unrest is a Major Problem for Haile Selassie," nd
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25	"Interview with Honorable Joe Iyalla," nd
	Writings on Japan, May 1948-March 1951
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	"Juge a Wash. DC. Joue un Role" article in French, nd
	"Ladies and GentlemenThe President of the United States," ca. 1952
30	"Leadership Development Project," ca. 1963
31	"Letters to the Editor," Wash. Post Sept. 18, 1967
32	"A Look at the Republican Party," Series Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 1968
33	"A Lonely Struggle," in The Methodist Woman Jan. 1968
34	"Mamie Bradley's Untold Story," March 8, 1956
35	National Association of Media Women, "Keynote Speech," April 20, 1974
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41	Notes in English/Vietnamese, nd
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45	Proposals and Ideas, nd
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48	"Report on Nigeria," nd
49	Response to Russian Article on Racial Discrimination in US, 1955
50	"Right On, Radical and Resolute: Ron Dellums is the Capital's Best Tailored Gadfly," nd
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38 King Jr., Martin Luther. "Telegram from MLK to Eisenhower,"

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	28 National Newspaper Publishers Association- Black Journal, 1973
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