A Finding Aid to the Alma Thomas Papers, circa 1894-2001, in the Archives of American Art

Jean Fitzgerald, Erin Kinhart, and Stephanie Ashley

Funding for the processing and digitization of the Alma Thomas paper is provided by The Walton Family Foundation and The Friends of Alma Thomas

May 29, 2012, April 30, 2018
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Alma Thomas papers
Identifier: AAA.thomalma
Date: circa 1894-2001
Extent: 5.5 Linear feet
Creator: Thomas, Alma
Language: English
Summary: The papers of Washington, D.C. painter and art educator Alma Thomas, date from circa 1894-2001 and measure 5.5 linear feet. The papers document Thomas's work as a teacher, and her development and success as a painter of the Washington Color School, through biographical material, letters, notes and writings, personal business records, exhibition files, printed materials, scrapbooks, photographs, an audio recording, and two video recordings.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
J. Maurice Thomas, the artist's sister, loaned portions of the collection for microfilming in 1979. Most, but not all of this material was then later donated in several accretions by J. Maurice Thomas, between 1979 and 2004. Charles Thomas Lewis, Thomas' nephew, gave additional papers in 2010.

Separated Materials
In 1979, J. Maurice Thomas loaned papers for microfilming. Most, but not all, of the loaned material was later donated and is described in this finding aid. Loaned materials not donated at a later date are available on reels 1541-1543 and are not described in the container listing of this finding aid.

Available Formats
The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2018 and is available on the Archives of American Art website. Materials which have not been digitized include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, family photographs not picturing Thomas, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages digitized. Some publications have not been digitized.

The sound recording in the collection has been digitized for research access and is available at Archives of American Art offices. Researchers may view the original cassette for the archival notations on it, but the original cassette is not available for playback due to fragility.
Materials lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels 1541-1543 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information
The Alma Thomas papers were merged and processed by Jean Fitzgerald in August 2007. Additional papers, donated in 2010, were integrated and processed in 2012 by Erin Kinhart. Further processing and finding aid revision was completed by Stephanie Ashley in 2018, and the collection was digitized with funding provided by The Walton Family Foundation and The Friends of Alma Thomas.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives’ Washington, D.C., Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate copies requires advance notice.

Conditions Governing Use
The Alma Thomas papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical Note
Washington, D.C. painter and art educator Alma Thomas (1891-1978) was known for her abstract paintings filled with dense patterns of color, and was considered a major artist of the Washington Color School.

Thomas was born in Columbus, Georgia, in 1894, and was the eldest of the four daughters of John Harris Thomas and Amelia Cantey Thomas. The family moved to Washington, D.C. in 1906 and Thomas was first introduced to art classes at Armstrong Technical High School. Following her graduation in 1911 she took a course in kindergarten teaching at the Miner Normal School, and subsequently worked as a substitute teacher in the Washington, D.C. public school system until 1914, when she took a teaching position on the Eastern shore of Maryland. From 1916 to 1923 she taught kindergarten at Thomas Garrett Settlement House in Wilmington, Delaware.

