



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Frank Wuttge Jr. research files**

1972-1979

Sc MG 645

Home to Harlem Project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

## Summary

**Creator:** Wuttge, Frank, Jr., 1901-1985

**Title:** Frank Wuttge Jr. research files

**Date:** 1972-1979

**Size:** 0.21 linear feet (1 box)

**Revision History:** This finding aid was updated by Allison Hughes.

**Abstract:** The Frank Wuttge Jr. research file is comprised of material Wuttge gathered about Mary Elizabeth Bowser and the Bowser family. Included are research notes, correspondence with researchers, publishers, television and movie producers and others regarding documentation about Bowser's life. There are also committee materials and the 1977 tree dedication ceremony announcement. Wuttge's interest in Arthur Schomburg and the Schomburg family is documented by letters from Wuttge to Schomburg biographer James Egert Allen, notes on the Schomburg family, and the origin and history of the surname. There is also printed material regarding Alexandre Dumas and other prominent black men.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Frank Wuttge Jr. research files, Sc MG 645, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

### Related Materials:

See the Frank Wuttge papers (MssCol 3401) in the Manuscripts & Archives Division, New York Public Library.

## Creator History

Frank Wuttge, Jr., son of the German photographer Frank Wuttge, was the secretary/historian of the 71st Regiment Veteran Association and president of the Civil War Memorial Committee. A member of

the Mary Elizabeth Bowser Tree Dedication Committee, Wuttge led the effort to pay tribute to Bowser with a tree dedication at West Farms Soldiers Cemetery in the Bronx.

Mary Elizabeth Bowser served as a Union spy during the Civil War in the Confederate White House of President Jefferson Davis. Born into slavery on a plantation outside of Richmond, Virginia in 1839 to the Van Lew family, she was freed in 1851 by Elizabeth Van Lew, daughter of her owner John Van Lew and a Quaker abolitionist. Bowser was sent to Philadelphia by Elizabeth Van Lew where she received her education, but was summoned back to Richmond to assist Van Lew, a Northern sympathizer and Union spy. Van Lew's contacts placed Bowser in the Virginia home of Jefferson Davis, where she labored as an uneducated, domestic servant under the alias "Ellen Bond." She passed along Confederate strategic and military plans to Van Lew who in turn sent the information to Union military commanders. The collection also contains information on Arthur A. Schomburg and the Schomburg family.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Frank Wuttge Jr. research file is comprised of material Wuttge gathered about Mary Elizabeth Bowser and the Bowser family. Included are research notes, correspondence with researchers, publishers, television and movie producers and others regarding documentation about Bowser's life. There are also committee materials and the 1977 tree dedication ceremony announcement. Wuttge's interest in Arthur Schomburg and the Schomburg family is documented by letters from Wuttge to Schomburg biographer James Egert Allen, notes on the Schomburg family, and the origin and history of the surname. There is also printed material regarding Alexandre Dumas and other prominent black men.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American women  
Spies -- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

### **Geographic Names**

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Participation, African American  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Participation, Female

### **Names**

Bowser, Mary Elizabeth, c. 1840-  
Schomburg, Arthur Alfonso, 1874-1938  
Wuttge, Frank, Jr., 1901-1985  
Civil War Memorial Committee (Bronx, N.Y.)  
Mary Elizabeth Bowser Tree Dedication Committee

## Container List

Mary Elizabeth Bowser 1972-1979

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence re: Mary Elizabeth Bowser 1977-1979
- b. 1 f. 2 Research Files - Mary Elizabeth Bowser 1972-1978

Arthur Alfonso Schomburg 1978

- b. 1 f. 3 Correspondence re: Arthur A. Schomburg 1978
- b. 1 f. 4 Research Files - Arthur A. Schomburg 1978