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JOHN WESLEY SUTTON

Collection 198-1

Prepared by:
Yaa Otubanjo
April 1999

Scope Note

John Wesley Sutton (1897-1978) was an agricultural specialist and a science instructor. He was a protégé of and assistant to Dr. George Washington Carver at Tuskegee Institute. Dr. Carver selected Sutton to be part of a contingent of African American scientists to work on cotton production in the Soviet Union. Sutton lived and worked in the Soviet Union as an agricultural scientist from 1931 - 1938, and was recognized by the Soviet government for his contributions. While serving as a New York City science teacher, Sutton also developed the Sutton Fund for Educational Development to assist underprivileged children.

The John W. Sutton papers were acquired as a gift from John W. Sutton in 1976. The papers occupy 1/4 linear foot and cover the period 1943-1977. Included in the collection are Sutton's FBI file, and newspaper articles about his brother, Percy Sutton, noted New York City attorney, businessman, and politician.

Biographical Sketch

- 1897 Sept. 7 Born in San Antonio, Texas, the son of Samuel J. And Lillian V. Sutton.
- 19?? Attended Prairie View College in Texas and Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.
- 19?? Awarded BA degree from Iowa State.
- 19?? Awarded B.Sc. Degree from Drake University in Iowa.
- 1931 Dr. George Washington Carver arranged for Sutton to travel to USSR as a scientific worker.
- 1932 Married Iylena Vasilievna at Krasnodar, USSR.
- 1933 Promoted by USSR Agricultural Ministry to his own laboratory.
- 1938 Expelled from Russia by Stalinist regime.
- 1938 Received M.Sc. Degree from Columbia University, New York City.
- 1946 Married Bessie Brandon.
- 19??-71 Taught science in New York City School System.
- 1977 Awarded certificate of appreciation from Embassy of USSR in Washington, DC for service to USSR agricultural programs.
- 1978 Oct. 23 Died in San Antonio, Texas.

Series Description

Series A

Personal Papers

Box 198-1

Primarily letters between John Sutton and George Murphy regarding Sutton's work in Russia and association with the Stalinist regime; and photocopy of Sutton's passport.

Series B

Printed Materials

Box 198-1

Newspaper clippings regarding Percy Sutton, John Sutton's brother, the Sutton family and blacks in Russia. Also includes John Sutton's FBI file and pamphlet on G.W. Carver.

Series C

Photographs

Box 198-1

Photographs of John Sutton receiving various honors and awards.

Container List

Box 198-1

A Personal Papers

Folder

- 1 Passport Photocopy
- 2 Correspondence A-Z
- 3 Sutton to Murphy
- 4 Murphy to Sutton
- 5 Carver to Sutton

B Printed Material

- 6 FBI File of John Sutton
- 7 Writings about John Sutton
- 8 Percy Sutton biographical
information
- 9 G.W. Carver pamphlet
- 10 Photographs