



# Smithsonian

*Anacostia Community Museum*

Chester Lee Harris papers, circa  
1884-2001, bulk 1940-1976

Anna Wada

June 2010

Anacostia Community Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Anacostia Community Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Chester Lee Harris papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1884-2001 (bulk 1940-1976)
<b>Identifier:</b>	ACMA.06-034
<b>Creator:</b>	Harris, Chester Lee
<b>Extent:</b>	1.37 Linear feet (4 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Lee Harris papers, which dates from circa 1884 to 2001 and measures 1.43 linear feet, documents the activities of Chester Lee Harris and his extended family. The papers are comprised of certificates, diplomas, newspaper clippings, memorabilia, books, and photographs.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Lee and Chester Harris, godmother Bessie, and Henrietta Brown pose in front of building</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Lee Harris papers were donated to the Anacostia Community Museum in August 2003 by Mr. Chester Lee Harris.

### Processing Information

Processed in June 2010 by intern Anna Wada, with the assistance of archivist Jennifer Morris.

### Preferred Citation

The Lee Harris papers, Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Mr. Chester Lee Harris.

### Restrictions

The collection is open for unrestricted research. Use requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

The Lee Harris papers are the physical property of the Anacostia Community Museum. Literary and copyright belong to the author/creator or their legal heirs and assigns. Rights to work produced during the normal course of Museum business resides with the Anacostia Community Museum. For further information, and to obtain permission to publish or reproduce, contact the Museum Archives.

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## Biographical Note

Chester Lee Harris was born in 1940, spending his early years at Hackensack, New Jersey with his parents, Chester and Margaret Harris. His sister Renee Harris was born three years later, after which the family moved to Manhattan, New York. Lee's mother was 16 years old when he was born – documentation on his father, however, is scarce. Margaret later divorced Chester and became married to William Beasley, who died in 1977. Both Lee and Renee graduated Edward W. Stitt Junior high school in New York.

In the early 1960s, Lee was enlisted in the 369th Infantry of the New York Army National Guard, participating in training at Fort Dix and Fort Drum. After his discharge, Lee married Claudette Nourse in 1969, moving into an apartment in the Bronx. He worked as a New York City Transit bus operator until 1994. Their first house was acquired after retirement in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The couple remains active in the community into later years of their life. At the age of fifty, Claudette graduated Bronx Community College of the City University of New York with an Associate's degree in Applied Science. Lee was fifty-nine and Claudette sixty-three when they volunteered at the Citizen's Academy of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. The two-month program aimed to foster public understanding on the incentives behind police work, in order to correct common misunderstandings. The following year Lee again applied to be a police department volunteer, this time for the Programs for Accessible Living's Parking Patrol Program (P.A.L.). There is no indication of whether he was accepted into this program or not.

Gatherings with his extended family continued after marriage, particularly at Christmas. His grandmother, Henrietta Cephas Brown ("Nana") makes a consistent appearance in family photographs since Lee's birth, indicating their close correspondence. He also made trips with his extended family to locales such as Cape Cod, New Hampshire, and New York City.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection documents the activities in the personal life of Chester Lee Harris and his family between 1884 and 2001. The majority of materials contained in this collection are family and travel snapshots. The series of biographical documents and books outline major events in his life, as well as his service in the military and his community.

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## Arrangement

The papers are organized into five series. Folders within series I to IV are arranged alphabetically, while the photographic series is arranged roughly in chronological order. Documents within the folders are organized chronologically.

- Series I: Biographical files
- Series II: Printed materials
- Series III: Career
- Series IV: Books
- Series V: Photographs
- Subseries 5.1: Lee Harris
- Subseries 5.2: Family

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

African American families  
African American military personnel  
African Americans -- Employment  
Hackensack (N.J.)  
Travel

Types of Materials:

Awards  
Books  
Brochures  
Clippings  
Color photographs  
Ephemera  
Invitations  
Memorabilia  
Newspaper clippings  
Programs

Names:

Harris, Lee

Places:

New York (N.Y.)

