



Smithsonian

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

The Harry T. and Harriette  
V. Moore Archival Collection

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of African American History and Culture
<b>Title:</b>	The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Archival Collection
<b>Date:</b>	(bulk 1945-1949)
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAAHC.A2018.12
<b>Creator:</b>	Moore, Harry T., 1905-1951 Moore, Harriette V., 1902-1952
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Cubic foot
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Harry T. Moore was a pioneering civil rights activist, educator, and civic leader. The collection was originally housed in a formerly "lost" briefcase that was found in 2006 by FBI investigators. The materials in this collection focus on his activities as a civil rights activist and community leader who sought to advocate for pay equity, voting rights, and justice reform for African American communities in Florida. Harry Moore and his wife Harriette were murdered for their work and they have been immortalized as the Civil Rights Movement's first martyrs.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Acquired as a gift from Drapher "Skip" Pagan, Jr. in memory of Juanita Evangeline Moore.

The Museum acquired two personal watches, a locket, and 26 textual documents pertaining to Harry and Harriette Moore (2013.157) from Juanita Evangeline Moore in 2013. These materials are viewable via Smithsonian Collections Search. The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Archival Collection was acquired through a donation from the Moores' grandson, Drapher "Skip" Pagan, Jr. in 2018.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, arranged, and described by Ja-Zette Marshburn and Alana Donocoff from 2019 to 2022.

### Preferred Citation

Harry T. And Harriette V. Moore Archival Collection, 1942-1949. National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution.

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## Biographical / Historical

Harry Tyson Moore was born on November 18, 1905 to Stephen John "Johnny" Moore and Rosalea "Rosa" Tyson Moore in Houston, Florida. After his father's death in 1914, Moore was sent to live with his maternal aunts in Daytona Beach, Florida. He attended Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial Institute, at the time a high school and junior college, where he graduated with a teaching degree in 1924. He immediately began his first teaching position at the segregated Monroe Elementary School in Cocoa, Florida.

Harriette Vyda Sims was born on June 19, 1902 in West Palm Beach, Florida to David and Annie Simms. Harriette was an insurance agent at Atlanta Life Insurance Company, a prominent Black-owned company, working out of Cocoa, Florida when she met Harry. Harry was also working at Atlanta Life to supplement his meager salary from teaching. Harry and Harriette married on Christmas Day in 1926. To establish themselves, the newlyweds moved in with Harriette's family in Mims, Florida. They had two daughters, Annie, born 1928, and Juanita (Evangeline), born 1930.

The couple enrolled together at the Daytona Normal Industrial Institute, later renamed the Bethune-Cookman College (BCC) after a merger of local African American schools. Harriette earned associate and bachelor's degrees in education in 1941 and 1950 respectively. Harry earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1936. Both Evangeline and Annie attended BCC as well. Annie served as an assistant to Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

From 1927-1936, Harry served as a teacher and eventual principal of Titusville Colored Junior High School. Harriette was a teacher and lunch lady at various elementary schools in the area. Troubled by the inequities and lack of educational resources available to African Americans, Harry started the Brevard County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1934. He established the organization with the help of the all-black Florida State Teacher's Association and the support of civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall.

In 1937, Moore was involved in a lawsuit regarding teacher pay equality. In Florida, White teachers received a monthly salary of \$50 while African American teachers had a base salary of \$20. This was the first civil rights case of its kind in the South. Moore's good friend John Gilbert, the principal of the junior high school, served as the plaintiff. The case, *Gilbert v. Board of Public Instruction of Brevard County*, was lost as many African American teachers were afraid to publicly endorse the case, fearing repercussions. This proved correct as Gilbert and Moore were both fired because of their activism. The Florida Supreme Court dismissed the petition stating that Brevard County was not legally required to change salary schedules based on pay because schools used individual contracts with the teachers. This case laid the foundation for several successful pay equality cases including *McDaniel v. Board of Public Instruction* in 1941 and *County Teachers Association v. the Board of Public Instruction for the County of Marion and Broward* in 1942.

