



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of African American  
History and Culture*

## Guide to the Dr. Matilda Arabelle Evans Collection

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October 2020

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of African American History and Culture
<b>Title:</b>	Dr. Matilda Arabelle Evans Collection
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAAHC.A2019.109
<b>Date:</b>	1896-1995
<b>Extent:</b>	1.6 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Evans, Matilda Arabella, Dr., 1872-1935
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Dr. Matilda Arabella Evans Collection of documents how she broke boundaries as one of the first African American women physicians to have her own practice. The collection highlights her role as a physician and the great impact she had on the health and welfare of the African American community. The collection is comprised of educational material, business records, photographs, publications, and reference materials collected by and about Evans and her work.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Acquired as a Gift of Leatrice Trottie Brown in memory of Dr. Matilda A. Evans

### Processing Information

Collection processed, arranged, and described by Ja-Zette Marshburn and Alana Donocoff in 2019 and 2020.

### Preferred Citation

Dr. Matilda Arabelle Evans Collection of archival material, National Museum of African American History and Culture

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research. Access to collection materials requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

The NMAAHC Archives can provide reproductions of some materials for research and educational use. Copyright and right to publicity restrictions apply and limit reproduction for other purposes.

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## Biographical Sketch

Biography Dr. Matilda A. Evans – A2019.109

Dr. Matilda Arabella Evans was born in Aiken, South Carolina on May 13, 1872. Her parents, Anderson and Harriet Evans, were sharecroppers. In order to help her family, Evans and her two siblings did agricultural work for the Schofield family. Martha Schofield was an early advocate of education for African Americans and the founder of the Schofield Normal and Industrial School. Schofield inspired Evans to start her educational career. She excelled at the Schofield Normal School, so much so, that Schofield led a campaign to raise funds for Evans to attend Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. However, Evans left Oberlin College in 1891 to teach at the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia before completing her degree. Schofield and Alfred Jones, the Secretary of Executive Committee of the Board of Corporators of Woman's Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (WMC) helped create the scholarship for Evans to attend WMC. She was the only African American woman in her class. After earning her medical degree, Evans was the first African American woman to be licensed as physician in South Carolina.

Evans' specialties included general surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, and hygienics. For the next fifteen years, Evans created and managed three medical institutions, Taylor Lane, Lady Street, and St. Luke's hospitals, all of which doubled as nurse training schools. She began by caring for patients in her own home at 1007 Lady Street. In 1901, she established the Taylor Lane Hospital at 2027 Taylor Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The hospital was the first African American owned hospital in the city of Columbia. Even rarer, she treated patients regardless of race and was known for her discretion and expertise. Using this to her advantage, she used funds from wealthy white patients to give free or greatly reduced rate care to African American patients. Around 1903, a fire destroyed the building, closing the hospital. She then created St. Luke's Hospital and Evans Sanitorium.

Evans had a special interest in the care and medical needs of African American children. She strongly believed that healthcare should be a right as an American and the responsibility of the government to provide healthcare for all. Evans created a health assessment and examination program that was later adapted and used by all of South Carolina public schools. She petitioned the South Carolina State Board of Health to give free vaccines to African American children.

Continuing her work in health education, in 1916, Evans created the weekly newspaper *Negro Health Association of South Carolina* and the South Carolina Good Health Association that educated the public on health matters including hygiene and nutrition. In 1918, Evans volunteered to serve in the Medical Service Corps of the United States Army, during World War I, to take care of veterans and their families. As Evans dedicated all her time to the Corps, she closed St. Luke's Hospital. She decided to leave the Corps after a year because of the racism and discrimination she faced daily.

Returning to medicine and breaking more barriers, in 1922, Evans became the only African American woman in America to serve as president of a state medical association, South Carolina's Palmetto Medical Association. She went on to become the regional Vice President of the National Medical Association.

Evans was dedicated not only to the health of African American children but their whole well-being. In 1926, she owned Lindenwood Park, a 20-acre farm. On her property, she created a community health organization, a community center, a swimming pond, dance hall, and café. All her community outreach programs were completely integrated and welcomed all. Evans established a free clinic in 1930 named the Evans Clinic Association of Columbia, S.C. It was incorporated by the Secretary of State in South Carolina. Evans adopted eleven children, seven had been abandoned after their delivery at her hospital. The other five children were her nieces from her sister who passed away.

On November 17, 1935, Dr. Matilda A. Evans passed away in her home in Columbia, South Carolina.

