

A3440 Ernest Cole, Photographic collection and Papers, 1960s-1970s

Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2019

9 archival boxes, 8 larger photographic boxes, negatives and contact sheets

INTRODUCTION

The collection contains the photographic work of the South African photographer Ernest Cole, some of which culminated in the iconic book "House of Bondage", published in 1967. Also included are his notes, correspondence and research material.

Deposited by the Ernest Cole Family Trust in 2019.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

Ernest Cole (1940-1990) was born as Ernest Levi Tsoloane Kole, in Eersterust, Pretoria. He joined the DRUM group of journalists, and thereafter started working as a freelance photographer. In 1966 he eventually decided to leave South Africa, as his work and movements became increasingly restricted by Apartheid laws. He managed to take with him a body of work which he had collected, including his negatives, which he used for the book "House of Bondage", published in New York in 1967, and one year later in London. He continued living and working in the USA, where he received a grant from the Ford Foundation to support a photographic project mainly on Afro-American issues and race relations in the USA. He also travel and lived in Sweden. He died from cancer in a hospital in New York in 1990.

See also <https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/society-arts-culture/ernest-cole-rediscovered-archive-apartheid-black-history/>

Publication:

"House of bondage", Ernest Cole (photographs) and Thomas Flaherty (text), New York : Random House, 1967

COLLECTION

A PERSONAL PAPERS, 1960s-1970s

A1 Correspondence, 1967-1969, 1f

Including copies and original letters from Struan Robertson; various persons acknowledging receipt of "House of Bondage"; typed copy of a letter by Ernest Cole to The New York Times, pointing out corrections to the article "A South African talks about U.S.", 12 December 1967; references by various entities, photo studios and journalists, including Magnum, Life, Random House and The Ford Foundation; typed copy of a letter by Ernest Cole to The Ford Foundation re. his application for a grant, 17 September 1968; typed and signed letter by Ernest Cole on his letterhead, written to Camera Mainichi magazine in Japan, 25 October 1968; permission given by Ernest Cole to the UN Public Information Section, to use photographs from "House of Bondage"; correspondence with John Hillelson, Magnum agent for Ernest Cole in the UK.

- A2 News clips about Ernest Cole, 1967/68, 1f
Articles about Ernest Cole after he settled in the US and book reviews of "House of Bondage", after it was published in 1967.
- A3 House of Bondage, Research and Book project
- A3.1 Notes, 1f
- A3.2 Research material, sorted, 1960s
Ernest Cole collected background information for each of the chapters in the book and placed them in folders, which he labelled "66" and according to subject matter. Included are newspaper clips, some with his own photographs, brochures, typed notes. He also typed up the captions and placing of images in the book. Each 'main' file seemed to contain the research material and an inserted file with the contact sheets. The original order and files were retained and correspond with the numbering of the negative and contact sheets - please refer to section B - South African Photographic work, for contact sheets and negatives. However, the final book chapters were laid out in a slightly different order.
- A3.2.1 Subject list
Listing of subject matter, from 66-1 to 66-19, which also relate to the contact sheets and the files with research material.
- A3.2.2 Migration Mine labour, no. 66-1, 1f
Included amongst others: 'Africa South in Exile' April-June 1961; blank and completed forms of labour contracts with Conditions of Employment; "The gold of migrant labour..." by Ruth First, 1961; The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) Agreement and Contract of employment.
- A3.2.3 "Whites" only, no. 66-2
Typescript article about race relations in the Pretoria suburb of Riverside, following a DRUM article "Black and White live side by side", written by Casey Motsisi and pictures by Ernest Cole, including the original DRUM article, May 1962; captions for images, originally entitled 'Integration'. 'Main' file seems to be missing.
- A3.2.4 Police & Passes, no. 66-3
Typescript article about Pass Law arrests
- A3.2.5 Black spots, no. 66-4
Notes, newspaper clips about removals in Vryheid; brochure "Bantu Residential Areas in Pretoria", issued by the Department of Non-European Affairs Pretoria City Council, 1965; brochure "Activities of the Non-European Affairs Department" Johannesburg, 1964.
- A3.2.6 Train congest, no. 66-5
Newspaper article about train commuting, Rand Daily Mail, 1963; typescript about train overcrowding; photo captions; .
- A3.2.7 Cheap servant, no. 66-6
File is labelled "Boys meat". Including notes; photo captions; Lionel Forman anniversary booklet, with introduction by Ray Alexander, undated, incomplete; newspaper clips

