



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## 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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Alma Thomas papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1894-2001
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.thomalma
<b>Creator:</b>	Thomas, Alma
<b>Extent:</b>	5.5 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	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.

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## 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

Alma Thomas papers, circa 1894-2001. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

Exhibition files contain a wide variety of documentation for many group and solo exhibitions of Thomas's work from the early 1950s through a 1998-2000 traveling retrospective exhibition, including solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1972. The records include letters from Franz Bader Gallery, David Driskell at Fisk University, and Vincent Melzac. Photographs include Thomas 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 picturing Lois Mailou Jones, Celine Tabary, Alma Thomas, and others. Two video recordings are of events related to the 1998-2000 retrospective at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and the Columbus Museum of Art. Records documenting a 1981-1982 exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, *A Life in Art: Alma Thomas*, includes the script of a video written by Adolphus Ealey.

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.

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## 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)
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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

African American artists  
African American educators  
African American painters  
Painting, American  
Washington Color School (Group of artists)  
Women artists  
Women educators  
Women painters

### 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)

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available Formats:** This series has been scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1      [Awards, 1967-1975](#)

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

Box 1, Folder 3      [Chronologies, circa 1968-1970s](#)

Box 1, Folder 4      [Death Certificate, 1978](#)

#### Education

Box 1, Folder 5      [Armstrong Technical High School, Washington, D.C., 1911](#)

Box 1, Folder 6      [Howard University Costume Design, circa 1921-circa 1924](#)

Box 1, Folder 7      [Miner Normal School, Washington, D.C., circa 1912](#)

Box 1, Folder 8      [Report Cards, 1930-1957](#)

Box 1, Folder 9      [Tony Sarg Marionette Class, 1934-1936](#)

Box 1, Folder 10      [Tony Sarg Marionette Class, 1934-1936](#)



Box 1, Folder 11	Family History, circa 1948, 1993
Box 1, Folder 12	Family History, 1981
Box 1, Folder 13	Guest Book, 1970-1975
Box 1, Folder 14	Guest Book, 1976
Box 1, Folder 15	Identity Cards, circa 1920s-circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 16	Painting of Pearl Bailey for Scott Kirkpatrick, 1967-1995
Teaching Career	
Box 1, Folder 17	DC Public Schools, Employment and Promotion Records, 1924-1960
Box 1, Folder 18	DC Public Schools, Teachers Rating Sheets, 1925-1957
Box 1, Folder 19	Study Abroad Trip, 1958
Box 1, Folder 20	Study Abroad Trip, 1958
Box 1, Folder 21	Study Abroad Trip, 1958
Box 1, Folder 22	Thomas Garrett Settlement, Wilmington, Delaware, circa 1920
Box 1, Folder 23	Guidance Associates, Profiles of Black Achievement: Alma Thomas, 1973 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

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## Series 2: Letters, circa 1930-2001

### 0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available Formats:** This series has been digitized in entirety.

**Arrangement:** Letters are arranged chronologically.

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](#)

Box 1, Folder 40 [Letters, 1974](#)

Box 1, Folder 41 [Letters, 1975 January-September](#)

Box 1, Folder 42 [Letters, 1975 October-December](#)

Box 1, Folder 43	<a href="#">Letters, 1976 January-May</a>
Box 1, Folder 44	<a href="#">Letters, 1976 June-September</a>
Box 1, Folder 45	<a href="#">Letters, 1976 October-December</a>
Box 1, Folder 46	<a href="#">Letters, 1977</a>
Box 1, Folder 47	<a href="#">Letters, 1978-1979</a>
Box 1, Folder 48	<a href="#">Letters, 1980-1985</a>
Box 1, Folder 49	<a href="#">Letters, 1986-1989</a>
Box 1, Folder 50	<a href="#">Letters, 1990</a>
Box 1, Folder 51	<a href="#">Letters, 1991</a>
Box 1, Folder 52	<a href="#">Letters, 1992</a>
Box 1, Folder 53	<a href="#">Letters, 1993</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	<a href="#">Letters, 1994 January-May</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	<a href="#">Letters, 1994 June-December</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	<a href="#">Letters, 1995</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	<a href="#">Letters, 1996-1997</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	<a href="#">Letters, 1998</a>
Box 2, Folder 6	<a href="#">Letters, 1999-2001</a>

