

Robert L. Carter Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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2014

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LC Online Catalog record:

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Prepared by Joseph K. Brooks

Revised and expanded by Melinda K. Friend with the assistance of Thomas Bigley and Dan Oleksiw

Collection Summary

Title: Robert L. Carter Papers

Span Dates: 1941-2006

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1969-2004)

ID No.: MSS81818

Creator: Carter, Robert L., 1917-2012

Extent: 10,000 items ; 30 containers ; 11.8 linear feet ; 20 digital files (282.5 MB)

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Civil rights lawyer and judge. Correspondence, memoranda, legal cases, speeches, writings, subject files, newspaper clippings, ephemera, biographical material, oral history interviews, photographs, notes, and research material relating primarily to Carter's career after 1968.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Carter, Robert L., 1917-2012.

Organizations

Attica Correctional Facility.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

New York (State). Special Commission on Attica.

Poletti Freidin Prashker Feldman & Gartner.

United States. District Court (New York : Southern District)

Subjects

African Americans--Societies, etc.

Civil rights--United States.

Correctional institutions--New York (State)--Attica.

Practice of law--New York (State)--New York.

Prison riots--New York (State)--Attica.

Occupations

Jurists.

Lawyers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Robert L. Carter, civil rights lawyer and judge, were given to the Library of Congress by Carter in 1992 and 1993 with additional material received in 2010. Oral history interviews were received from Enid Gort in 2012.

Processing History

Part I of the papers of Robert L. Carter was arranged and described in 1995. The finding aid was revised in 2009. In 2010 the collection was expanded and the finding aid revised to include Part II. In 2014 additional oral history transcripts were inserted in the Miscellany series of Part II, and the finding aid was revised again to reflect the additional material and to include a description of previously undescribed digital collection material.

Transfers

Audiotapes have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of the Robert L. Carter Papers.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the [NAACP](#) and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert L. Carter in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Robert L. Carter are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Digital Format

Digital files were received as part of the papers of Robert L. Carter. Reference copies were created from the original digital media. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for more information.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Roman numeral designating the Part followed by a colon and container or digital ID number, Robert L. Carter Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1917, Mar. 11	Born, Careyville, Fla.
1937	A.B., Lincoln University, Lincoln University, Pa.
1940	LL.B., Howard University, Washington, D.C.
1941	LL.M., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1941-1944	Served in U.S. Army Air Corps
1944	Legal assistant, NAACP
1945	Admitted to New York Bar Assistant special counsel, NAACP
1946	Married Gloria Pamela Spencer (died 1971)
1956-1968	General counsel, NAACP
1969-1972	Partner, Poletti Freidin Prashker Feldman & Gartner
1971-1972	Member, New York State Commission on Attica, investigating the riots at the state prison in Attica, N.Y.

1972-1986	Appointed U.S. district judge, Southern District of New York, by President Richard M. Nixon
1987-2012	Senior judge
2012, Jan. 3	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

Part I of the papers of Robert Lee Carter (1917-2012) spans the years circa 1960-1993 and consists of correspondence, case files, hearing transcripts, speeches, and writings. The focus is on the hearings of the New York State Special Commission on Attica, to which Carter was appointed to investigate the riots at the state prison in Attica, New York. Correspondence and other material relate to his work as general counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Part II of the papers spans the years, 1941-2006, with the bulk of the material dating from 1969 to 2004. The papers are organized into the following series: Cases, General Correspondence, Subject File, Speeches and Writings File, Miscellany, and Digital Files.

The Cases represent opinions rendered by Carter as a United States district judge, many of which also appeared in the *New York Law Journal*. Other material retained with the cases includes notes, memoranda, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and communications with other judges. Prominent among the cases are *Bery v. City of New York* and *Prisco v. New York*. The *Westminster School District v. Mendez* case was argued by Carter as an attorney in 1946.

The General Correspondence is organized into an alphabetical file and a reading file, with both comprised of correspondence with friends, family, associates, and organizations. The reading file, however, also covers legal cases handled by Poletti Freidin Prashker Feldman & Gartner, the law firm in which Carter was a partner from 1969 until 1972.

The Subject File highlights Carter's career with articles written about him, biographical material, and Carter's work with various organizations, panels, and persons. Included in the series is material relating to his friends and colleagues Derrick A. Bell and Kenneth Bancroft Clark, his involvement with the NAACP especially during the resignation of the entire legal staff in 1968 over an article written by Lewis M. Steel, and his work on the New York State Special Commission on Attica investigating the prison riots at Attica, New York, in 1971.

The Speeches and Writings File is organized into a speeches and speaking engagements file and a writings file covering Carter's career especially for the years 1968-1972. The speeches and speaking engagements file includes oral history interviews, award presentations, celebratory dinners, and statements as well as speeches. Oral history interviews are also found in the Miscellany series. Remarks are not present for every event. Of interest in the writings file is Carter's first attempt at a memoir, "Trench Warfare: The Enduring Effort to Achieve Racial Justice Through Law"; the unpublished "Law and the Black Community: A Profile in Failure and Frustration"; and his master's thesis from 1941, "The Three Freedoms." He also wrote many articles on civil rights as related to education, law, housing, and employment.