Thomas originally enrolled at Howard University in Washington, D.C. as a home economics major in 1921, but after studying under Lois Mailou Jones and James V. Herring in Herring's newly established art department, she earned a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art in 1924, and became the first person to graduate from the program. Thomas then began her teaching career at Shaw Junior High School in Washington, D.C. that lasted from 1924, until her retirement in 1960. During this time she established community arts programs that would encourage her students to develop an appreciation of fine arts. Activities included marionette programs, distribution of student-designed holiday menu cards for dinners given for soldiers at the Tuskegee Veterans' Hospital, art clubs, lectures, and student exhibitions. In 1943 she became the founding vice president of Barnett Aden Gallery, which was established by James V. Herring and Alonzo Aden and was the first integrated gallery in Washington, D.C.
In 1934 Thomas earned an M.A. degree in Art Education from Columbia University. At American University in Washington, D.C., she studied creative painting under Joe Summerford, Robert Gates, and Jacob Kainen from 1950 to 1960, and began to break away from representational painting and experiment more seriously with Abstract Expressionism. In 1958 she participated in a tour of the art centers of Western Europe under the auspices of the Tyler School of Fine Arts at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Following her retirement from teaching in 1960, Thomas devoted herself full-time to painting, and continued to develop her signature style. She was inspired by nature and the desire to express beauty through composition and color, and refused to be constrained by societal expectations related to her race, gender, and age, achieving her greatest success in the last decade of her life. Her work was exhibited at the Dupont Theatre Art Gallery, Franz Bader Gallery, and the Howard University Gallery of Art, before she was honored in 1972 with exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Thomas's work has been exhibited at the White House and can be found in the permanent collections of major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Washington, D.C. painter and art educator Alma Thomas, date from circa 1894-2001 and measure 5.5 linear feet. The papers document Thomas's work as a teacher, and her development and success as a painter of the Washington Color School, through biographical material, letters, notes and writings, personal business records, exhibition files, printed materials, scrapbooks, photographs, an audio recording, and two video recordings.

Biographical material includes identity cards, chronologies, an audio recording including a biographical account, and scattered documentation of Thomas's education and teaching careers with D.C. Public Schools, Howard University, and Thomas Garrett Settlement in Wilmington, Delaware. Also found are records relating to Thomas's participation in a summer marionette class taught by Tony Sarg in 1934, and a tour of European art centers which Thomas took in 1958.

Letters relate primarily to the exhibition of Thomas's work and related events and are from galleries, museums, other art institutions, colleagues, and friends including Franz Bader, Adelyn Breeskin, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Howard University Gallery of Art, Martha Jackson Gallery, Nathalie J. Cole Johnson, Vincent Melzac, Celine Tabary, and Joshua Taylor.

Notes and writings include four notebooks and autobiographical writings by Thomas, a "Birthday Book," and an annotated engagement calendar. J. Maurice Thomas's writings about Alma Thomas, her research for a bibliography on James Weldon Johnson, and writings by others, including Jacob Kainen, about Alma Thomas, are also found here.

Personal business records include price lists, gift and loan receipts, and files concerning the Art in Embassies Program, the Martha Jackson Gallery, a benefit auction for the Corcoran School of Art, and the designation of the Thomas family home in Washington, D.C. as a historic property.

Eleven scrapbooks document Thomas's teaching career through the activities of the art classes she taught at Shaw Junior High School.

Printed materials include announcements and catalogs for exhibitions and other events; clippings which document Thomas's career and subjects of interest to her; Christmas cards featuring block prints designed by Thomas; and other programs and publications featuring Thomas.

Photographs are of Alma Thomas, family, and friends and colleagues including Sam Gilliam, James V. Herring, and Nathalie V. Cole Johnson; art classes taught by Thomas; Thomas's homes in Columbus, Georgia and Washington, D.C.; and exhibitions not documented in Series 4: Exhibition Files, including photographs of Alma Thomas at an opening at Barnett Aden Gallery with Alonzo Aden and others.

Arrangement

The papers have been arranged into 8 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1911-2001 (Box 1; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 2: Letters, circa 1930-2001 (Boxes 1-2; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 3: Notes and Writings, circa 1920s-circa 1998 (Box 2; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1951-2000 (Boxes 2-3, OV 7; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 5: Personal Business Records, circa 1950s-1994 (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1908-2000 (Boxes 3-5, OV 7; 1.8 linear feet)
- Series 7: Scrapbooks, 1930-1946 (Box 5; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 8: Photographs, circa 1894-2001 (Boxes 5-6; 0.6 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- African American artists
- Painting, American
- Washington Color School (Group of artists)
- Women artists

Types of Materials:
- Audiocassettes
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Video recordings

Names:
- Art in Embassies Program (U.S.)
- Bader, Franz, 1903-1994
- Breeskin, Adelyn Dohme, 1896-1986
Johnson, Nathalie J. Cole  
Martha Jackson Gallery  
Sarg, Tony, 1882-1942  
Tarbary, Celine  
Taylor, Joshua Charles, 1917-  
Thomas, J. Maurice (John Maurice), 1900 or 1901-

Occupations:
Educators -- Washington (D.C.)
Painters -- Washington (D.C.)
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1911-2001

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes awards, biographical accounts, chronologies of Thomas's life and career, guest books from two unidentified events, identity cards, Thomas's death certificate, and a sketch, clippings, and playbills relating to Thomas's painting of Pearl Bailey in *Hello Dolly* for Scott Kirkpatrick. Also found is an audio recording produced by Guidance Associates to accompany an educational filmstrip from their Profiles of Black Achievement series, in which Thomas provides an autobiographical account.

