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North Carolina
Collection

Harris Family Papers

Title:	Harris Family Papers
Inclusive Dates:	1907-2012
Extent of Materials:	8 Hollinger boxes, 2 oversized boxes, 4 photograph albums, 1 oversized file folder
Location:	Duke Storage, Map Drawer 43
Date of Accession:	December 2014
Donor:	Patricia Murray
Relationship of donor or materials to the DCL/NCR	
Processor:	Kristen Merryman
Description:	
Subject Headings:	Hayes, Roland, 1887--1977--Correspondence.
	Obituaries--North Carolina--Durham County.
	Hillside High School.
	Whitted Junior High School.
	African American jazz musicians.
	African American musicians.
	Family life--North Carolina--Durham.
	Bennett College (Greensboro, N.C.)
	Talladega College.
	North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.
	Harris Family.
Abstract:	
	The Harris Family Papers are a collection of materials gathered together primarily by Mayme Harris Perry documenting her family. The main Harris family members included in the collection are Mayme Harris Perry, her younger brother Johnny Harris, her younger sister Eleta Jean Harris Murray (and Jean's children, Pat, David, and Eleta "Cookie" Murray), and Mayme's parents Charles Harris and Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris. It includes correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, publications, musical compositions, funeral programs, and scrapbooks collected or created over the years by members of the family. The materials document the life of a middle class African- American family in Durham

Scope and Content:	<p>in the 20th century and their connections to other family members and professional colleagues in places including Georgia, Chicago, Boston, and Los Angeles. Charles Harris was the piano player for Roland Hayes (a lyric tenor and composer and the first African-American male concert artist to receive wide acclaim in the United States and abroad), and correspondence with Hayes is included in the collection. Mayme Harris Perry taught English and history at Whitted Junior High School and Hillside High School from the 1950s-1980s, spanning the time of integration for the traditionally all black schools. Materials from those schools is included in the collection. She wrote famous people and politicians asking for photographs to hang on her classroom wall. That correspondence and set of photographs is part of the collection and includes several presidents such as John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Ronald Reagan, as well as people such as Bob Woodward and Mary McLeod Bethune. Her mother, Eleta Atwater Harris worked at the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company for many years and materials from her time there are also included. The collection also includes many materials relating to the family of Mayme's maternal grandparents, John Henry and Mamie Harper Atwater, who settled in Durham at the turn of the 20th century and were instrumental in establishing St. Matthew's C.M.E. Church (a predecessor of Russell Memorial C.M.E. Church) as well as Mayme's paternal grandparents, the Harrises, who lived in Augusta, Georgia, and were quite active in the community there.</p>
Related Materials:	Durham Schools Collection
Restrictions:	This collection is open for research.
Biographical/Historical Note:	<p>Charles Harris was born in 1885 in Augusta, Georgia, the son of James and Elizabeth Johnson Harris. His parents were both very musically inclined and Charles played piano from an early age. He graduated from Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, in 1904 and studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where he met Roland Hayes, a well-known tenor. Harris toured internationally with Hayes from 1911-1916, serving as his piano accompanist, including a performance before England's Queen Victoria. Following his touring career, Harris taught music at many colleges throughout the South. His longest tenure was at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg. After his retirement in 1951, he taught music part time at North Carolina Central University. In 1922, he married Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris in Durham. They had three children, Mayme, Johnny, and Eleta, who were raised in a very musical household, as evidenced by their later career choices. He died at the age of 103 in 1988.</p> <p>Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris was born in 1899 in Elberton, Georgia, to John Henry and Mamie Harper Atwater. The family moved to Durham, North Carolina, when she was young. Georgia attended Durham city schools, including the West End School, and graduated from Paine College in Augusta, GA, in 1919. She returned to Durham and worked for the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company for 37 years. She died in 1965.</p> <p>Charles and Georgia Harris's daughter, Mayme Harris Perry, was born in Durham, North Carolina, in 1924. The family lived at 612 Carr Street at the time, which was directly across from the American Tobacco factory. Mayme graduated from Hillside High School in 1941 and attended Bennett College in Greensboro. She moved back to Durham and taught English and history at Whitted Junior High School and Hillside High School. Her marriage to Robert Perry in 1952 was short lived. She was active in the Durham community, particularly with Russell Memorial C.M.E. Church, of which her grandparents were founding members. Mayme Harris Perry died in 2007.</p> <p>Mayme Harris Perry had two siblings, Johnny Harris (b. 1927), and Eleta Jean Harris Murray (b. 1929) both in Durham. Like their older sister, they graduated from Hillside High School. Both went to Talledaga College after graduation. Johnny had a highly successful career as a jazz musician, traveling the country with groups such as The Cats and the Fiddles and The Ink Spots, playing in front of many well-known people including President Bill Clinton. Johnny died in 2000. Jean Harris married Milo Murray in 1952 in Durham and they moved to Chicago, IL, shortly after. Jean taught music in the Chicago public schools for many years and passed away in 1995. The Murrays had three children, Eleta "Cookie," Patricia "Pat," and David, who passed away in 1982. Pat Murray moved to Durham from Chicago in 2001 to care for her aunt, Mayme Harris Perry. Pat publishes the Durham SkyWriter and is a freelance DJ. Cookie, a stage actress, has a daughter Jihan and continues to live in Chicago.</p>
Condition Notes:	
Organization of Collection:	<p>The collection is organized into two series: Family Papers and Family Photographs. Within the Family Papers series, the materials are organized by the creator or owner of the materials and arranged alphabetically by family member. Within the Family Photographs series, the materials are arranged by the people featured in the photographs as much as possible.</p>