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

### 0.7 Linear feet (Box 2)

Arrangement: 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

### Subseries 3.1: By Thomas, 1936-circa 1970s

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

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

Box 2, Folder 7	<a href="#">Autobiographical Writings, circa 1960s-circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 8	<a href="#">Birthday Book, 1936</a>
Box 2, Folder 9	<a href="#">Engagement Calendar, 1968</a>
Box 2, Folder 10	<a href="#">Notebook, circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 11	<a href="#">Notebook, circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 12	<a href="#">Notebook, circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 13	<a href="#">Notebook, circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 14	<a href="#">Notes, circa 1950s-circa 1970s</a>

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

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available Formats:** 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
Box 2, Folder 16	Manuscript About Alma Thomas's March on Washington, D.C., 1963, 1983
Box 2, Folder 17	Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 18	Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 19	Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 20	Notes on Alma Thomas, circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 21	Notes on Alma Thomas, Chronologies (1955-1971), circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 22	Notes on Alma Thomas, Chronologies (circa 1962-circa 1976), circa 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 2, Folder 23	Notes on Alma Thomas, Index Cards, circa 1951-circa 1980
Box 2, Folder 24	Notes on Alma Thomas, Photographs, circa 1970s-circa 1990s
James Weldon Johnson Bibliography Project, circa 1970s-circa 1998	
Box 2, Folder 25	Correspondence, 1934-1941
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
Box 2, Folder 32	Research Notes, 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 33	Research Notes, 1920s-circa 1940s

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### Subseries 3.3: By Others

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

Available Formats: This series has been digitized in entirety.

Formats:

Box 2, Folder 34	<a href="#">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</a>
Box 2, Folder 35	<a href="#">Fitzpatrick, Sandra, Thesis, "The Path to Creativity: The Life and Career of Alma W. Thomas in Washington, D.C.", 1981-1983</a>
Box 2, Folder 36	<a href="#">Fitzpatrick, Sandra, Thesis, "The Path to Creativity: The Life and Career of Alma W. Thomas in Washington, D.C.", 1981-1983</a>
Box 2, Folder 37	<a href="#">Kainen, Jacob, Essay About Thomas, circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 38	<a href="#">Unidentified, "General Outline: 'The Black Woman' Exhibition", circa 1970s</a>
Box 2, Folder 39	<a href="#">Various Authors, Writings About Thomas, circa 1970s</a>

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## Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1951-2000

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

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

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

Box 2, Folder 40	<a href="#">First Annual Exhibition of the Little Paris Studio Group (1951), Inspiration House, 1951</a>
Box 2, Folder 41	<a href="#">Hilda Shapiro/Alma Thomas (1959), Watkins Gallery at American University, 1959</a>
Box 2, Folder 42	<a href="#">Watercolors by Alma Thomas (1960), Dupont Theatre Gallery of Art, 1960</a>
Box 2, Folder 43	<a href="#">Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective Exhibition, 1959-1966 (1966), Howard University Gallery of Art, 1966</a>
Box 2, Folder 44	<a href="#">Negro Artists in Washington (1968), George Washington University Art Gallery, 1968</a>
Box 2, Folder 45	<a href="#">Alma Thomas: Recent Paintings (1968), Franz Bader Gallery, 1968</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 7
Box 2, Folder 46	<a href="#">1969: Twelve Afro-American Artists (1969), Lee Nordness Gallery, 1969</a>
Box 2, Folder 47	<a href="#">The Washington Painters (1969), Ringling Museum of Art, 1969</a>
Box 2, Folder 48	<a href="#">Alma Thomas: Earth and Space Paintings (1970), Franz Bader Gallery, 1970</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 7
Box 2, Folder 49	<a href="#">Alma W. Thomas: Recent Paintings (1971), Fisk University, 1970-1972</a>
Box 2, Folder 50	<a href="#">Alma W. Thomas: Recent Paintings (1971), Fisk University, Photographs, 1970-1972</a>

