

Walter
Forsberg

Hortense Beveridge and Bedford- Stuyvesant Youth in Action

Hortense “Tee” Beveridge (1923-93) was a worker in American film culture. As a film editor in the 1940s and 50s she made television commercials in the nascent heyday of New York’s TV Film industry by day, and sponsored films for progressive African American and communist organizations by night. The first black woman admitted to the Local 771 union for motion picture film editors during the mid-1950s, Beveridge later cut featurette “making-of” documentaries about commercial fare like *Bullitt* (1968), *Mean Streets* (1973), and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), while continuing to labor in her “mid-night hours” on independently-produced African American works like Amiri Baraka’s *New-Ark* (1968).

From 1965-66 Beveridge was the Director of Film and Photography for the Brooklyn-based community group and career advancement organization Bedford-Stuyvesant Youth in Action, for which she mentored young people by teaching skills in the camera arts. Among those she mentored through Youth in Action were future members of the Kamoinge group of photographers, including James Mannas, Jr.

The frame reproductions included here are from 16mm camera original color reversal footage Tee filmed with unknown apprentice assistants of the 1965 Brooklyn Olympics—a week-long youth sporting event held at Bed-Stuy’s St. John’s Park. According to the *New York Recorder*, “more than 2,500 boys and girls participated in this Youth in Action athletic program which... included swimming, basketball, track and field, baseball, softball, boxing and football tournaments, and demonstrations in karate-judo, fencing and drum and bugle corps exhibitions.”¹

1. Jesse Brown, “Jesse Brown’s Sports Whirl,” in *New York Recorder*, (September 11, 1965), 12.

The community-based documentary filmmaking Beveridge spearheaded also chronicled Brooklyn neighborhood parades, Youth in Action cultural arts programs like the African Heritage Exposition for



Hortense Beveridge. Collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Pearl Bowser, Courtesy Pete Beveridge, 2012.79.1.104.1ab

1965 Brooklyn Olympics. Collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Pearl Bowser, Courtesy Pete Beveridge, 2012.79.1.104.1ab



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the Closing Day Ceremonies of the New York World's Fair, holiday church parties (attended by Jacqueline Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy), and the local youth marching band, The Carter Cadets.

Anticipating more well-known films of the subsequent Black Arts movement and television documentary journalism of the later 1960s,

Dancer performing at the African Heritage Exposition, October 17, 1965. Collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Pearl Bowser, Courtesy Pete Beveridge, 2012.79.1.104.1ab



Carter Cadets. Collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Pearl Bowser, Courtesy Pete Beveridge, 2012.79.1.104.1ab



movies from Beveridge's early filmmaking oeuvre are exceptional documents of community-mediated self-presentation in the civil rights era and form part of the founding collection of moving images at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

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