Container List	
	Family Papers
	Charles Harris
Box 1	Birthdays --100th--articles and proclamations, 1985
	Birthdays--100th--cards, 1985
	Birthdays--100th--letters from politicians, 1985
	Birthdays--cards and letters, 1980-1987
	Certificates, 1924-1985
	Correspondence--personal, 1942-1975
	Correspondence--personal--Elizabeth J. Harris, 1942-1946
	Correspondence--personal--Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris, 1919-1953
	Correspondence--professional, 1925-1979
	Durham centennial celebrations, 1953, 1981
	Fisk University and South Carolina State Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1925, 1950-1952, 1974
	Funeral and obituaries, 1988
	Musical compositions, undated
	Newspaper articles, 1932-1987
	Roland Hayes--correspondence, 1919, 1970-1974
	Roland Hayes--memorials, 1977
Box 2	Roland Hayes--performances, 1916-1974
	Roland Hayes--"Reminiscences of My Days with Roland Hayes", 1944
	"The Public Career of Charles Jacob Harris" by Deborah Morton, 1974
	World War II ration books and savings bonds, 1941-1945
	Writings--miscellaneous, 1960-1972, undated
	Writings--"The Confessions of a Ham-Singer", undated
	David Murray
	Funeral program and military certificate, 1976, 1982
	Eleta Jean "Cookie" Murray
	Correspondence and performance materials, 1976-1986
	Eleta Jean Harris Murray
	Certifications and civil service card, 1945-1948
	Compositions, 1965, 1974, undated

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	Correspondence, 1946-1965, undated
	Durham city schools report cards, 1935-1945
	Funeral program, 1995
	Hillside High School class of 1945 graduation, 1945
	Performances, 1943-1981
	Talladega College, 1946-1950, 1978
	Telegrams, 1965
	Wedding materials, 1952
	Elizabeth J. Harris
Box 3	Scrapbook, 1907-1942
Box 4	Harris family history, pages from Harris family Bible, undated
	Memoir, undated
	Writings, undated
	Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris
	Atwater family documents, 1906-1981
	Correspondence, 1917-1965
	Deeds--John Atwater, 1906-1923
	Funeral, 1965
	Miscellaneous, undated
	North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, 1922, 1951, 1956
	Johnny Harris
	Baby book, 1927
	Certificates, 1945, 1981
	Correspondence--personal, 1946-1996
	Correspondence--professional, 1972, 1981
	Durham city schools report cards, 1933-1940
	Funeral, 2000
Box 5	Interviews, 1967-1980
	Military service, 1945-1946
	Performances
	Promotional materials, 1976, undated
	Talladega College, 1949

