

Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1940-1981

Overview of the Collection

Creator	McAdoo, Benjamin F.
Title	Benjamin F. McAdoo papers
Dates	1940-1981 (inclusive) 1940 1981
Quantity	58.93 cubic feet (36 boxes)
Collection Number	1232
Summary	Papers, drawings, and plans of an architect and civic leader of Seattle, Washington.
Repository	University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 speccoll@uw.edu
Access Restrictions	Open to all users.
Languages	English

Biographical Note

Benjamin F. McAdoo was born in Pasadena, California in 1920. He established the first African American-owned architecture firm in Seattle and was the first black man to practice architecture in Washington State. He was a local community leader and advocate for the advancement of low-income resident housing solutions.

McAdoo's architectural education began at the University of Southern California before transferring to the University of Washington. Working nights and attending daytime classes, he graduated with his bachelor's degree in architecture in 1946. He was the first African American person to receive an architecture degree from the University of Washington. His projects were first published in The Seattle Times in July 1949. McAdoo's first commissions were small in scale, including community churches, building renovations, and private residences, but private homes brought McAdoo popular recognition. McAdoo's interest in low-cost housing led him to design modular housing in Jamaica for the United States Agency for International Development (AID) from 1961-1962. This successful design could be easily assembled by unskilled workers, and was widely manufactured within the country. When he returned to the US, he worked in Washington, D.C. where he helped establish the Latin American Division of the AID before transferring to the General Service Administrator's Public Building Services. He returned to Seattle in 1964 and worked in the Auburn office of Public Building Services. He also maintained a private office in Seattle concurrently, and resumed his full-time practice in the late 1960s.

During the three decades of his prolific and diverse architectural career, McAdoo designed churches, single and multifamily dwellings, as well as commercial and institutional works. He exercised a design style of modernism and regionalism. Like many other architects, McAdoo's personal residence

(1957-1958) is a premier example of his ideal residential design process. At 17803 28th Avenue South in Bothell, McAdoo's house illustrates his approach to Northwest regionalism with its open structure, generous use of glass to connect the building to the natural environment, use of Western red cedar, and strong horizontal lines of the building's profile to accentuate the link with the relatively flat site. McAdoo and his family sought more contact with nature and less expensive and larger living spaces, prompting them to leave Seattle. At the time, Bothell was a rural town with approximately 2,000 residents in 1958.

Other residences designed by McAdoo populate central and north Seattle and Mercer Island including the John P. Browning House (1946) in Seattle, the Donald Hochberg residence (1954) on Mercer Island, and the George Hage House (1956) in Seattle.

Later in his career, his designs and renovations included Seattle's First National Branch Bank in Wedgwood (1970), Southcenter Branch of the King County Central Blood Bank (1970), Seattle Fire Station No. 29 (1972), the Queen Anne Swimming Pool (1978), and work for the University of Washington including its Ethnic Cultural Center (1972). McAdoo clearly demonstrated his interest in the Seattle black community. In 1964 and, as president of the Seattle chapter of the NAACP, began broadcasting a weekly radio show focused on social issues. He maintained this post for four years. McAdoo worked steadily until his death in 1981. His career, spanning critical decades of the civil rights movement, seamlessly joined social imperatives with architectural design.

Sources: www.blackpast.org, dahp.wa.gov, historylink.org, sah-archipedia.org, rolludaarchitects.com

Content Description

Correspondence, financial and business records, reports, notes, project files, clippings, architectural drawings and plans, posters, photographs, signs, awards, certificates, and news releases relative to his activities as president of the Seattle branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and career as an architect.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Restrictions may exist on copying, quotation, or publication. Contact Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries for details.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Organized into 3 accessions:

Accession No. 1232-001, Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1952-1966

Accession No. 1232-002, Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1941-1981

Accession No. 1232-003, Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1940-1981

Separated Materials

Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1940-1981
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv11682>

Material Described Separately:

[Benjamin McAdoo Architectural Drawings and Photographs \(Collection No. PH1614\)](#)

Detailed Description of the Collection

Accession No. 1232-001: Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1952-1966

0.23 cubic feet (1 box)

Scope and Content: Correspondence, financial records, reports, notes, and news releases relative to his activities as president of the Seattle branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; 1952-1966.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights not transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Acquisition Info: Bibliographic Source: Benjamin McAdoo