Box 2, Folder 51	Alma W. Thomas (1972), Whitney Museum of American Art, Letters and Receipts, 1970-1973
Box 2, Folder 52	Alma W. Thomas (1972), Whitney Museum of American Art, Printed Material, 1972
Box 2, Folder 53	Alma W. Thomas (1972), Whitney Museum of American Art, Photographs, 1972
Box 2, Folder 54	Alma W. Thomas (1972), Whitney Museum of American Art, Photographs, 1972
Box 3, Folder 1	Alma W. Thomas Retrospective Exhibition (1972), Corcoran Gallery of Art, Letters and Business Records, 1922-1977
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
Box 3, Folder 7	Alma Thomas (1974), Franz Bader Gallery, 1974
Box 3, Folder 8	Alma Thomas (1974), Franz Bader Gallery, Photographs, 1974
Box 3, Folder 9	Alma W. Thomas: Recent Paintings (1975), Howard University Gallery of Art, 1975
Box 3, Folder 10	Heritage Days: The Black Perspective (1976), Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1976
Box 3, Folder 11	Black American Artists: 1750-1950 (1976), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1975-1977
Box 3, Folder 12	A Life in Art: Alma Thomas 1891-1978 (1981-1982), National Museum of American Art, Letters, 1981-1982
Box 3, Folder 13	A Life in Art: Alma Thomas 1891-1978 (1981-1982), National Museum of American Art, Business Records and Film Script, 1981-1982
Box 3, Folder 14	A Life in Art: Alma Thomas 1891-1978 (1981-1982), National Museum of American Art, Printed Material, 1981-1983



Box 3, Folder 15	A Life in Art: Alma Thomas 1891-1978 (1982), Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences, 1982
Box 3, Folder 16	Twenty Works by Alma Thomas and Her Contemporaries (1982), Shaw Junior High School Alma Thomas Memorial Gallery, 1982
Box 3, Folder 17	Grand International Mail Art Exhibition of Visual Message (1982), Kwan Hoon Museum of Fine Art, 1982
Box 3, Folder 18	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1998), Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Letters, 1994-1997
Box 3, Folder 19	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1998), Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Letters, 1997-1999
Box 3, Folder 20	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1998), Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Printed Material, 1998
Box 3, Folder 21	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1998), Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Printed Material, 1998
Box 3, Folder 22	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1999), Tampa Museum of Art, 1999
Box 3, Folder 23	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1999), New Jersey State Museum, 1999
Box 3, Folder 24	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (1999), Anacostia Museum Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1999
Box 3, Folder 25	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings (2000), The Columbus Museum, 1999-2000
Box 3, Folder 26	Alma W. Thomas: A Retrospective of the Paintings, Fort Wayne Museum of Art and Columbus Museum, Video Recordings, 1998-2000 2 Videocassettes (S-VHS) Notes: 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

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## Series 5: Personal Business Records, circa 1950s-1994

### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available Formats:** This series has been digitized in entirety.

Box 3, Folder 27	<a href="#">Art in Embassies Program, circa 1969-1994</a>
Box 3, Folder 28	<a href="#">Benefit Auction for Corcoran School of Art, 1977</a>
Box 3, Folder 29	<a href="#">Gift and Loan Receipts, 1969-1981</a>
Box 3, Folder 30	<a href="#">Historic Landmark Designation, 1983-1987</a>
Box 3, Folder 31	<a href="#">Historic Landmark Designation, 1983-1987</a>
Box 3, Folder 32	<a href="#">Lists of Artwork, circa 1970s</a>
Box 3, Folder 33	<a href="#">Lists of Artwork, Martha Jackson Gallery, circa 1970s</a>
Box 3, Folder 34	<a href="#">Lists of, and Receipts for, Household Items/Alma Thomas Estate, 1978</a>
Box 3, Folder 35	<a href="#">Price Lists, circa 1950s-circa 1970s</a>
Box 3, Folder 36	<a href="#">Receipts, Martha Jackson Gallery, 1966-1977</a>
Box 3, Folder 37	<a href="#">Receipts, Other, circa 1970s-1993</a>

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## Series 6: Printed Material, 1908-2000

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

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available Formats:** 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](#)

Box 3, Folder 39      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1952-1954](#)

Box 3, Folder 40      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1955](#)

Box 3, Folder 41      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1956](#)

Box 3, Folder 42      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1957-1959](#)