- A3.2.8 Poverty (Artificial), no. 66-7
File is labelled "Below the breadline". Notes and newspaper clips, including "Poverty - like daily grind - remains, by Jill Chisholm and photographs by Ernest Cole, Mamelodi, undated
- A3.2.9 Education for servitude, no. 66-8
File is labelled "Education for Bantu". Notes, typescripts and photo captions.
- A3.2.10 Heirs of poverty, no. 66-9
Newspaper clips relating to crime.
- A3.2.11 Shebeens, no. 66-10
Newspaper clips; captions for images; typescript written and signed by Can Themba about shebeens and liquor law in South Africa, undated.
- A3.2.12 Bantu beer, no. 66-11
Folder empty.
- A3.2.13 Hospitals, no. 66-12
Newspaper clips with photographs by Ernest Cole about the Pretoria Non-European Hospital.
- A3.2.14 Zion, no. 66-13
Notes, typescripts, captions for images.
- A3.2.15 Catholic missionary, no. 66-14
Folder empty.
- A3.2.16 Medicine/Priestess, no. 66-15
File is labelled "Ancestral worship". Newspaper clip "Young woman prospers as witchdoctor" with photographs by Ernest Cole, written by Joseph Lelyveld for The New York Times, 14 November 1965
- A3.2.17 Black Ingenuity, no. 66-16
Typescripts; newspaper clips, one of these mentioning the last coffee cart being forcibly removed by the police.
- A3.2.18 Numbers racket, no. 66-17
Article about Fah-Fee, with photographs by Ernest Cole, published in 'Zonk', April 1963
- A3.2.19 Native middle class, no. 66-18
Including notes; newspaper clips "Life is so dull for the middle classes", 1963, and "Haven of new African middle class" with photographs of modern houses in Dube/Soweto, and of Johanna Mabuza in their double-storey home in Dube; "Coming of Age conference" of the National Council of African Women, 1937-1958, with congratulatory message by Rev. ZR Mahabane, and by Madie Hall Xuma; "This is apartheid" published by Christian Action, with forewords by Albert Lutuli and Alan Paton; typescript of the Presidential Address at the Conference of the National Council of African Women, December 1965
- A3.2.20 Banishment, no. 66-19

Newspaper clips; notes; typescript. Also included a manuscript entitled "The Banished", page 1-37, no author, possibly 1965, with red footnotes referring to Hansards, Rand Daily Mail and Race Relations News.

A3.2.21 Other
ZCC, empty file

A3.3 Press clippings and publications, South Africa, 1960s
Ernest Cole left the DRUM magazine in 1960, and freelanced for South African newspapers and the Associated Press, which was a first in those days. He was always thinking of making a book. While he was doing smaller projects, or assignments, he considered how they fitted into a wider body of work (Magnum Photos). Therefore these early newspaper clips and publications which he collected around the effects which Apartheid had particularly on black South Africans, led to his book 'House of Bondage', with a number of them also containing his photographs. Again, the original order of the way in which these clippings were received, has been widely retained, i.e. they were not part of the folders in section A3.2.

A3.3.1 Newspaper clips on Education, 1963-1965
Mainly around the subject of 'Bantu Education', some of them from the newspaper 'Spark' and 'Rand Daily Mail', including his photographs; also included a full page article by Anthony Lukas from the New York Times about the daily life of Jimmy Nkosi, published in the Sunday Chronicle, 31 January 1965, possibly with photographs by Ernest Cole.

A3.3.2 Newspaper clips, South Africa general, 1961-66
Contained in an envelope, addressed to Enuga Reddy, at the United Nations, By Hand from Andrew Maguire. The clips cover all spheres of life including music (Dollar Brand, the King Kong band), removals (Vryheid), labour, beer brewing, race relations within the Catholic and Anglican Church.

A3.3.3 Newspaper clips, South Africa general, 1960s
Newspaper clips including education, banishment, Group Areas Act; also included a brochure "man of the people... chief A. Lutuli", published by Afrika Publications, Johannesburg

A3.3.4 Newspaper clips, international press, 1960s
General about Apartheid probably collected after his departure from South Africa; clips about the Jews in South Africa; article from Anti-Apartheid News, containing his photographs, March 1967.