Records relating to Thomas's education include scattered programs and other printed material; report cards relating to her high school and college education; and letters, a notebook, printed material, an illustrated diploma, and Thomas's sketch of a skeleton marionette, documenting her participation in Tony Sarg's marionette class in 1934.

Thomas's teaching career is briefly documented through school employment and promotion records; teacher rating sheets from her career at Shaw Junior High School; clippings and photographs recording her work at the Thomas Garrett Settlement in Wilmington, Delaware; and Thomas's passport, receipts, notes, and printed material from a study abroad trip which she took as a professional development opportunity offered by Temple University, in 1958.

At the end of the series is a group of files related to Thomas's younger sister, J. Maurice Thomas.

This series has been scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1  
Awards, 1967-1975
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 2  
Biographical Accounts and Notes, circa 1950s-circa 1970s
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 3  
Chronologies, circa 1968-1970s
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 4  
Death Certificate, 1978
Image(s)

Education

Box 1, Folder 5  
Armstrong Technical High School, Washington, D.C., 1911
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 6  
Howard University Costume Design, circa 1921-circa 1924
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 7  
Miner Normal School, Washington, D.C., circa 1912
Box 1, Folder 8  Report Cards, 1930-1957  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 9  Tony Sarg Marionette Class, 1934-1936  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10  Tony Sarg Marionette Class, 1934-1936  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 11  Family History, circa 1948, 1993  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 12  Family History, 1981  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 13  Guest Book, 1970-1975  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 14  Guest Book, 1976  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Identity Cards, circa 1920s-circa 1970s  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 16  Painting of Pearl Bailey for Scott Kirkpatrick, 1967-1995  Image(s)

Teaching Career

Box 1, Folder 17  DC Public Schools, Employment and Promotion Records, 1924-1960  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 18  DC Public Schools, Teachers Rating Sheets, 1925-1957  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 19  Study Abroad Trip, 1958  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 20  Study Abroad Trip, 1958  Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 21  Study Abroad Trip, 1958
Box 1, Folder 22  
Thomas Garrett Settlement, Wilmington, Delaware, circa 1920

Box 1, Folder 23  
1 sound cassette

J. Maurice Thomas

Box 1, Folder 24  
Attestation of Pilgrimage, circa 1960s

Box 1, Folder 25  
Biographical Information, circa 1960-2001

Box 1, Folder 26  
Centenarian Awards, 2000-2001

Box 1, Folder 27  
Lock of Hair, circa 1980s

Box 1, Folder 28  
Oral History Transcript, 1986

Return to Table of Contents
Series 2: Letters, circa 1930-2001

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

This series consists primarily of incoming letters from colleagues and art institutions concerning the exhibition of Thomas’s work and related activities; there are only three copies of outgoing letters written by Alma Thomas found in the folders for 1972, 1973, and 1977.

There are letters from individuals, galleries, museums, and educational institutions including Franz Bader and Franz Bader Gallery; Adelyn Breeskin and the Smithsonian National Museum of American Art; Harold Hart and Martha Jackson Gallery; Vincent Melzac and the Corcoran Gallery of Art; the Columbus Museum; Howard University Gallery of Art; Fisk University; and Fort Wayne Museum of Art.

Also found are scattered letters from Valliere Auzenne, poet Nathalie J. Cole Johnson, Celine Tabary, and Joshua Taylor. Following Alma Thomas’s death, J. Maurice Thomas dealt with the various galleries interested in exhibiting her sister’s work and annotated many of the letters in this series.