Fighting for pay equity for teachers and educational civil rights took Harry and Harriette around the state, organizing and mobilizing community members. In 1936, the Moores took on new positions at the segregated Mims Elementary School and continued their involvement in organizing civil rights cases throughout Florida. In 1941, Harry was appointed the president of the Florida State Conference for the NAACP and later became the executive secretary for the Florida branch. In 1944, *Smith v. Allwright* ruled that it was unconstitutional for the Democratic Party to limit its membership to White people. This gave Harry the impetus to establish the Progressive Voters League (PVL), a partisan political action group in 1946. Harry believed that African Americans should have the power to vote for whomever is best for their community. Harry kept his work with the PVL separate from his work with the NAACP, despite his leadership role in both. Within a few years of PVL's establishment, there were 100,000 registered eligible African American voters in the state. For the first time in Florida's history, African American citizens were organized and poised to change the outcome of elections. In 1946, this work cost Harry and Harriette their positions at Mims Elementary School. Fortunately,

the NAACP, grateful for all of Harry's years of voluntary service, named him the NAACP's first full-time paid executive secretary. Both daughters assisted in creating NAACP Youth Council for the chapter as well.

Harry fought against the gruesome lynching and rampant police brutality taking place in Florida. In 1937, he started investigating cases himself and took an active role in pursuing justice in several unsolved lynching cases around Florida. He regularly sent correspondence about voting rights and lynching to state legislators, the governor, congressmen and even the president. In 1949, Moore became very involved in the national case, *State of Florida v. Samuel Shepherd, Walter L. Irvin, Charles Greenlee, and Ernest E. Thomas*, commonly known as the Groveland Rape case. Four young African American men were accused of raping a white woman, Norma Padgett. The sheriff of the area, Willis V. McCall rallied a mob of 1,000 local men to locate the accused. Ernest Thomas was killed during pursuit after being shot 400 times by the mob. Shepherd, Irvin, and Greenlee were beaten and coerced into confessing to the crime, only Irvin refused. The trio were immediately convicted by an all-white jury. Shephard and Irvin were sentenced to death while Greenlee, a minor, was sentenced to life in prison. In 1951, Harry and the NAACP legal team appealed the case before the United States Supreme Court. The Court ruled the men were not given a fair trial and sent the case back for retrial at the lower court. In November of 1951, while transporting Shepherd and Irvin back to the county prison for the retrial, Sheriff McCall shot the handcuffed men, killing Shepherd and seriously injuring Irvin. Moore launched an aggressive campaign to have McCall removed from his position and indicted for his involvement in the deaths. He wrote letters to President Truman, the governor, congressmen and several state and county legislators about McCall and the case. Many historians believe Moore's involvement in this case led to his murder only six weeks later. In 2019, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued the Groveland Four a posthumous pardon.

On December 25, 1951, both Christmas and the Moore's 25th wedding anniversary, a bomb exploded under their home, directly below the Moore's bedroom. Harry died on the way to the hospital. His funeral took place on January 2, 1952 to a crowd of 3,500, according to *Ebony* magazine. The following day, January 3, Harriette died from the injuries she sustained in the bombing. Her funeral took place on January 8, where NAACP leader Roy Wilkins spoke eloquently about the Moores and how their work will not be forgotten. The Moores are often called the first martyrs of the 1950s Civil Rights Movement.

The world quickly took note of Harry and Harriet's murders. Newspapers around the world criticized the U.S. for its treatment of African American citizens. The murders were discussed on the floor of the United Nations and the halls of Congress. There were many investigations at the time of the bombing, but the perpetrators were not found. The case was reopened in 1978, but again no charges were filed. In 2004-2006, the investigation was again reopened and led to the conclusion that the murders were conducted by the Central Florida Klu Klux Klan. The men believed responsible were Earl J. Brooklyn, Tillman H. Belvin, Joseph N. Cox, and Edward L. Spivey. However, all the men had died by this time, therefore no one was ever charged for the Moores' murder.