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Accession		
1/1	1232-001 Incoming Letters <u>Scope and Content:</u> Alvis, Charles; Anderson, James E.; Burton, Philip L.; Cook, Mark E.; Donahue, Herb; Kiwanis Club of South Central; Lightfoot, Ethel; Moon, H.L.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Pease, Mina; Smith, David Bailey; Smith, E. Vincent; Stouder, Darcy; Taplin, Sandy; Taylor, Mollie; Torrance, Roscoe C.; Weyer, Roderick, Schroeter, & Sterne; Williams, Betty	1952-1966
1/2	1232-001 Outgoing Letters	1955-1966
1/3	1232-001 Interoffice Correspondence	1954-1966
1/4	1232-001 Financial Records	1959, 1964
1/5	1232-001 Reports	1957
1/6	1232-001 Notes and Clippings	1965
1/7	1232-001 Magazine (Score)	1960
1/8	1232-001 News Releases	1957-1966

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Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/9	1232-001 Newspapers (<i>Puget Sound Observer</i>)	1957-1958
1/10	1232-001 Map	May 1963
1/11	1232-001 Miscellaneous	1966-1967
1/12	1232-001 Ephemera	1965, undated

Accession No. 1232-002: Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1941-1981

8.91 cubic feet (8 boxes)

Scope and Content: Correspondence, project files, news clippings, notes, architectural drawings and plans, posters, and photographs.

Restrictions on Access: No restrictions on access.

Restrictions on Use: Creator's copyrights transferred to the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections.

Acquisition Info: Donor: Enid McAdoo

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box	Accession	
1	1232-002 General Correspondence	1943-1971
2	1232-002 Buisness Correspondence	1948-1963
2	1232-002 Correspondence with Seventh-Day Adventists Conference	1946-1949
2	1232-002 Correspondence about civil rights	1973-1979
2	1232-002 Correspondence about helping student artists, etc	1973-1980
2	1232-002 Ben Mar documents	1950-1959
2	1232-002 Prospective clients	approximately 1950s
2	1232-002 Radio Proposal- Ralph Bayard	undated
2	1232-002 American Institute of Architects	1947-1976

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2	1232-002 1980 Contributions	1980
2	1232-002 Building Superintendent Selection Committee	1970-1971
2	1232-002 Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association of King County	1971-1972
3	1232-002 KUOW commentary	1971-1980
3	1232-002 United Civil Service Commission, Bureau of Personnel Investigations, Robert Dummond Jr	1974-1976
3	1232-002 City architect, Department of Buildings, Selection committee	1972-1973
3	1232-002 Century 21 Exposition	1959-1961
3	1232-002 Central Contractors Association	1969-1976
3	1232-002 Seattle Museum of Black History	1976-1977
3	1232-002 Black Architects Group, National Association of Minority Contractors	1971-1972
3	1232-002 Variety Club Telethon	1979
3	1232-002 Political data and files	1956-1980
4	1232-002 Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, Planning Committee	1976
4	1232-002 Bidder's Folder	1957-1961
4	1232-002 UW Friends of Educational Opportunity Program	1973-1978
4	1232-002 Bellevue School Board race	1969
4	1232-002 Bellevue Citizen's Publishing Corp	1970-1972
4	1232-002 American Institute of Architects, information and committees	1957-1976
4	1232-002 Afro Youth Village- Gladys Givens, Director	1971-1973

Container(s)	Description	Dates
4	1232-002 Architectural competitions	1970-1972
4	1232-002 United States Navy League	1974-1976
4	1232-002 Central Area Affairs	1968-1970
4	1232-002 Central Contractor's Association	1969-1970
4	1232-002 Council on Progressive Architecture	1947-1949
4	1232-002 Contracts, guarentees, financial statements, legal forms, etc	1952-1968
4	1232-002 Walla Walla College, board of trustees	1971-1976
4	1232-002 Seattle Enviroment Review committee, Mayor Wes Uhlman, Lynne Carroll	1977
4	1232-002 Ocean Shores Office	1973
5	1232-002 Service Organizations	1955-1961
5	1232-002 Horatio Alger Society	1964-1981
5	1232-002 Acquisition ownership of properties	1951-1979
5	1232-002 Lincoln Redevelopment project, Kansas City, Missouri	1967-1968
5	1232-002 Financial Documents	1971-1977
5	1232-002 Camp Roberts- school and draft data, war employment records	1942-1948
5	1232-002 Washington State Architectual projects- contracts, data, correspondence	1959
5	1232-002 Washington conference of SDA, Century 21 exhibit	1961-1962
5	1232-002 Jamaican Venture	1962-1975
5	1232-002 Senator Henry M Jackson campaign	1970