Letters are arranged chronologically.

This series has been digitized in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 29  Letters, Surnames Unknown, circa 1930-circa 2000

Box 1, Folder 30  Letters, Surnames A-M, circa 1930-circa 2000

Box 1, Folder 31  Letters, Surnames N-Z, circa 1930-circa 2000

Box 1, Folder 32  Letters, 1935-1939

Box 1, Folder 33  Letters, 1941-1946

Box 1, Folder 34  Letters, 1953-1964

Box 1, Folder 35  Letters, 1965-1969

Box 1, Folder 36  Letters, 1970

Box 1, Folder 37  Letters, 1971

Box 1, Folder 38  Letters, 1972
Box 1, Folder 39  Letters, 1973
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 40  Letters, 1974
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 41  Letters, 1975 January-September
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 42  Letters, 1975 October-December
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 43  Letters, 1976 January-May
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 44  Letters, 1976 June-September
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 45  Letters, 1976 October-December
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 46  Letters, 1977
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 47  Letters, 1978-1979
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 48  Letters, 1980-1985
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 49  Letters, 1986-1989
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 50  Letters, 1990
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 51  Letters, 1991
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 52  Letters, 1992
    Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 53  Letters, 1993
Box 2, Folder 1  Letters, 1994 January-May
   Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 2  Letters, 1994 June-December
   Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 3  Letters, 1995
   Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 4  Letters, 1996-1997
   Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 5  Letters, 1998
   Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 6  Letters, 1999-2001
   Image(s)

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Series 3: Notes and Writings, circa 1920s-circa 1998

0.7 Linear feet (Box 2)

This series is arranged as three subseries.

- 3.1: By Thomas, 1936-circa 1970s
- 3.2: By J. Maurice Thomas, circa 1920s-circa 1990s
- 3.3: By Others, circa 1970s-circa 1998

3.1: By Thomas, 1936-circa 1970s

Thomas's writings include autobiographical essays and fragments, one of which has a painted sketch on the reverse, and one entitled "Year of the woman" in which Thomas eschews involvement with men who oppress women and expresses pride in remaining unmarried; four notebooks; an engagement calendar annotated with appointments and inspirational quotations; and "Alma's Birthday Book" containing lists of friends' birthdays. Thomas discusses her childhood, her education, her relationships with individuals such as the founders of the Barnett Aden Gallery, Alonzo Aden and James V. Herring, her motivation for painting, and her desire to not be constrained by societal expectations related to race and gender.

This series has been digitized in entirety with the exception of calendar pages with no annotations.

Box 2, Folder 7  Autobiographical Writings, circa 1960s-circa 1970s
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 8  Birthday Book, 1936
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 9  Engagement Calendar, 1968
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 10  Notebook, circa 1970s
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 11  Notebook, circa 1970s
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 12  Notebook, circa 1970s
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 13  Notebook, circa 1970s
- Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 14  Notes, circa 1950s-circa 1970s
- Image(s)

3.2: By J. Maurice Thomas, circa 1920s-circa 1970s

Writings by J. Maurice Thomas include notes on Alma Thomas and Thomas family history. Her chronologies for her sister list Alma Thomas's achievements, solo and group exhibitions, the significance of events in which Thomas participated, works exhibited, and press coverage. Some of the notes appear
to relate to contributions J. Maurice Thomas proposed for an biographical work on Alma Thomas by Valliere Auzene, which is referenced in Series 2: Letters.

Research notes for a bibliography on James Weldon Johnson are also included here.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. The index cards for J. Maurice Thomas's bibliography on J. Weldon Johnson have not been digitized as the information they contain appears to have been included in Thomas's notes on Johnson.