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Files, 1916-1994

#### *0.16 Linear feet*

Scope and Contents: This series contains birth and death certificates, marriage certificates, as well as academic diplomas of Lee Harris and his family. Correspondence includes personal cards sent to Lee and Claudette Harris from family members, and a flyer of their first home on sale.

Box 1, Folder 1	Certificates, 1916-1986
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, circa 1884-1994
Box 1, Folder 3	Diplomas, 1954-1979

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## Series 2: Printed Materials, 1917-2001

### *0.16 Linear feet*

Scope and Contents: This series contains newspaper clippings that Harris saved, including that of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Particularly significant is the program of a community salute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in New York 1964, in which Lee had participated. He also collected memorabilia from his travels, such as brochures and admission tickets.

Box 1, Folder 4	Community events, 1917; 1946
Box 1, Folder 5	Historic events, 1963-1975
Box 1, Folder 6	Travel souvenirs, circa 1964-2001

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## Series 3: Career, 1965-2000

### *0.08 Linear feet*

Scope and Contents: This series contains handouts on the history of the 369th infantry, as well as applications and responses regarding the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department volunteer programs. Also preserved is a newspaper article from The Charlotte Observer, which mentions the participation of Claudette Harris as a volunteer in the Police Citizen's Academy.

Box 1, Folder 7      Military activities, circa 1965

Box 1, Folder 8      Volunteer activities, 1999-2000

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## Series 4: Books, 1939-1961

### *0.43 Linear feet*

Scope and Contents: This series contains several books of diverse nature, which had been collected or given to Lee Harris in his early years, as memorabilia or for reference.

Box 2, Folder 1	Army manuals, 1957
Box 2, Folder 2	Baby book, 1939
Box 2, Folder 3	Baby book, 1940
Box 2, Folder 4	Bible, 1961
Box 2, Folder 5	Boy scout handbook, 1951
Box 2, Folder 6	Black Indians, undated

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## Series 5: Photographs, 1939-1976; undated

### 0.54 Linear feet

Scope and Contents: This series contains photographs of Mr. Harris and his family. Much of the series is comprised of photographs which depict personal and family events, such as individual portraits, travel snapshots, and extensive records of family gatherings.

### 5.1: Lee Harris, 1940-1973

Box 3, Folder 1	Childhood, Apr-Oct, 1940
Box 3, Folder 2	Childhood, 1941-1956
Box 3, Folder 3	Military service, 1960-1964
Box 3, Folder 4	General, 1961-1973

### 5.2: Family, 1942-1976; undated

Box 3, Folder 5	Henrietta Cephas Brown ("Nana"), circa 1953; undated
Box 3, Folder 6	Howard and Henrietta Brown, 1963; undated
Box 3, Folder 7	Margaret and Chester Brown Harris, 1934-1963
Box 3, Folder 8	Renee Harris, 1948-1972
Box 3, Folder 9	Claudette Harris, 1967-1973
Box 4, Folder 1	Family gatherings, 1942-1975
Box 4, Folder 2	Vacation, 1965-1975
Box 4, Folder 3	Vacation, Jul. 1976
Box 4, Folder 4	Friends and relatives, 1973, undated

ACMA PH2003.7078.58: [Young Henrietta and Sara E. Cephas standing together, Undated](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of grandmother and great-aunt of Lee Harris, Henrietta and Sara E. Cephas. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African American families  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.61: [Portrait of young Howard Brown, Undated](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 3 x 4 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of grandfather of Lee Harris, Howard Brown.  
Description written on back.

Topic: African American men  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.68: [Portrait of Sara E. Cephas](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 3 x 5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of great-aunt of Lee Harris. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.11: [Chester and Margaret Harris with a family member in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1948](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Note on verso in ink: "Mary Harris and Chester Harris (Mother and Father) and family member? Hackensack, N. J. , summer 1948, Railroad Avenue & Second Street."