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5	1232-002 Hilltop Community, Bellevue- president and annual report	1966-1974
5	1232-002 Ghana Venture	1956-1960
5	1232-002 Africa trip	1960
5	1232-002 Queen City Builders Corperation, contracts	1952-1957
5	1232-002 Hallow point bullets- articles and issue of use by Seattle Police Department	1974-1975
5	1232-002 World Affairs Council talk on South Africa	1973
5	1232-002 Urban Affairs Council	1969-1971
5	1232-002 Newspaper clippings- political	1960-1981
5	1232-002 Newspaper clippings- "the fact newspapers, commentary and correspondence"	1977-1978
5	1232-002 Notes from pocket notebook (unsorted)	1944
5	1232-002 College classwork and notes	approximately 1944
5	1232-002 School grade records, curriculum outlines	1944-1959
5	1232-002 Journal with clippings and photograph, contains photocopy of earlier journal	approximately 1929-1948
6	1232-002 News clippings, articles, press	approximately 1950s-1970s
6	1232-002 Calendar and contact list booklets	approximately 1950s-1970s
6	1232-002 Buisness cards	undated
7	1232-002 Architectural drawings and plans, photographs, film	undated
8	1232-002 Posters for local events and local architecture	approximately 1980s-2005

Container(s)	Description	Dates
8	1232-002 Architectural drawings and plans	undated

Accession No. 1232-003: Benjamin F. McAdoo papers, 1940-1981

49.79 cubic feet (27 boxes)

Scope and Content: Business records including project files, statements, billing invoices, negotiation documents, correspondence, meeting notes; architectural drawings; signs, photographs; awards and certificates relating to Benjamin McAdoo.

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open to all users except undescribed architectural plans and drawings which are closed until processed.

Restrictions on Use: Commercial use or use in publications require permission from Enid McAdoo, Marcia Greenle, or Benjamin F. McAdoo IV. Contact PNW Curator for contact information. Restrictions are lifted and copyright is transferred the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections on October 27, 2043.

Acquisition Info: Business records and drawings recovered from the furnace room of Benjamin McAdoo's office building on the corner of Boyleston and Olive, Seattle, fall 2018. Donated by Enid McAdoo. Second donation received December 6, 2018 from Enid McAdoo, as boxes 20-27.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box	Accession	
1-16	1232-003 Unsorted business records	undated
17-18	1232-003 Unsorted awards and certificates	undated
19	1232-003 Notebook	undated
20	1232-003 Unsorted buisness records <u>Scope and Content:</u> Drawing tube storage log, architectural files, personal daily logs, architectural drawing file list (1947-1961)	undated
21-23	1232-003 Unsorted buisness records <u>Scope and Content:</u> Architectural files	undated
24-25	1232-003 Unsorted buisness records <u>Scope and Content:</u> Architectural files, photos	undated
26	1232-003 Unsorted buisness records <u>Scope and Content:</u> Photographs	undated
27	1232-003 Unsorted buisness records	undated

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Container(s)	Description	Dates
<u>Scope and Content:</u> Architectural files, photos, desk diary		
Folder:Oversize		
OS folder 1-2	1232-003 Election sign, in two pieces	undated
OS folder 2	1232-003 Sign	undated

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

African Americans--Societies, etc
African Americans--Washington (State)--Seattle
Architects--Washington (State)--Seattle
Dwellings--Washington (State)--Seattle--Design and construction
Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

Personal Names :

McAdoo, Benjamin F.--Archives

Corporate Names :

Century 21 Exposition (1962 : Seattle, Wash.)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Seattle Branch

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)--Race relations

2007 (Last modified: 4/9/2020)



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