The Miscellany series is comprised mostly of research material and legal briefs collected by Carter, and oral history interviews.

The Digital Files are comprised of text documents relating to *Bery v. City of New York* and *QVC Network v. Christiana Sportswear*.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two parts containing seven series:

- Part I, circa 1960-1993

Part II:

- Cases, 1946-2006
- General Correspondence, 1968-2002

- Subject File, 1946-2004
- Speeches and Writings File, 1941-2005
- Miscellany, 1945-1996
- Digital Files, 1995-1996

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX I:1-I:7

Part I, circa 1960-1993

Biographical material, legal cases, correspondence, transcripts of individual hearings, subject files, and speeches and writings.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX II:1-3

Part II: Cases, 1946-2006

Legal cases heard or argued by Carter including printed decisions, notes, memoranda, correspondence, newspaper clippings, digital files, and documents printed from the digital files.

Arranged alphabetically by name of case or type of material.

BOX II:4-8

Part II: General Correspondence, 1968-2002

BOX II:4-6

Alphabetical File, 1968-2002

Incoming and outgoing correspondence with friends, family, associates, and organizations.

Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically with unidentified items at the end.

BOX II:6-8

Reading File, 1969-1972

Outgoing correspondence file created by Carter while in private law practice.

Arranged chronologically by year and therein in reverse chronological order.

BOX II:8-16

Part II: Subject File, 1946-2004

Biographical material, information about organizations and other persons, articles about Carter, newspaper clippings, photographs, trip file, notes, and printed matter.

Arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, and topic or by type of material.

BOX II:16-18

Part II: Speeches and Writings File, 1941-2005

BOX II:16-18

Speeches and Speaking Engagements, 1954-2005

Speeches, interviews, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and background information.

Arranged chronologically by date of event.

BOX II:18-21

Writings, 1941-1998

Articles, book reviews, books, an unpublished memoir, a master's thesis, background information, newspaper clippings, drafts, and correspondence.

Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and therein by title or topic. Articles are arranged chronologically.

BOX II:21-23

Part II: Miscellany, 1945-1996

Legal briefs, fragments and notes, transcripts of interviews, and research material.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

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Digital Files, 1995-1996

Text documents relating to *Bery v. City of New York* and *QVC Network v. Christiana Sportswear*.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed. The series contains 20 files (282.5 MB) and contains text documents.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX I:1-I:7	Part I, circa 1960-1993 Biographical material, legal cases, correspondence, transcripts of individual hearings, subject files, and speeches and writings. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX I:1	Biographical material, 1968-1993
BOX I:1	Cases
BOX I:1	Civilian Complaint Review Board of the Police Department of the City of New York, <i>Clarke against Ambrose</i> , 1969
BOX I:1	Hearings (2 folders)
BOX I:1	Miscellaneous
BOX I:1	Statements
BOX I:1	Miscellaneous
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BOX I:1	1968
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BOX I:2	1969-1993
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BOX I:2	"Decent Housing for All" campaign, New York, N. Y., 1966
BOX I:2	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 1979
BOX I:2	NAACP tribute to Carter, 1988
BOX I:3	New York State Special Commission on Attica, 1972
BOX I:3	Interviews (2 vols.)
BOX I:4	Public hearings
BOX I:4	Apr. 12-17 (2 vols.)
BOX I:5	Apr. 18-21 (2 vols.)
BOX I:6	Apr. 24-27 (2 vols.)
BOX I:7	Apr. 28-May 10 (2 vols.)
BOX I:7	Report

Part I, circa 1960-1993

Container

Contents

BOX I:7	Speeches and writings, circa 1960-1990, undated
BOX II:1-3	Part II: Cases, 1946-2006 Legal cases heard or argued by Carter including printed decisions, notes, memoranda, correspondence, newspaper clippings, digital files, and documents printed from the digital files. Arranged alphabetically by name of case or type of material.
BOX II:1	Acordia Northeast v. Thesseus Int'l Asset Fund, 2002-2003
BOX II:1	Alesayi Beverage Corp. v. Canada Dry Corp., 1995-1996
BOX II:1	Anglo Am. Ins. Co. v. CalFed, 1996
BOX II:1	Ask Technologies v. Cablescope, 2003
BOX II:1	Barcia v. Sitkin, 2003-2005
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BOX II:1	Bucorp v. Metro-north Commutal R.R., 1992
BOX II:1	Capruso v. Hartford Fin. Servs. Group, 2003
BOX II:1	Cartier v. Deziner Wholesale, 2000
BOX II:1	Cavendish Traders v. Nice Skate Shoes, 2000
BOX II:1	Central Nat'l-Gottesman v. M.V. "Gertrude Oldendorff," 2002
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BOX II:1	Costa v. SIB Mortgage Group, 2002
BOX II:1	Cullen v. Fliegner, 1994
BOX II:1	Dawson Indus. v. Affiliated FM Ins. Co., 1992
BOX II:1	Duncan v. Unity Life & Accident Ins. Ass'n, 2003
BOX II:1	ESI Montgomery County v. Montenay Int'l Corp., 1996
BOX II:1	Economist Newspaper v. American Economist, 1994
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BOX II:2	Glotzman v. Retail, Wholesale & Chain Store Food Employees, Local 338, 2002
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BOX II:2	Gross v. Bare Escentuals, 2005
BOX II:2	Gurry v. Merck & Co., 2003
BOX II:2	Hangzhou Silk Import & Export Corp. v. P. C. B. Int'l Indus., 2002
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Part II: Cases, 1946-2006