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.14: [Lee and Renee Harris, Howard Brown, and an acquaintance at a family gathering, 1945 July](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Description written on back: Photograph of 5 year old Lee and 2 year old Renee Harris with grandfather Howard Brown and an acquaintance, taken at downtown New York City.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.17: [Lee Harris in Manhattan, New York, 1951](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Note on verso in ink removed: "Fall (Sunday), 1951. Lee Harris, 11 years old; [picture] taken in front of apartment house, Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan, New York, looking uptown between 164th & 165th street."

Topic: African American boys  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.19: [Lee and Renee Harris in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1942](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 3.06 x 2 in.)

Language: English.

Topic: African American children  
African Americans

Place: Hackensack  
New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.20: [Lee and Chester Harris, godmother Bessie, and Henrietta Brown pose in front of building, 1945 July](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 2.12 x 3.18 in.)

Language: English.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan  
New York  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.22: [Lee Harris with his grandparents in front of their house, 1940 September](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 7 month old Lee Harris and grandparents taken in front of their house on Second Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.24: [Lee Harris with his father in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1940 September](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 3 x 2 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 7 month old Lee Harris and Chester Harris taken in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families

Place: African Americans  
New Jersey  
United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.27: [Lee Harris in front of his grandparents' home, 1941 June 29](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 7 month old Lee Harris taken at the home of grandmother Harris on Second Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American boys  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.28: [Family gathering in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1942](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 2 and a half year old Lee Harris, 9 month old Renne Harris, and 11 month old Bill taken at grandmother Harris's home on Second Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.30: [Snapshot of Lee Harris, 1941 June](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English

Notes: Photograph of 1 year old Lee Harris taken at the home of grandmother Harris on Second Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American boys  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.37: [Lee Harris sitting on lawn with his grandmother, Nana, 1940 June](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 3 x 5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 5 month old Lee Harris and Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown taken in front of his house on 3rd Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.38: [School portrait of Margaret Brown, circa 1934-1936](#)  
1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 3 x 5 in.)

Language: English.  
Notes: Photograph of 10 to 12 year old Margaret Brown, mother of Lee Harris, taken in Virginia. Description written on back.  
Topic: African American girls  
African Americans  
Place: Virginia  
United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.40: [Margaret Harris and Howard "Pop" Brown in Manhattan, New York, circa 1948-1949](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)  
Language: English.  
Notes: Photograph of Margaret Harris and her father, Howard "Pop" Brown, taken on 164th Street in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.  
Topic: African American families  
African Americans  
Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.41: [Margaret Harris in Manhattan, New York, circa 1948-1949](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)  
Language: English.  
Notes: Photograph of Margaret Harris taken in front of the Catholic School on 164th Street in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.  
Topic: African American women  
African Americans  
Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.43: [Lee and Renee Harris at the EdgeCombe Avenue Park in Manhattan, New York, 1945](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)  
Language: English.  
Notes: Photograph of 5 year old Lee and 3 year old Renee Harris with their aunt taken at EdgeCombe Avenue Park, 2 blocks from their apartment house on 2102 Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.  
Topic: African American families  
African Americans  
Place: Manhattan (New York)

United States  
Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.44: [Lee Harris in a sailor suit standing in front of Catholic School in Manhattan, New York, 1945](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 5 and a half year old Lee Harris taken in front of the Catholic School on 164th Street, around the corner from his house in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American boys  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.49: [Renee and Lee Harris holding toy gun made by his father in Manhattan, New York, 1945 June](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 5 year old Lee and 2 and a half year old Renee Harris taken on 164th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American children  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.52: [Lee Harris holding toy guy made by his father in Manhattan, New York, 1945 June](#)