Box 2, Folder 15  
Autobiographical and Family History Notes and Writings, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 16  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 17  
Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 18  
Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 19  
Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 20  
Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 21  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 22  
Notes on Alma Thomas, Chronologies (circa 1962-circa 1976), circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 23  
Notes on Alma Thomas, Index Cards, circa 1951-circa 1980  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 24  
Notes on Alma Thomas, Photographs, circa 1970s-circa 1990s  
Image(s)


Box 2, Folder 25  
Correspondence, 1934-1941  
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 26  
Index Cards, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 27  Index Cards, 1920s-circa 1940s

Box 2, Folder 28  Index Cards, Poems, 1920s-circa 1940s

Box 2, Folder 29  Index Cards, Songs, 1920s-circa 1940s

Box 2, Folder 30  Printed Material, circa 1920-1970

Box 2, Folder 31  Research Notes, 1920s-circa 1940s

3.3: By Others

Writings by others are primarily about Alma Thomas and include an essay by Jacob Kainen, and a thesis by Sandra Fitzpatrick.

This series has been digitized in entirety.

Box 2, Folder 34  Benjamin, Tritobia Hayes, "What is More Far Reaching Than Beauty?: From Academic Representation to Poetic Abstraction in the Art of Alma Woodsey Thomas", circa 1998


Box 2, Folder 37  Kainen, Jacob, Essay About Thomas, circa 1970s

Box 2, Folder 38  Unidentified, "General Outline: 'The Black Woman' Exhibition", circa 1970s

Box 2, Folder 39  Various Authors, Writings About Thomas, circa 1970s
Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1951-2000

0.8 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, OV 7)

Exhibition files document Thomas’s solo and group exhibitions through letters, lists of artwork, loan records, receipts, printed material such as clippings, exhibition announcements, and catalogs, and photographs.

Individual correspondents from this series include Franz Bader, David Driskell, and Vincent Melzac. In addition to photographs of installations, there are photographs of Thomas at exhibition openings, including her solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum, and photographs of her pictured with individuals including William Buckner, Jeff Donaldson, David Driskell, James W. Herring, and Vincent Melzac. Also found is a photograph of the 1951 Little Paris Studio Group including Lois Mailou Jones, Celine Tabary, and Thomas.

The file for Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings contains two video recordings related to this exhibition at two separate locations: the Columbus Museum and the Fort Wayne Museum of Art.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Duplicates and blank versos of photographs have not been digitized.

Box 2, Folder 40

First Annual Exhibition of the Little Paris Studio Group (1951), Inspiration House, 1951

Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 41

Hilda Shapiro/Alma Thomas (1959), Watkins Gallery at American University, 1959

Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 42

Watercolors by Alma Thomas (1960), Dupont Theatre Gallery of Art, 1960

Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 43


Image(s): Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective Exhibition 1959-1966 (1966), Howard University Gallery of Art,

Box 2, Folder 44


Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 45

Alma Thomas: Recent Paintings (1968), Franz Bader Gallery, 1968

Image(s)

Oversized material housed in OV 7

Box 2, Folder 46


Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 47

Box 2, Folder 48  

Oversized material housed in OV 7

Box 2, Folder 49  

Box 2, Folder 50  

Box 2, Folder 51  

Box 2, Folder 52  

Box 2, Folder 53  

Box 2, Folder 54  

Box 3, Folder 1  

Box 3, Folder 2  
*Alma W. Thomas Retrospective Exhibition* (1972), Corcoran Gallery of Art, Printed Material, 1972

Box 3, Folder 3  
*Alma W. Thomas Retrospective Exhibition* (1972), Corcoran Gallery of Art, Photographs, 1972

Box 3, Folder 4  
*Alma W. Thomas Retrospective Exhibition* (1972), Corcoran Gallery of Art, Slides, 1968-1972

Box 3, Folder 5  
*Alma W. Thomas Paintings* (1973), Martha Jackson Gallery, 1973
Box 3, Folder 6  
*Woman's Work - American Art '74*(1974), Museum of the Philadelphia Civic Center, 1974  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 7  
*Alma Thomas*(1974), Franz Bader Gallery, 1974  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 8  
*Alma Thomas*(1974), Franz Bader Gallery, Photographs, 1974  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 9  
*Alma W. Thomas: Recent Paintings*(1975), Howard University Gallery of Art, 1975  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 10  
*Heritage Days: The Black Perspective*(1976), Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1976  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 11  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 12  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 13  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 14  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 15  
*A Life in Art: Alma Thomas 1891-1978*(1982), Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1982  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 16  
*Twenty Works by Alma Thomas and Her Contemporaries*(1982), Shaw Junior High School Alma Thomas Memorial Gallery, 1982  
Image(s)  