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BOX II:2	LaSalle Bank Nat'l Ass'n v. American Securization Corp., 2005-2006
BOX II:2	Manning Int'l v. Home Shopping Network, 2001
BOX II:2	Marvullo v. Gruner & Jahr AG & Co., 2000-2001
BOX II:2	Mason Tenders Dist. Council Welfare Fund v. Van San Constr. Corp., 2004
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BOX II:2	Modern Settings v. Prudential-Bache Sec., 1990-1992
BOX II:2	Nelson v. Barnhardt, 2003
BOX II:2	New York City Health & Hosps. Corp. v. Spectrum Medical Leasing, 2004
BOX II:2	New York State Nat'l Org. for Women v. Pataki, 1998-2003
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BOX II:2	Ouedraogo v. Surso Assocs., 2005
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BOX II:2	Prisco v. New York, 1996
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BOX II:3	Saunders v. Port Auth., 2004
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BOX II:3	Selby v. Principal Mut. Life Ins. Co., 2000-2003
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BOX II:4-8 **Part II: General Correspondence, 1968-2002**

BOX II:4-6 **Alphabetical File, 1968-2002**

Incoming and outgoing correspondence with friends, family, associates, and organizations. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically with unidentified items at the end.

BOX II:4	A-G, 1969-2002, undated (8 folders)
BOX II:5	H-R, 1968-2001, undated (7 folders)
BOX II:6	S-Z, 1969-1999, undated (4 folders)
BOX II:6	Unidentified, 1976, 1984, 1990, undated

BOX II:6-8 **Reading File, 1969-1972**

Outgoing correspondence file created by Carter while in private law practice. Arranged chronologically by year and therein in reverse chronological order.

Part II: General Correspondence, 1968-2002

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BOX II:6	1969 (3 folders)
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BOX II:8-16	Part II: Subject File, 1946-2004 Biographical material, information about organizations and other persons, articles about Carter, newspaper clippings, photographs, trip file, notes, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person, organization, and topic or by type of material.
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BOX II:8	Articles about Carter and mentions
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BOX II:9	1985-2002
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Part II: Subject File, 1946-2004

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BOX II:15	Notes, 1971-1972
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BOX II:16	Photographs, 1979, undated
BOX II:16	Telephone message register, 1972
BOX II:16	Trip file
BOX II:16	Africa, 1974
BOX II:16	Alaska, 1987
BOX II:16	China, 1981
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BOX II:16-18	Speeches and Speaking Engagements, 1954-2005 Speeches, interviews, newspaper clippings, ephemera, and background information. Arranged chronologically by date of event.
BOX II:16	1954-1970 (14 folders)
BOX II:17	1971-1994 (22 folders)
BOX II:18	1995-2005, undated (20 folders)
BOX II:18-21	Writings, 1941-1998 Articles, book reviews, books, an unpublished memoir, a master's thesis, background information, newspaper clippings, drafts, and correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by type of writing and therein by title or topic. Articles are arranged chronologically.
BOX II:18	Articles

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<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX II:19	<i>A.C.L.U. Guide to Your Rights</i> , "The Right to Equal Educational Opportunity," 1969-1970
BOX II:19	<i>The American Negro Reference Book</i> , foreword, 1972
BOX II:19	<i>Justice: The Crisis of Law, Order and Freedom in America</i> , review, 1970
BOX II:20	"Law and the Black Community: A Profile in Failure and Frustration"
BOX II:20	Chapter 1: Search for Equal Education
BOX II:20	Background information and notes, 1955-1959, 1968-1970, undated (2 folders)
BOX II:20	Drafts, circa 1970
BOX II:20	Chapter 2: The Quest for Decent Shelter, 1969-1970, undated
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BOX II:20	Synopses, circa 1970
BOX II:20	<i>Politics of Southern Equality: Law and Social Change in a Mississippi County</i> , review, 1970
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BOX II:21	"The Three Freedoms," master's thesis, 1941
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BOX II:21	Legal briefs, 1967-1972
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	Robert Carter Project, transcripts, 1992-1993 (2 folders)
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Part II: Miscellany, 1945-1996

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BOX II:23

1987, 1993-1996, undated

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Digital Files, 1995-1996

Text documents relating to *Bery v. City of New York* and *QVC Network v. Christiana Sportswear*.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed. The series contains 20 files (282.5 MB) and contains text documents.

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Cases

Bery v. City of New York, 1996 *See also Container II:1, same heading*

Digital ID: mss81818_39_1

Digital ID: mss81818_39_2

Digital ID: mss81818_39_3

Digital ID: mss81818_39_4

QVC Network v. Christiana Sportswear, 1995 *See also Container II:2, same heading*

Digital ID: mss81818_39_1