1 Photographic print (gelatin silver; 2.06 x 3.18 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 5 and a half year old Lee Harris taken in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American boys  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.54: [Portrait of Sara E. Cephas, Undated](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 4 x 5.5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of great-aunt of Lee Harris. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.56: [Young Henrietta and Howard Brown standing together, Undated](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of grandparents of Lee Harris. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.57: [Young Henrietta Cephas Brown standing in front of a car, Undated](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of grandmother of Lee Harris, Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.59: [Young Margaret and Chester Harris standing in front of Catholic School, circa 1948-1949](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 8 x 10 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of Margaret and Chester Harris in their 20s, taken in front of the Catholic School on 164th Street and St. Nicolas Avenue in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)

United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.60: [Al and Mary Brown, pregnant with their baby to come, Wayne Brown Jr, Undated](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2.5 x 3.5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of uncle of Lee Harris, Al Brown, and his wife, Mary Brown. Description written on back of photograph

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.62: [Young Henrietta Cephas Brown standing in front of a house](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3.5 in.)

Language: English.



Notes: Grandmother of Lee Harris, Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.63: [Young Henrietta Cephas Brown leaning against a door](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Grandmother of Lee Harris, Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.64: [Young Howard Brown standing on doorstep](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2.5 x 4 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Grandfather of Lee Harris, Howard Brown. Description written on back.

Topic: African American men  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.65: [Young Henrietta Cephas Brown standing in a garden](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2.5 x 4 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Grandmother of Lee Harris, Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown. Description written on back.

Topic: African American women  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.66: [Young Howard Brown sitting on a car in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1942](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 4 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Grandfather of Lee Harris, Howard "Pop" Brown, taken in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American men  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.67: [James Tinsley, young Henrietta Brown, and Neil Harris standing in front of a house](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 3 x 4 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Grandmother of Lee Harris, Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown, and her acquaintances. Description written on back.

Topic: African American neighborhoods  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.71: [Portrait of Lee Harris with a girl in Manhattan, New York, 1953](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 13 year old Lee Harris taken between 156th and 158th street in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American youth  
African AmericansPlace: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.77: [Portrait of Lee Harris in Manhattan, New York, 1956](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 4.5 x 6.5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 16 year old Lee Harris taken in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American men  
African AmericansPlace: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.80: [Portrait of Renee, Margaret and Lee Harris in Manhattan, New York, 1944](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 4.5 x 6.5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 2 year old Renee, 22 year old Margaret, and 4 year old Lee Harris taken in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African AmericansPlace: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.81: [Portrait of Renee and Lee Harris, 1943](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 8 x 10 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 10 month old Renee and 3 year old Lee Harris. Description written on back.

Topic: African American children  
African Americans

Place: United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.84: [Renee and Lee Harris standing on a street in Manhattan, New York, 1946](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 3.5 x 5.5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 4 year old Renee and 6 year old Lee Harris, taken between Amsterdam Avenue and St. Nicholas Avenue at 165th Street in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American children  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.48: [Lee Harris with Margaret Harris and Henrietta Cephas Brown in Manhattan, New York, 1945](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 2 x 3 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of Lee Harris, his mother Margaret Harris, and grandmother Henrietta "Nana" Cephas Brown, taken on 165th Street off of Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan, New York. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: Manhattan (New York)  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.79: [Bessie holding Lee Harris in front of his childhood home in Hackensack, New Jersey, 1940 August](#)

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 8 x 10 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of Lee Harris and his godmother Bessie taken at his home on 310 3rd Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

ACMA PH2003.7078.55: Lee Harris and grandmother, 1942

1 Item (photographic print ; gelatin silver; 7 x 5 in.)

Language: English.

Notes: Photograph of 2 year old Lee and 18 year old Margaret Harris taken at the home of grandmother Harris on 2nd Street in Hackensack, New Jersey. Description written on back.

Topic: African American families  
African Americans

Place: New Jersey  
United States

Genre/Form: Photographic prints

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