Evangeline was extremely involved in the investigation and worked directly with the attorney general. By the mid-1990s, Evangeline began to take a public role in preserving the memory of her family's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. In 1995, she helped organize the Harry T. Moore and Harriette V. Moore Homesite Development Committee, a non-profit organization that raised money for an educational site dedicated to celebrating the life and work of the Moores. In 2004, Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Memorial Park opened, featuring a museum, the original Moore homesite, and a 12-acre park. There are annual celebrations held in the second week of December in Mims, honoring the Moore family's sacrifices for human rights. In 2015, the Florida State Senate adopted resolution SR1638, "Remembering the outstanding contributions of pioneer leaders and martyrs Harriette Vyda Simms Moore and Harry T. Moore in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, etc." In October 2015, Evangeline passed away in New Carrollton, Maryland.

#### **Historical Timeline**

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1902 | Harriette V. Simms was born in West Palm Beach, Florida to David I. Simms and Annie Warren Simms.   |
| 1905 | Harry Tyson Moore was born in Houston, Florida to Stephen John "Johnny" Moore and Rosa Tyson Moore. |

- 1914-1916 Johnny Moore died. Rosa Moore sent Harry to Daytona Beach, Florida to stay with family because of financial difficulties. Harry and his maternal aunts moved to Jacksonville, Florida for better educational opportunities.
- 1919 Moore returned to Houston, Florida and began the high school program at Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial Institute. He graduated with a teaching degree in 1924.
- 1925 Harry earned his teaching certificate and immediately began teaching position at the segregated Monroe Elementary School in Cocoa, Florida.
- 1926 Harry and Harriette wed on Christmas.
- 1927 The Moore newlyweds moved in with Harriette's parents. Harry began teaching at the Titusville Colored Junior High School in Titusville, Florida.
- 1928 Annie Rosa Moore was born. In the fall, Harriette began working as a teacher at Mims Colored Elementary School in Mims, Florida.
- 1930 [Juanita] Evangeline Moore was born. Harry began taking correspondence courses at the University of Florida.
- 1931 Harry and his family move into their own home in Mims, Florida.
- 1934 Harry founded the Brevard County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- 1936 Harry graduated from Bethune-Cookman College (BCC) with a normal degree in education. In the fall, Harry became a teacher and the principal of Mims Colored Elementary School.
- 1938 In March, Attorney S.D. McGill filed a lawsuit for pay equality with Cocoa Junior School principal John Gilbert as the plaintiff. The case was dismissed in June.
- 1939 The appeal case of *Gilbert v. Board of Public Instruction of Brevard County* was dismissed. The case was represented by NAACP Legal Counsel, Thurgood Marshall.
- 1941 Harry organized and served as president of the Florida State Conference of the NAACP. Harriette graduated from Bethune-Cookman College with a teaching degree.
- 1944 Harry founded the Progressive Voters League as a political partisan action group in opposition to the NAACP non-partisan stance.
- 1946 As a result of his civil rights work and activism, Harry and Harriette lost their teaching positions at Mims Elementary School.
- 1947 Evangeline enrolled in BCC. Harry became the NAACP's first fully paid executive secretary of the Brevard County chapter.
- 1948 Harriette began teaching at the Lake Park Colored School in Palm Beach County, Florida.
- 1950 Harriette graduated from BCC with a B.S. in science.
- 1951 Harry graduated with a B.A. from BCC in August.  
December 25: The Moore's home is firebombed. Harry passed away right before midnight.