Box 3, Folder 17  
*Grand International Mail Art Exhibition of Visual Message*(1982), Kwan Hoon Museum of Fine Art, 1982
Box 3, Folder 18  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 19  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 20  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 21  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 22  
*Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings* (1999), Tampa Museum of Art, 1999
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 23  
*Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings* (1999), New Jersey State Museum, 1999
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 24  
*Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings* (1999), Anacostia Museum Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1999
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 25  
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 26  
2 videocassettes (s-vhs)
Image(s)

Video recording of the exhibition at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art in 1998; and a video recording of a lecture given by Sachi Yanaru-Rizzo at the opening of the exhibition in Columbus in October 2000.

Box OV 7  
Oversized *Alma Thomas: Recent Paintings* (1968), Franz Bader Gallery, digitized with Box 2, Folder 45

Box OV 7  
Oversized *Alma Thomas: Earth and Space Paintings* (1970), Franz Bader Gallery, digitized with Box 2, Folder 48

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Personal business records include price lists, gift and loan receipts for museums and galleries including Martha Jackson Gallery, and files concerning loans to the Art in Embassies Program and a benefit auction for the Corcoran School of Art. There are also records documenting J. Maurice Thomas's successful efforts to have the Thomas family home in Washington, D.C. designated as a historic property, and lists and receipts relating to Alma Thomas's estate.

This series has been digitized in entirety.

Box 3, Folder 27  Art in Embassies Program, circa 1969-1994
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 28  Benefit Auction for Corcoran School of Art, 1977
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 29  Gift and Loan Receipts, 1969-1981
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 30  Historic Landmark Designation, 1983-1987
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 31  Historic Landmark Designation, 1983-1987
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 32  Lists of Artwork, circa 1970s
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 33  Lists of Artwork, Martha Jackson Gallery, circa 1970s
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 34  Lists of, and Receipts for, Household Items/Alma Thomas Estate, 1978
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 35  Price Lists, circa 1950s-circa 1970s
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 36  Receipts, Martha Jackson Gallery, 1966-1977
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 37  Receipts, Other, circa 1970s-1993
   Image(s)
Series 6: Printed Material, 1908-2000

1.8 Linear feet (Boxes 3-5, OV 7)

Printed material is comprised primarily of announcements and catalogs for Thomas's exhibitions and news clippings related to her activities and to subjects of interest to her. The series includes clippings that J. Maurice Thomas continued to collect about her sister after Alma Thomas's death. Some of the clippings relate to curators and gallery owners who showed Thomas's work and that of other African American and Washington Color School artists.

Other printed material includes a catalog of six linoleum block print Christmas cards designed by Thomas, calendars of events, programs, publications featuring Thomas, reproductions of art work by Thomas and others, and two yearbooks from Saint Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., of which Alma and J. Maurice Thomas were members.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Material not digitized includes duplicates; some exhibition catalogs and other publications for which only covers, title pages, and/or relevant pages have been digitized; and some of the Howard University and miscellaneous publications not related to Alma Thomas.

Box 3, Folder 38  Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1950s-circa 1990s
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 39  Announcements and Catalogs, 1952-1954
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 40  Announcements and Catalogs, 1955
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 41  Announcements and Catalogs, 1956
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 42  Announcements and Catalogs, 1957-1959
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 43  Announcements and Catalogs, 1960-1961
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 44  Announcements and Catalogs, 1962-1963
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 45  Announcements and Catalogs, 1964-1967
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 46  Announcements and Catalogs, 1968
   Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 47  Announcements and Catalogs, 1969
Box 3, Folder 48  Announcements and Catalogs, 1970 April-May

