

Collection: HARRIS, JAMES HENRY, PAPERS
 Raleigh, Wake County
 1848, 1864-1890, 1967

Physical Description: 30 items; letters, affidavit, petition, charter, circulars, certificates, newspaper clipping; biographical sketch, envelope.

Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. David Henry [Gertrude] Harris, daughter-in-law of James H. Harris, [REDACTED], Raleigh, January, 1967. Additional gift of 3 items from Mrs. Harris via Mrs. James W. [Elizabeth] Reid, [REDACTED], Raleigh March 16, 1970. Biographical sketch received from Elizabeth Balanoff, University of Chicago, 1967.

Description: James Henry Harris (ca. 1830-1891) was a free black in Granville County, where he was apprenticed to an upholsterer and later opened his own business. Leaving North Carolina, he attended school in Oberlin, Ohio, and travelled to Canada and to American Negro settlements in Africa. During the Civil War he was a recruiting officer for Negro troops in the state of Indiana. After the war he returned to North Carolina and became prominent in the Republican Party serving in the state legislature in 1868, 1872, 1883. In Raleigh he was a city alderman, a deputy tax collector, and an original trustee of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church (1868), a trustee of the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and the Blind, and editor of the North Carolina Republican. Harris died suddenly in Washington, D.C. on May 31, 1891. He is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Raleigh with his wife Bettie Miller Harris (d. 1935) and children Florence (d. 1889) and David Henry (d. 1955), husband of Gertrude Harris of Raleigh.

Calendar of Items

March 18, 1848

Affidavit of John Dickinson, Granville County, before justice of the peace that James Harris is a free dark mulatto, ca. 19 years old. Affirmation of justice's office by clerk of superior court.

Calendar of Items (cont'd)

- December 24, 1850 Affirmation of clerk's office by Governor Charles Manly.
- December 23, 1863 Appointment of Harris by adjutant general of Indiana as recruiting officer to raise colored forces for a regiment of infantry in any county of the state.
- August 24, 1864 Appointment of Harris by adjutant general of Indian recruiting officer to enlist colored volunteers in the 7th congressional district under the call for 500,000 men issued July 18, 1864.
- August 31, 1865 Appointment of Harris as a teacher of "Freed People in North Carolina," by the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, Boston, signed by John Parkman and Hannah E. Stevenson.
- January 13, 1867 Appointment of Harris as deputy member of the Grand National Council of the Union League of America with authority to install local and county councils in North Carolina.
- March 26, 1867 Letter from J. M. Edmunds, Grand President of the Union League of America, Washington, D.C. to J. Henry Harris. Enclosures: Charter from Grand Council of the Union League of America to W. W. Holden, J. H. Harris, A. H. Jones, W. W. White, W. R. Richardson, Handy Lockett, C. W. Horner, D. A. Wicker, and Wm. Warwick.
- January 1, 1864 Union League of America, circular letter. Call for political action.
- July 8, 1864 Union League of America, circular letter. Directs information to be sought from delegates to Chicago Convention to insure none are "peace at any price" men. List of questions
- July 8, 1867 Petition to Congress from the officers of the North Carolina State Equal Rights League, "representing the entire colored population," to remove the disabilities of voting and holding office imposed on W. W. Holden by the constitutional amendment and reconstruction acts now in force. Cites Holden's loyalty, etc. S/James H. Harris, president and W. H. Anderson, recording secretary.

Calendar of Items (cont'd)

- May 9, 1868 Statement from Nelson A. Miles, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, North Carolina, Raleigh. Need for private charity to supplement appropriations of Freedmen's Bureau.
- May 12, 1868 Statement from W. W. Holden, Nelson A. Miles, and R.W. Pulliam (President, Raleigh National Bank of N.C.), trustees of the "Boston Fund" for the relief of the destitute and afflicted in N. C. that they have appointed A. W. Tourgee and James H. Harris to visit northern cities and solicit contributions for the fund.
- May 31, 1868 Letter recommending Harris from Charles Scribner, U.S. Senator from Massachusetts.
- June 1, 1868 Letter introducing Harris to Lt. Governor William Claflin, Massachusetts from O. O. Howard, War Department, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Washington, D.C.
- June 8, 1868 Pledges of \$100 for the "Boston Fund" from William Claflin, Thomas Talbot, O. Ames & Sons, and James L. Little & Co., Boston.
- July 13, 1868 Appointment of Harris as a commissioner of City of Raleigh by W. W. Holden.
- August 18, 1869 Certificate of life membership (\$20.00), N. C. Agricultural Society.
- August 8, 1871 Certification of election of S. F. Phillips, R. S. Peny (Penny/Perry?), N. C. Jones, and J. H. Harris as delegates to the [Constitutional] Convention. [Note: However, at the same election on August 3, 1871, the people voted against having a convention to amend the 1868 constitution.]
- December 4, 1872 Governor Tod R. Caldwell, Raleigh. To James H. Harris. Notification of election as elector for state at large, replacing S. F. Phillips, resigned.