1952	January 1: Funeral of Harry T. Moore. January 3: Harriette died from injuries sustained in bombing. January 8: Funeral of Harriette V. Moore. The NAACP awarded the Spingarn medal to Harry T. Moore; his mother Rosa accepted it on his behalf. Evangeline married Drapher Pagan, Sr. Drapher "Skip" Pagan, Jr. is born the following year.
1955	The FBI officially closed the Moore homicide investigation case.
1972	Annie R. Moore Hampton died suddenly and was buried in Ocala, Florida.
1978	The Moore case was reopened but no charges were filed.
1985	Creation of the Harry T. Moore Social Service Center in Titusville, Florida.
1991	Florida's Governor Lawton Chiles ordered the reopening of the Moores' homicide case; no charges were filed.
1993-1998	The Brevard County Board of County Commissioners purchased the Moore homesite to be used as a memorial to the slain couple and created The Harry T. Moore Homesite Development Committee. The Florida State Legislature awarded \$700,000 for development of the 10-acre Harry T. Moore Memorial Homesite in Mims, Florida.
1999	Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Memorial Homesite Historical Marker is unveiled.
2002	Brevard County Court Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Justice Center opened.
2003-2004	An archeological survey of Moore family home led to an investigation. The Florida State Attorney General Charlie Crist reopened the Moore homicide investigation. The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex is completed.
2006	Attorney General Crist concluded that the perpetrators were four men from the Central Florida Klu Klux Klan. They had all died by this time, so no charges were filed.
2012-2013	The post office in Cocoa, Florida was renamed was named in honor of Harry T. and Harriette Moore by an Act of Congress: Public Law 112-243. Harry and Harriette were inducted in the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame.
2015	Evangeline Moore died in New Carrollton, Maryland.
2019	The Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Memorial Park and Museum was added to U.S. Civil Rights Trail.
2021	Brevard County School Board passed a resolution acknowledging the Moore's unjust firings.

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## Scope and Contents

The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Archival Collection chronicles Harry Moore's career in civil rights and education that ultimately led to his and his wife's murder. The materials in this collection were originally located in Harry T. Moore's briefcase and are dated from 1942 to 1949. The collection contains

correspondence, memoranda, business records, ephemera, and newspaper clippings. The bulk of the material reflects Moore's work as a community leader working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Progressive Voters League (PVL). The materials include original typed correspondence to and from Harry T. Moore as well as mimeographed letters that were saved for recordkeeping purposes.

The briefcase and Moore's wallet (part of the NMAAHC Collection) were found by Harriette Moore's brother, George Simms, after the firebombing of the Moore's home on Christmas night in 1951. Both were given to the local authorities for the investigation. The briefcase was lost during the initial 1951-1952 investigations. It was found in 2006 by FBI Investigators in a barn close to the Moore's former home. The investigation was closed the same year and the briefcase and its contents were returned to the family. J. Evangeline Moore served as the steward of the collection, lending out materials to various organizations, journalists, writers, and filmmakers over the years to educate the masses about her father's work and her parents' legacy. This work continued until her death in 2015. This collection and related Moore family heirlooms were donated to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2013 and 2018, respectively.

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## Arrangement

This archival collection does not include all the materials originally located in the briefcase. Materials from this collection were used during investigations as well as historical displays, documentaries, and various educational presentations. Research revealed that various materials were misplaced or lost. The FBI investigators originally located the briefcase in 2006 and they organized and rehoused the materials for better preservation. According to the 2006 investigation report, the investigators organized the documents in alphabetical order but arranged them as they were discovered within Harry T. Moore's filing system. His filing system was based on keeping documents together in envelopes that pertain to the same subject.

The NMAAHC Archives Team kept the subject and proximal context of the materials together. To further preserve this original arrangement and sustain the collection, materials were separated by format and then by subject, keeping those with similar dates and subjects together.

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## Bibliography

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Poore, Caroline Emmons. (1992). *Striking the First Blow: Harry T. Moore and the Fight for Black Equality in Florida*. Florida State University.

Powers, Ormond. "Book Revives Debates about Fatal Christmas 1951 Bombing." *Orlando Sentinel*. May 19, 1999. (accessed May 2019). <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1999-05-19-9905180799-story.html>.

"Over 1,500 Attend Funeral Services of Harry T. Moore." *Atlanta Daily World*. January 1952. (accessed May 2019). <https://search.proquest.com/docview/490965897/pageviewPDF/7F3B4980B9E44AD2PQ/1?accountid=46638>.