A4 Life in the USA, 1960s-1970s
Newspaper clips, magazines, some with notes spanning a wide spectrum of topics. As noted by his agency Magnum Photos: "impressions are of a guy who's enjoying being in a new city, discovering new people with new attitudes, even if his notes betray sarcasm toward some of the experience. He was clearly interested in aspects of New York life that were taboo in apartheid-era South Africa. There are plenty of pictures of racially mixed couples, anti-government protests and of the burgeoning pleasure industry.

A4.1 Newspaper clips, end-1960s, 1f
Some with notes by Ernest Cole, mainly on Afro-American issues and race relations in the USA.

A4.2 Magazines, end-1960s-1970, 1box
Some with notes by Ernest Cole, mainly on Afro-American issues and race relations in the USA.
Including: Life magazine, Look magazine, Ebony, The New York Times magazine

A4.3 Pamphlets, 1f
Mainly relating to Harlem

- A4.4 Newspaper clips, general, 1960s-1970s, 1f
- A4.5 Magazines, general, 1960s-1970s, 1 box
- A4.6 Newspaper clips, Pleasure industry, end-1960s, mainly 1971, 1f
Including aspects of Women's liberation and pleasure industry
- A4.7 Pamphlets and advertisements, 1f
- A4.8 Magazines, pleasure industry, 1970/71, 1box

- A5 Other items, 2 reel, vinyl 7"
Including interviews conducted by Ernst Cole of Gideon Nxumalo, and a ship servant, no transcripts; a Vinyl containing 'Horace Faith, Black pearl / help Me Help Myself, Hotshot' / Sonet Records, licensed by Trojan, 1970.
Stored in photographic box in Media room. (Also included memory stick with images from House of Bondage)

- B SOUTH AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK, 1960s, 5 boxes
The images of Ernest Cole were published in various South African newspapers and magazines such as DRUM, as well as for the Associated Press, for which he worked as a freelance photographer. Included are the negative and contact sheets, as well as some photographic prints of Ernest Cole's body of work before leaving South Africa in 1966.

All negative and contact sheets have been digitised. They are stored in the Media Room.

- B1 House of Bondage images, 103, 1967
These images were published in the book "House of Bondage". Each of the photographs originate from one of the folders in B2.1-24, from which they were extracted. The images which were selected for the book are marked on the contact sheet and the negative sheet. The photographs displayed here have been uploaded in the order in which they appear in each chapter of the book. The description of each of the images in the book has been used verbatim.

The photographs which were selected for "House of Bondage" also form part of the so called 'Portfolio folder', see section B1A.
Not all of the individual photographs which were used in the book have been digitized yet, which is indicated in each of the item description.
See also B2 in this section for the no.66 negative sheets.
- B1.1 The Mines
The chapter relates to the experiences of migrant workers, who were recruited from Southern Africa to work in the gold mines on the Witwatersrand, Transvaal.
- B1.2 Police & Passes
The chapter demonstrates the implications of the infamous "Pass laws", which were used for the administration and influx control for Africans into urban areas.
- B1.3 Black Spots
The chapter documents the removals of "black spots", which were areas occupied by Africans, into which whites wished to expand.
- B1.4 Nightmare Rides
The chapter relates the nightmare of train commuters in Johannesburg.
- B1.5 The Cheap Servant
The chapter tells the story of domestic workers.
- B1.6 For Whites Only

The images in this chapter demonstrate how Apartheid was effected in everyday life particularly through signage. There are no further descriptions for each of the images, as they are self-explanatory.

- B1.7 Below Subsistence
The chapter contains images documenting Africans' lives, many of which are marked by hunger, desperation and poverty .
- B1.8 Education for Servitude
The images in this chapter are documenting the poor environment and standard of schools under Apartheid's Bantu Education.
- B1.9 Hospital Care
The chapter are documenting the effects of segregated health care.
- B1.10 Heirs of Poverty
The chapter covers the resulting effects of poverty, showing street children such as the boy 'Papa', and crime in the streets of Johannesburg.
- B1.11 Shebeens & Bantu Beer
The images in this chapter cover the devastating impact of drinking in shebeens and the consumption of Government-produced Bantu beer, on African communities.
- B1.12 The Consolation of Religion
The images in this chapter cover the ambiguous relationship between Christianity and its missionaries, and African ancestral belief systems in the African communities.
- B1.13 African Middle Class
The chapter's image describe the lives and structure of a relatively privileged African middle class.
- B1.14 Banishment
The images cover one of Apartheid's cruelest punishments - the banishment of people to remotest and poor areas.
- B1A Other Portfolio folder images, 10 images, 1967
The photographs which were selected for "House of Bondage" also form part of the so called 'Portfolio folder'. But over and above the folder also contains other images, 184 in total, which were found to be an outstanding selection from Ernst Cole's South African body of photographic work.