Box 3, Folder 43      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1960-1961](#)

Box 3, Folder 44      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1962-1963](#)

Box 3, Folder 45      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1964-1967](#)

Box 3, Folder 46      [Announcements and Catalogs, 1968](#)

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	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1974</a>
Box 4, Folder 2	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1975-1976 July</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 7
Box 4, Folder 3	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1976 September-November</a>
Box 4, Folder 4	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1977-1978</a>
Box 4, Folder 5	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1980-1981</a>
Box 4, Folder 6	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, 1982-1990</a>
Box 4, Folder 7	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, circa 1950s-circa 1960s</a>
Box 4, Folder 8	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1931-1949</a>
Box 4, Folder 9	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs, For Others, 1953-1959</a>
Box 4, Folder 10	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1961-1962</a>
Box 4, Folder 11	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1967-1968</a>
Box 4, Folder 12	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1970-1971</a>
Box 4, Folder 13	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1972-1973</a>
Box 4, Folder 14	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1974-1978</a>
Box 4, Folder 15	<a href="#">Announcements and Catalogs For Others, 1982-1998</a>
Box 4, Folder 16	<a href="#">Calendars Containing Reproductions of Artwork by Thomas, 1969-1970</a>
Box 4, Folder 17	<a href="#">Calendars Containing Reproductions of Artwork by Thomas, 1994</a>
Box 4, Folder 18	<a href="#">Calendars of Events Featuring Thomas, 1977-1997</a>
Box 4, Folder 19	<a href="#">Christmas Cards Designed by Thomas, circa 1940s</a>
Box 4, Folder 20	<a href="#">Clippings, circa 1930s-circa 1990s</a> Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 7
Box 4, Folder 21	<a href="#">Clippings, 1919-1949</a>
Box 4, Folder 22	<a href="#">Clippings, 1951-1960</a>
Box 4, Folder 23	<a href="#">Clippings, 1961-1962</a>

Box 4, Folder 24	Clippings, 1963
Box 4, Folder 25	Clippings, 1964-1969
Box 4, Folder 26	Clippings, 1970 March-May
Box 4, Folder 27	Clippings, 1970 June-December
Box 4, Folder 28	Clippings, 1971
Box 4, Folder 29	Clippings, 1972-1973
Box 4, Folder 30	Clippings, 1974
Box 4, Folder 31	Clippings, 1975 January-September
Box 4, Folder 32	Clippings, 1975 October-December
Box 4, Folder 33	Clippings, 1976 January-April
Box 4, Folder 34	Clippings, 1976 May-December
Box 4, Folder 35	Clippings, 1977
Box 4, Folder 36	Clippings, 1978-1982
Box 4, Folder 37	Clippings, 1983
Box 4, Folder 38	Clippings, 1984-1986
Box 4, Folder 39	Clippings, 1987-1988
Box 4, Folder 40	Clippings, 1989
Box 4, Folder 41	Clippings, 1990
Box 5, Folder 1	Clippings, 1991-1993
Box 5, Folder 2	Clippings, 1994-1995
Box 5, Folder 3	Clippings, 1996-1997
Box 5, Folder 4	Clippings, 1998-2000
Box 5, Folder 5	Clippings Regarding Howard Theater, circa 1903-circa 1999
Box 5, Folder 6	Programs, circa 1944-1964

Box 5, Folder 7	<a href="#">Programs, 1967-1975</a>
Box 5, Folder 8	<a href="#">Programs, 1986-1998</a>
Box 5, Folder 9	<a href="#">Publications Featuring Thomas, 1971-1972</a>
Box 5, Folder 10	<a href="#">Publications Featuring Thomas, 1975-1976</a>
Box 5, Folder 11	<a href="#">Publications Featuring Thomas, 1994-1997</a>
Box 5, Folder 12	<a href="#">Publications, Howard University, 1975-1997</a>
Box 5, Folder 13	<a href="#">Publications, Howard University, 1975-1997</a>
Box 5, Folder 14	<a href="#">Publications, Miscellaneous, 1908, circa 1960s-circa 1990s</a>
Box 5, Folder 15	<a href="#">Publications, Miscellaneous, circa 1960s-circa 1990s</a>
Box 5, Folder 16	<a href="#">Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1970s</a>
Box 5, Folder 17	<a href="#">St. Luke's Episcopal Church Yearbooks, 1973, 2000</a>
Box OV 7	<a href="#">Oversized Announcements and Catalogs digitized with Box 4, Folder 2</a>
Box OV 7	<a href="#">Oversized Clippings digitized with Box 4, Folder 20</a>