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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:

- Activism
- American South
- Associations, institutions, etc.
- Blacks -- Press coverage
- Civil rights
- Education
- Families
- Groveland Four Trial, Groveland, Fla., 1949-1952
- Hate crimes
- Justice
- Law
- Lynching
- Politics
- Race discrimination
- Race relations
- Resistance
- Segregation
- Social justice
- Suffrage
- United States -- History -- 1945-1953
- Violence

### Types of Materials:

- Correspondence

Names:

Baker, Ella, 1903-1986  
Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1875-1955  
Bethune-Cookman College (Daytona Beach, Fla.)  
Caldwell, Millard Fillmore, 1897-1984  
Current, Gloster B. (Gloster Bryant), 1913-1997  
Florida Normal and Industrial Memorial College (Saint Augustine, Fla.)  
Gilbert, John  
Hendricks, Joseph Edward, 1903-  
Holland, Spessard L. (Spessard Lindsey), 1892-1971  
Houston, Charles Hamilton, Dr., 1895-1950  
Humphrey, Hubert  
Kennedy, Stetson  
Marshall, Thurgood, 1908-1993  
Mathews, John E., 1892 - 1955  
Moore, J. Evangeline, 1930-2015  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People  
Pittsburgh Courier (newspaper)  
Progressive Voters League  
Warren, Fuller, 1905-1973  
Watson, J. Thomas, 1885 - 1954  
White, Walter, 1893-1955 (President, N.A.A.C.P)  
Williams, Franklin Hall, 1917 - 1990

Places:

United States of America -- Florida -- Brevard County  
United States of America -- Florida -- Brevard County -- Cocoa  
United States of America -- Florida -- Brevard County -- Mims  
United States of America -- Florida -- Brevard County -- Titusville  
United States of America -- Florida -- Lake County -- Groveland  
United States of America -- Florida -- Seminole County -- Sanford

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1944-1948; undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains textual documents (memoranda, ephemera, correspondence, and financial records) that Harry T. Moore composed, created, mimeographed and/or received as President and Executive Secretary of the Florida State Conference of the NAACP. Subjects include voting rights, police brutality, legislation, legal assistance, rallies, meetings and conferences.

#### 1: Business Records and Ephemera, 1944-1948; undated

Box 1, Folder 1	Internal Memorandum, 1944-1948; undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Internal Business Correspondence, 1945-1947; undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Handbook for Handling Legal Cases and Veteran's Handbook, 1944-1946
Box 1, Folder 4	NAACP Youth Council, 1946; undated

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#### 2: NAACP Financial Records, 1946-1947

Box 1, Folder 5	NAACP Financial Records, 1946-1947
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#### 3: NAACP Business Correspondence, 1946-1948; undated

Box 1, Folder 6	Business Ephemera, 1946-1948; undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters from Lucille Black to Moore on NAACP Membership Campaign, 1946
Box 1, Folder 8	Letter from Moore to Thurgood Marshall, 1946
Box 1, Folder 9	Anti-Lynching Legislation, 1945-1947
Box 1, Folder 10	FEPC Legislation, 1946; undated
Box 1, Folder 11	Letters to/from Marian Wynn Perry Assistant to Special Council, 1946-1947
Box 1, Folder 12	Letters to/from Gloster B. Current- Deputy Director of NAACP, 1945-1947
Box 1, Folder 13	Letters to/from Hilton Turner- Secretary of NAACP, 1946

Box 1, Folder 14

1947 NAACP Regional Conference, 1946-1947

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## Series 2: Progressive Voters League of Florida, 1944-1948; undated

Scope and Contents: This series contains textual documents (memoranda, ephemera, correspondence, and business records) that Harry T. Moore composed, created, mimeographed and/or received as Founder and President of the Progressive Voters League (PVL). PVL is not to be confused with the rival interracial political action group, The Florida's Voters League. Subjects include political candidates, legislation, political party affiliations, and voting rights.