	Harris Family Papers
	Baby book and birth certificate, 1924
	Community Family Life and Recreation Center at Lyon Park, 2002
	Correspondence--Duke University, 1989
	Correspondence--family, 1934-1945
	Correspondence--family, 1946-1995
	Correspondence--friends, 1962, 1985, undated
	Correspondence--professional, 1969-1973
Box 6	Correspondence--politicians and journalists, 1941-1982
	Correspondence--politicians and journalists, signed photographs (2 folders), 1941-1982
	Durham [includes Trinity College 1920 graduation program, 1953 White Rock Baptist Church brochure, and 2012 election viewing party flyer from Motorco], 1920-2011
	Durham postcards, undated
	Ernie Barnes (artist) catalog, 1979
	Funeral program, 2007
	Marriage documents, 1952
	Publications--"Milestones along the Color Line", 1922
	Publications--"The Crisis," "Every Woman's Magazine", 1926, 1919
	Publications--"The Negro Brings Music", 1938
	Russell Memorial C.M.E. Church, 1949-2012
	School--Bennett College--Alumnae Association, undated
	School--Bennett College--Alumnae Association--17th White Breakfast and Annual Scholarship Fundraiser, 2007
Box 7	School--Bennett College--autograph book, 1942
	School--Bennett College--"Bennett Banner", 1943, 1945
	School--Bennett College--graduation, 1945
	School--Bennett College--report cards, 1941-1945
	School--Delta Sigma Theta , 1950-1953
	School--Durham city schools report cards, 1930-1941
	School--Hillside Class of 1941 reunions, 1947, 1952
	School--"Hillside Chronicle", 1941, October 1943, May 1945
	School--Hillside Park School memory books, 1938-1941
	Teaching awards, 1947-1983
	Teaching--Chicago Teachers College, 1955

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	Teaching--"Salute to Frank Howard Alston" and "Hillside History Book", 1952, 1979
	Teaching--"The Whitted Mirror", June 1954, May 1956, May 1963, June 1975
	Teaching--Student thank-yous, 2003
Box 8	Sympathy cards (2 folders), 2007
	Milo C. Murray
	Funeral program and obituary, 2002
	Extended Harris Family
	Harris family documents (Georgia branch), undated
	Harris family genealogy, 1915, 1992-1997
	Rev. James Harris, undated
	Thomas Harris, undated
	Family Photographs
	Durham--Schools
	General Durham photographs--Duke University
	General Durham photographs--Harris family
	General Durham photographs--Herald and Sun newspapers
Box 9	Album--compiled by Emma Harris, sister of Charles Harris. Includes photographs of Charles Harris's 100th birthday, general photographs of the Harris and Murray families, 1985-1988
	Wedding album--for Eleta Harris and Milo Murray's wedding on June 28, 1952 and Mayme Harris and Robert Perry's wedding on July 2, 1952, 1952
Box 10	Oversized photographs
	Album--compiled by Emma Harris, sister of Charles Harris. Includes pictures of Shriners in Bronx, NY, a wedding reception, and assorted Harris family photographs taken in Chicago, New York, and North Carolina, 1955-1974
	Album--compiled by Emma Harris, sister of Charles Harris. Includes pictures of the Harris family in New York, Georgia, and North Carolina, circa 1920-1980
	Album--compiled by Emma Harris, sister of Charles Harris. Includes pictures of the Harris family in New York, Georgia, and North Carolina, as well as photographs of the family traveling around the United States, 1929-1983
Box 11	Photographs
	Atwater and Harris extended family photographs, 1896-1947
	Harris family group photographs, 1925-1996
	Georgia Eleta Atwater Harris, 1906-1965
Box 12	Photographs
	Charles Harris, 1914-1988
	Mayme Harris Perry, 1937-1996

Harris Family Papers

Box 13	Photographs
	Johnny Harris, 1940-1997
	Eleta Jean Harris Murray and her family, Milo, David, Pat, and Eleta "Cookie", 1947-1983
Box 14	Photographs
	Eleta "Cookie" Murray, Jihan Murray-Smith, Pat Murray, 1984-2010
	Miscellaneous Harris family friends and relatives, 1910-1997, undated
	Eleanor Roosevelt in Durham, 1945
	Education conference in Washington, D.C., includes photographs of Edward Kennedy, 1977
Oversized Folder	100th birthday greeting for Charles Harris from mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, 1985
	Aerial photograph of American Tobacco factory (Now American Tobacco Campus), ca. 1950
	Charles Harris sympathy card, 1987
	Deed between John and Mamie Atwater and H. G. Foushee, 1910
	Deed between John and Mamie Atwater and R. L. McDougald, 1925
	Diploma, Poro College of Scalp Treatment and Hair Culture, Eleta Harris , 1923
	Durham Alumnae Chapter of Bennett College memorial plaque for Mayme Harris Perry, 2007
	Hillside Chronicle , 1941
	Hillside graduation class of 1945 in Durham Sun, 1945
	Hillside High School diploma, Jean Eleta Harris, 1945
	Hillside High School diploma, John Harris, 1945
	Hillside Park High School diploma, Mayme Harris, 1941
	Johnny Harris scrapbook page, 1967
	Thank you to Johnny Harris for participation in New Orleans World's Fair, 1984

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