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

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 5)

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

**Available:** This series has been digitized in entirety.

**Formats:**

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

Box 5, Folder 18	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C1a Exhibit 3", 1930-1940</a>
Box 5, Folder 19	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 20	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 21	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C1b Exhibit 6", 1930-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 22	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 23	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 24	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C2 Exhibit 2", 1937-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 25	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 1", 1937-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 26	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 2", 1938</a>
Box 5, Folder 27	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 3", 1936-1946</a>
Box 5, Folder 28	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 3", 1936-1946</a>
Box 5, Folder 29	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 4", 1936-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 30	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 6", 1935-1939</a>
Box 5, Folder 31	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 8", 1936</a>
Box 5, Folder 32	<a href="#">Scrapbook "C3b Exhibit 9", 1938-1939</a>

Box 5, Folder 33

Scrapbook "C4 Exhibit 1", 1934

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## Series 8: Photographs, circa 1894-2001

### 0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 5-6)

**Available Formats:** 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.

**Scope and Contents:** 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.

Box 5, Folder 34	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, circa 1915-circa 1938</a>
Box 5, Folder 35	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, circa 1915-circa 1958</a>
Box 5, Folder 36	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, 1950s-1960s</a>
Box 5, Folder 37	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, 1970s</a>
Box 5, Folder 38	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, Howard University Charter Day, 1975</a>
Box 5, Folder 39	<a href="#">Of Alma Thomas, Studio Portraits, circa 1972</a>
Box 5, Folder 40	<a href="#">Of Family Members, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, circa 1894</a>
Box 5, Folder 41	<a href="#">Of Family Members, J. Maurice Thomas and Others, circa 1912-circa 1990s</a>
Box 5, Folder 42	<a href="#">Of Family Members, Nephew, Niece, and Others, circa 1920s-1974</a>
Box 5, Folder 43	<a href="#">Of Family Members, Parents (copy of circa 1888 photograph), circa 2000</a>
Box 5, Folder 44	<a href="#">Of Friends and Colleagues, 1911</a>
Box 5, Folder 45	<a href="#">Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s</a>
Box 5, Folder 46	<a href="#">Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s</a>
Box 5, Folder 47	<a href="#">Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s</a>
Box 5, Folder 48	<a href="#">Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920s</a>

Box 5, Folder 49	Of Friends and Colleagues, circa 1920-1968
Box 5, Folder 50	Of Friends and Colleagues in Wilmington, DE, circa 1916-circa 1920
Box 5, Folder 51	Thomas's Art Class at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1960s
Box 6, Folder 1	Thomas's Costumes Designed for Howard University Players, 1923 or 1924
Box 6, Folder 2	Thomas's Exhibition Installation at the Martha Jackson Gallery, circa 1960s
Box 6, Folder 3	Thomas's Exhibition Openings at Barnett Aden Gallery, circa 1960s
Box 6, Folder 4	Thomas's Garden in Washington, D.C., circa 1970-1971
Box 6, Folder 5	Thomas's Garden and Residence in Washington, D.C., circa 1990-circa 1994
Box 6, Folder 6	Thomas's House in Columbus, GA, 1982-circa 1990 Notes: Photos picture J. Maurice Thomas and at the Columbus house.
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
Box 6, Folder 11	Thomas, J. Maurice, Living Room, circa 1980s
Box 6, Folder 12	Of Steamboats (Copy Prints of circa 1900 images), circa 1990s
Box 6, Folder 13	Of Artwork by Thomas, circa 1920s-1994
Box 6, Folder 14	Of Artwork by Others, circa 1940s-circa 1980s
Box 6, Folder 15	Photograph Album, 1920s
Box 6, Folder 16	Photograph Album, 1920s
Box 6, Folder 17	Photograph Album, 1920s
Box 6, Folder 18	Photograph Album, 1982

Box 6, Folder 19

Negatives, circa 1920s-circa 1990s

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