### 1: Business Records and Ephemera, 1944-1947; undated

Box 1, Folder 15	Internal Memorandum, 1944-1947
Box 1, Folder 16	Memoranda, 1945-1947
Box 1, Folder 17	Business Ephemera, 1944-1948; undated

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### 2: Business Correspondence, 1945-1947; undated

Box 1, Folder 18	Letters to/from E.K. McIlrath, lawyer, 1946
Box 1, Folder 19	Letters to/from J. Tom Watson, Attorney General of Florida, 1946
Box 1, Folder 20	Letters to/from congressmen, 1945-1947
Box 1, Folder 21	Election Material, 1946; undated
Box 1, Folder 22	Internal Matters among PVL workers, 1946-1947

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## Series 3: Criminal Investigation Records, 1945-1947

Scope and Contents: Harry T. Moore pursued his own private investigations of cases of homicide and assault by law enforcement. This series contains correspondence and related writings with victims or families of victims of police brutality, with NAACP leadership and legal representation as well as with state and federal government officials. This series documents Moore persistence and diligence in exposing hostile brutality and unfair treatment of Black people in Florida by law and government officials.

Box 2, Folder 1	William Miles, 1946-1947
Box 2, Folder 2	L.R. Rainge, 1946
Box 2, Folder 3	Reginer Hendley, 1946
Box 2, Folder 4	J.W. Burne vs. City Council, clerk, mayor, etc. of the city of Titusville, Florida, 1946
Box 2, Folder 5	Lynching of Jesse Payne, 1945-1946
Box 2, Folder 6	Garfield Green, 1946
Box 2, Folder 7	Hattie Hobbs, 1946
Box 2, Folder 8	Rezell Patrick, 1946
Box 2, Folder 9	Leroy Bradswell, 1946
Box 2, Folder 10	James Fuller, 1946-1947
Box 2, Folder 11	Letter from Governor Millard Caldwell to Moore on Bradswell and Fuller, 1946
Box 2, Folder 12	Daisy Sheppard, 1946
Box 2, Folder 13	Joseph Palmer, 1947
Box 2, Folder 14	Hudson Salter and John Calloway, 1947
Box 2, Folder 15	Bob Rufus, 1947
Box 2, Folder 16	Oxford and Oxford- Attorneys at Law, 1946
Box 2, Folder 17	Letter from Milton Rooks to Moore about lynching, 1946

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## Series 4: Educational Equity Records, 1945-1946

Scope and Contents: This series documents Harry T. Moore pursuits to challenge the educational inequalities experienced by the African American community. The series includes correspondence and business records related African Americans pursuing graduate school education and bus overcrowding for primary and intermediate schools in Mims, Florida.

Box 2, Folder 18	Scholarship Funds and Scholarships at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical College, 1945-1947
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Box 2, Folder 19	Overcrowding School Bus Petition, 1946; undated
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## Series 5: Newspaper and Periodical Clippings, 1945-1949; undated

Scope and Contents: This series includes newspaper clippings documenting Harry T. Moore's civil rights work with various affiliations (NAACP, PVL, FSTA). This work included voting rights, police brutality, political candidates as well as the call for lynching legislation from the state and federal government. Content includes Moore-penned open letters and articles as well as various interviews with a variety of African American-owned newspapers. These publications include The Advocate (Winter Park, Fla.), The Miami Whip, The Herald (Miami), Ft. Lauderdale Colored Bulletin, The Script (Brevard County, Fla.), Pittsburgh Courier (Florida Edition), The Tampa Bulletin, Florida Sentinel Bulletin, The Florida News (West Palm Beach, Fla.), and The Florida Times.

Box 2, Folder 20 Newspaper clippings, 1943-1948; undated

Box 2, Folder 21 Newspaper clippings, 1945-1948; undated

Box 2, Folder 22 Newspaper clippings, 1942-1949; undated

Box 2, Folder 23 Newspaper clippings, 1947-1949; undated

Box 2, Folder 24 Newspaper clippings, 1943-1949; undated

Box 2, Folder 25 Newspaper clippings, 1944-1949; undated

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