Calendar of Items (cont'd)

- March 31, 1873 John Pool, St. Cloud Hotel, Washington, D. C. To James H. Harris. National Labor Union appointing executive officers in each state to extend membership beyond mechanics to all classes of labor. Offers Harris post of executive officer at large in North Carolina.
- June 1, 1875 Appointment of Harris as trustee for N. C. Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, replacing Handy Lockhard not confirmed by the senate. S/Governor C. H. Brogden.
- October 16, 1878 Broadside. "Positive Evidence of J. W. O'Hara's Indignity" [to serve as congressman from the second congressional district]. Affidavit of Ann M. O'Hara before clerk of superior court of Craven County citing his abandonment of her and their child.
- [1878] Broadside. Chairman, Republican Committee. To Republicans of Second Congressional District. Urging voters to support nominee James H. Harris.
- March 16, 1880 John C. Dancy, editor, Tarboro. To James H. Harris, Raleigh. Denies any feeling of hostility for Harris; explains stand on 1878 election; comments on coming Republican presidential convention in Chicago and on possible candidates (Sherman, Grant, Blaine) and his preferences for Buxton (governor), Seymour (attorney general), Settle (vice-president). Refers to Harris's newspaper The Republican as one of the best edited papers run by the party.
- January 22, 1881 Endorsement (Manuscript) of the character of James H. Harris by 64 leading citizens of Raleigh. Also newspaper clipping with list of names, as well as an introduction defending Harris's name from his involvement with Littlefield and Swepson.
- January 3, 1890 North Carolina Republican Association, Washington, D.C. To James H. Harris. Encloses copy of resolutions adopted at meeting of association, s/A. S. Richardson, secretary, citing Harris as one of original organizers of Republican party [in N.C.], leadership in every political contest since 1867, loyalty which has won him a seat in every Republican national convention since the war.
- March 21, 1967 Biographical sketch (3 pp.) of Harris by Elizabeth Balanoff one of seven graduate seminar students who accompanied Dr. John Hope Franklin, professor of History at the University of Chicago, to North Carolina in January, 1967.

Finding Aids:

Main Entry Card

Autograph Cards

Caldwell, Tod R.
Dancy, John C.
Edmunds, J. M.
Holden, William W.
Howard, Oliver O.
Miles, Nelson A.,
Pool, John
Pulliam, R. W.
Sumner, Charles

Date Cards

1864-1869
1871-1878
1880-1881

Geographic Cards

Wake County, Raleigh

Subject Cards

BLAINE, JAMES G., 1880
BUXTON, R. P., 1880
COX, WILLIAM R., 1880
DICKINSON, JOHN, 1848
GRANT, ULYSSES, 1880
HOLDEN, WILLIAM W., 1867-68
JONES, A. H., 1867
LOCKHART, HANDY, 1867
O'HARA, JAMES, 1878
NEGRO, 1865-1878
ORGANIZATIONS
POLITICS, 1864-1890
RALEIGH, 1881
RECONSTRUCTION, 1868-1876
REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1867-1890
RICHARDSON, W. R., 1867
SEYMOUR, AUGUSTUS S., 1880
SHERMAN, JOHN, 1880
SETTLE, THOMAS, 1880
TOURGEE, ALBION, 1868
UNION LEAGUE OF AMERICA, 1864, 1867
WHITE, W. W., 1867

See also: Microfilm Newspaper Collection: North Carolina Republican (Weekly July 30, 1880, and November 12, 1880, edited by James H. Harris. Also obituaries of June 2, 1891, in Daily State Chronicle and the News and Observer.

County Records: Wake County Marriage Bond. James H. Harris and Isabella Hinton, 1851.

Private Collections: James Boon Papers (PC 99). Receipts for tuition payment signed by Isabella Hinton/Harris, 1851.

Church Records Collection: Brochure, Saint Ambrose Episcopal Church, Centennial, 1868-1968.

W. H. Quick, Rockingham, N. C., "James H. Harris," Negro Stars in All Ages of the World, (Richmond: S.B. Adkins & Co., Printers, 1898), pages 119-132.

Elizabeth Balanoff, "Negro Legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly," July, 1868-February, 1872; North Carolina Historical Review, January, 1972.

Roberta S. Alexander, North Carolina Faces the Freedman: Race Relations During Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867 (University of Chicago, History Department, Dissertation, 1974), 2 vols. [Copy in Search Room].

Finding Aid revised (calendared) by Ellen Z. McGrew 7 July 1979