There is no further description for the uploaded images yet, and the digitization of the remaining images from the Portfolio folder remains work in progress. However, all contact sheets in the Portfolio folder have been digitized.

All stored in Media Room.

- B2 Photographic folders, 66-numbered, 15 folders with 291 negative and contact sheets
These negative and contact sheets were numbered 66/1-24 by Ernest Cole. The categories do not necessarily correspond with the names given in his folders under section A3.2. Therefore only the numbering will be provided in the listing below. They exclude the negative and contact sheets which are contained in the Portfolio folder in section B1.

All negative and contact sheets have been digitised. The physical negative and contact sheets are stored in the Media Room.

- B2.1 Number 66-1, 43 negative and contact sheets
B2.2 Number 66-2, 19 negative and contact sheets
B2.3 Number 66-3, 8 negative and contact sheets
B2.4 Number 66-4, 18 negative and contact sheets
B2.5 Number 66-5, 9 negative and contact sheets
B2.6 Number 66-6, 21 negative and contact sheets

- B2.7 Number 66-7, 19 negative and contact sheets
- B2.8 Number 66-8, 14 negative and contact sheets
- B2.9 Number 66-9, 14 negative and contact sheets
- B2.10 Number 66-10, 5 negative and contact sheets
- B2.11 Number 66-11, 6 negative and contact sheets
- B2.12 Number 66-12, 16 negative and contact sheets
- B2.13 Number 66-13, 5 negative and contact sheets
- B2.14 Number 66-14, 11 negative and contact sheets
- B2.15 Number 66-15, 14 negative and contact sheets
- B2.16 Number 66-16, 21 negative and contact sheets
- B2.17 Number 66-17, 7 negative and contact sheets
- B2.18 Number 66-18, 15 negative and contact sheets
- B2.19 Number 66-19, 8 negative and contact sheets
- B2.20 Number 66-20, 7 negative and contact sheets
- B2.21 Number 66-21, 7 negative and contact sheets
- B2.22 Number 66-22, 3 negative sheets
- B2.23 Number 66-23, 1 negative sheet
- B2.24 Number 66-24, 1 negative sheet

- B3 Other negative and contact sheets folders, 3 folders with 24 negative sheets and 64 contact sheets

 This section remains work in progress, as most of these contact sheets still have to be matched to the respective negative sheets.
- B3.1 Various items, 7 negative and contact sheets
 Including portraits of Ernest Cole himself; images from the Rivonia trial depicting Winnie Mandela and family members; other including Matanzima arriving at a train station for a meeting.
- B3.2 ZCC, 17 negative and contact sheets
- B3.3 Contact sheets without negatives, 40 contact sheets
 24 of these have been scanned. This section remains work in progress, as these contact sheets still have to be matched to the negative sheets in section B3.4.
- B3.4 Negative sheets without contact sheets, 4 folders
 A number of these negative sheets will not have contact sheets.
- B3.4.1 Negative sheets without contact sheets numbered 1-90, 3 folders with 90 negative sheets
- B3.4.2 Negative sheets with odd or no numbers, 1 folder with 18 negative sheets
- B4 Exhibition prints, Hasselblad Foundation, 6 photographic boxes
 Exhibition prints made by the Hasselblad Foundation, resin coated, 12x16 inch. Including duplicates.

 Stored in photographic boxes in Media room.
- C USA PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK
 The photographs in this section were created by Ernest Cole during his life in the USA.
- C1 Contact sheets, 1f
 Life in the USA, including amongst others: photos of the boxer Muhammad Ali, the singer Aretha Franklin, and the South African Jazz artist Hugh Masekela who was also in exile in the USA. Stored in Media Room.
- C1.1 Contact sheets, no. B77 and B49

C1.2 Contact sheets, no. A7 and B67

C2 Vintage prints, no description, undated, 22 photographs
Life of Afro-Americans in the rural South, but also urban settings. Prints on silver bromide, 11x14 inch.
Interleaved, in photographic box. Stored in Media Room