Box 3, Folder 49  Announcements and Catalogs, 1970 November-December

Box 3, Folder 50  Announcements and Catalogs, 1971 January-April

Box 3, Folder 51  Announcements and Catalogs, 1971 May-December

Box 3, Folder 52  Announcements and Catalogs, 1972-1973

Box 4, Folder 1  Announcements and Catalogs, 1974

Box 4, Folder 2  Announcements and Catalogs, 1975-1976 July
     Oversized material housed in OV 7

Box 4, Folder 3  Announcements and Catalogs, 1976 September-November

Box 4, Folder 4  Announcements and Catalogs, 1977-1978

Box 4, Folder 5  Announcements and Catalogs, 1980-1981

Box 4, Folder 6  Announcements and Catalogs, 1982-1990

Box 4, Folder 7  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, circa 1950s-circa 1960s

Box 4, Folder 8  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1931-1949

Box 4, Folder 9  Announcements and Catalogs, For Others, 1953-1959

Box 4, Folder 10  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1961-1962
Box 4, Folder 11  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1967-1968
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 12  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1970-1971
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 13  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1972-1973
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 14  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1974-1978
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 15  Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1982-1998
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 16  Calendars Containing Reproductions of Artwork by Thomas, 1969-1970
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 17  Calendars Containing Reproductions of Artwork by Thomas, 1994
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 18  Calendars of Events Featuring Thomas, 1977-1997
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 19  Christmas Cards Designed by Thomas, circa 1940s
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 20  Clippings, circa 1930s-circa 1990s
    Image(s)
    Oversized material housed in OV 7

Box 4, Folder 21  Clippings, 1919-1949
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 22  Clippings, 1951-1960
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 23  Clippings, 1961-1962
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 24  Clippings, 1963
    Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 25  Clippings, 1964-1969
Box 4, Folder 26  Clippings, 1970 March-May
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 27  Clippings, 1970 June-December
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 28  Clippings, 1971
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 29  Clippings, 1972-1973
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 30  Clippings, 1974
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 31  Clippings, 1975 January-September
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 32  Clippings, 1975 October-December
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 33  Clippings, 1976 January-April
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 34  Clippings, 1976 May-December
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 35  Clippings, 1977
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 36  Clippings, 1978-1982
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 37  Clippings, 1983
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 38  Clippings, 1984-1986
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 39  Clippings, 1987-1988
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 40  Clippings, 1989
Box 4, Folder 41  Clippings, 1990
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 1  Clippings, 1991-1993
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 2  Clippings, 1994-1995
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 3  Clippings, 1996-1997
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 4  Clippings, 1998-2000
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 5  Clippings Regarding Howard Theater, circa 1903-circa 1999
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 6  Programs, circa 1944-1964
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 7  Programs, 1967-1975
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 8  Programs, 1986-1998
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 9  Publications Featuring Thomas, 1971-1972
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 10  Publications Featuring Thomas, 1975-1976
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 11  Publications Featuring Thomas, 1994-1997
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 12  Publications, Howard University, 1975-1997

Box 5, Folder 13  Publications, Howard University, 1975-1997

Box 5, Folder 14  Publications, Miscellaneous, 1908, circa 1960s-circa 1990s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 15  Publications, Miscellaneous, circa 1960s-circa 1990s
Box 5, Folder 16  Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1970s
Image(s)

Image(s)

Box OV 7  Oversized Announcements and Catalogs digitized with Box 4, Folder 2

Box OV 7  Oversized Clippings digitized with Box 4, Folder 2

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Series 7: Scrapbooks from Shaw Junior High School, 1930-1946

0.3 Linear feet (Box 5)

The eleven Shaw Junior High School scrapbooks in this series document a variety of school activities initiated by Thomas in order to involve her students in community service and stimulate their appreciation of the arts through art clubs, lectures, exhibitions, and community events. The scrapbooks have been dismantled and contain letters, notes, clippings, programs with block print covers designed by students, miscellaneous printed material, and scattered photographs of students.

Scrapbooks are arranged according to a numerical system from the original records.

This series has been digitized in entirety.

Box 5, Folder 18  Scrapbook "C1a Exhibit 3", 1930-1940
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 19  Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 20  Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 21  Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 22  Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 23  Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 24  Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 25  Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 1", 1937-1939
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 26  Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 2", 1938
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 27  Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 3", 1936-1946
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 28  Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 3", 1936-1946
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 29  Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 4", 1936-1939
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5, Folder 30</th>
<th>Scrapbook &quot;C3b Exhibit 6&quot;, 1935-1939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 31</td>
<td>Scrapbook &quot;C3b Exhibit 8&quot;, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 32</td>
<td>Scrapbook &quot;C3b Exhibit 9&quot;, 1938-1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 33</td>
<td>Scrapbook &quot;C4 Exhibit 1&quot;, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 8: Photographs, circa 1894-2001

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 5-6)

Photographs are of Alma Thomas, family members, friends and colleagues, art classes, her residence and garden, miscellaneous exhibition openings not contained in exhibition files, events including Howard University Charter Day where Thomas was honored in 1975, and works of art by Thomas and others. Included in the family photographs are many of J. Maurice Thomas, and of Thomas's parents, grandparents, and extended family. Photographs of friends and colleagues include some taken during Thomas's work at the Thomas Garrett Settlement House in Wilmington, Delaware; a photograph of James V. Herring with Sam Gilliam; and photographs of poet and founding member of UNICEF, Nathalie V. Cole Johnson.

Also found is a family photograph album with photographs of friends, family, and colleagues from the 1920s, and a photographs album compiled in the 1980s and given to J. Maurice Thomas, documenting Alma Thomas's life.

The bulk of this series has been digitized. Duplicates, negatives for which corresponding prints exist, blank versos of photographs, some of the photographs of J. Maurice Thomas's 100th birthday party, and some family photographs not picturing Thomas have not been digitized.

Box 5, Folder 34 Of Alma Thomas, circa 1915-circa 1938
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 35 Of Alma Thomas, circa 1915-circa 1958
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 36 Of Alma Thomas, 1950s-1960s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 37 Of Alma Thomas, 1970s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 38 Of Alma Thomas, Howard University Charter Day, 1975
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 39 Of Alma Thomas, Studio Portraits, circa 1972
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 40 Of Family Members, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, circa 1894
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 41 Of Family Members, J. Maurice Thomas and Others, circa 1912-circa 1990s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 42 Of Family Members, Nephew, Niece, and Others, circa 1920s-1974
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 43 Of Family Members, Parents (copy of circa 1888 photograph), circa 2000
Box 5, Folder 44  Of Friends and Colleagues, 1911
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 45  Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 46  Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 47  Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 48  Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 49  Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920-1968
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 50  Of Friends and Colleagues in Wilmington, DE, circa 1916-circa 1920
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 51  Thomas's Art Class at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1960s
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 1  Thomas's Costumes Designed for Howard University Players, 1923 or 1924
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 2  Thomas's Exhibition Installation at the Martha Jackson Gallery, circa 1960s
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 3  Thomas's Exhibition Openings at Barnett Aden Gallery, circa 1960s
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 4  Thomas's Garden in Washington, D.C., circa 1970-1971
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 5  Thomas's Garden and Residence in Washington, D.C., circa 1990-circa 1994
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 6  Thomas's House in Columbus, GA, 1982-circa 1990
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 7  Thomas, J. Maurice, 100th Birthday Party, 1998
Box 6, Folder 8  Thomas, J. Maurice, 100th Birthday Party, 1998

Box 6, Folder 9  Thomas, J. Maurice, 100th Birthday Party, 1998

Box 6, Folder 10  Thomas, J. Maurice, at Various Events, 1991-2001
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 11  Thomas, J. Maurice, Living Room, circa 1980s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 12  Of Steamboats (Copy Prints of circa 1900 images), circa 1990s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 13  Of Artwork by Thomas, circa 1920s-1994
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 14  Of Artwork by Others, circa 1940s-circa 1980s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 15  Photograph Album, 1920s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 16  Photograph Album, 1920s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 17  Photograph Album, 1920s
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 18  Photograph Album, 1982
(Image(s))

Box 6, Folder 19  Negatives, circa 1920s-circa 1990s
(Image(s))

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