### **Timeline Dr. Matilda A. Evans**

1872	Matilda Arabella Evans was born in Aiken, South Carolina to Anderson and Harriet Evans
c. 1880-1890	Evans attended the Schofield Normal and Industrial School
1890-1892	Evans attended Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio
1892	Evans left college early and accepted a teaching position at Haines Institute and the Schofield School in Augusta, Georgia
1893-1897	Evans attended the Woman's Medical College (WMC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
1897	Graduated with a medical degree from WMC and moved to Columbia, South Carolina. She created her own practice in her home on Lady Street
1901	Evans established the Taylor Lane Hospital, the first African American owned hospital in Columbia, South Carolina
1903	A fire destroyed the building and her practice returned to 1007 Lady Street, the location of her original practice
1914	Evans opened St. Luke's Hospital and Evans Sanitorium
1916	Evans created the weekly newspaper <i>Negro Health Association of South Carolina</i>
1918	Evans volunteered in the Medical Service Corps of the United States Army during World War I. St. Luke's Hospital was closed
1922	Evans served as president of the South Carolina's Palmetto Medical Association
1926	Evans opened a park and community center on her Lindenwood property for children of all races and ages
1930-1931	Evans established a free clinic, Evans Clinic Association of Columbia, S.C. It was incorporated by the secretary of state in South Carolina
1935	Evans passed away in Columbia, South Carolina

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## Arrangement

The materials in this collection have been kept at the folder level and separated into five series. The materials have been ordered and organized based on the content. Within each series and subseries, the folders are organized as close to the collection's original order as when it was acquired.

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## Sources

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Moore, John Hammond. (1993). *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990*. University of South Carolina Press: Columbia, South Carolina.

Payne, Elizabeth Ann, Ed. *Writing Women's History: A Tribute to Anne Firor Scott (2011)*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Spruill, Marjorie Julian, Valinda W. Littlefield, and Joan Marie Johnson. (2010). *Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times, vol. 2*. The University of Georgia Press: Athens, Georgia.

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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  
Business

Children  
Communities  
Education  
Health  
Race discrimination  
Women  
World War I, 1914-1918

Types of Materials:

Correspondence

Occupations:

Medicine

Geographic Names:

South Carolina -- Columbia

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## Container Listing

### Educational Materials

Materials include report cards from Evans' medical education and a photograph of her at Oberlin College.

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|-----------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Report card Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania for Miss M.A. Evans for 2nd year and 3rd year, 1896 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Photograph of Matilda A. Evans at Oberlin College, 1896   |

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## Business Records

Materials include licenses, certificates, and documents from Evans' medical practice.

Box 1, Folder 3	City License of Columbia, Columbia S.C. 1929 M.A. Evans Md., 1929
Box 1, Folder 3	Letterhead paper for Dr. M.A. Evans Specialist Gynecology and Pediatrics, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Prescription paper from Dr. M.A. Evans, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	VOLUNTEER MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS Authorized by the COUNCIL of NATIONAL DEFENSE ...enrolled, as a member, as of November 9, 1918 Matilda Arabelle Evans, 1918
Box 2, Folder 2	Check to "Volunteer Medical Service Corps" for \$1.00, signed by M.A. Evans, 1918
Box 1, Folder 5	"Clinic Doing Good Work Among Negroes of City: Institution on Harden Street Comes Into Being When Need Made Evident by Great Outpouring of Children - Doctor Evans Moving Spirit in Venture.", 1931
Box 2, Folder 3	The State of South Carolina Certificate of Incorporation By the Secretary of State Where as Dr. M.A. Evans, A. Simons and Willis C. Jones, of Columbia, S.C. appointed to supervise or manage affairs of Evans Clinic Association of Columbia, S.C, 1931

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## Photographs

Materials in this series include photographs of Evans and her family as well as photographs of the hospitals she founded.

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|-----------------|--|
| Box 2, Folder 4 | Dr. M.A. EVANS, undated  |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | THE FAMILY (rear) JOHN - ARTIE - MYRTLE - JESSIE (front) DR. EVANS - DOZIER - SIDNEY", undated |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | TAYLOR LANE HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM, 1899  |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | [St. Luke Hospital], undated   |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Nursing Staff at St. Luke Hospital, undated  |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Extreme left front - Dr. Evans and Staff in front of St. Luke Hospital, undated                |

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## Publications

Materials include writings and ephemera related to Evans and the Evans clinic as well as a biography authored by Evans of her benefactor and mentor Martha Schofield.

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|------------------|--|
| Box 2, Folder 1  | Martha Schofield Pioneer Negro Educator by Dr. Matilda A. Evans: Historical and Philosophical Review of Reconstruction Period of South Carolina 1916, 1916 |
| Box 2, Folder 6  | A TRUE LIKENESS: The Black South of Richard Samuel Roberts 1920-1936, 1926   |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | A Brief history of THE EVANS CLINIC 1235 Harden Street COLUMBIA, S.C. 1932, 1932   |

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## Reference Material

Materials in this series are divided into two subseries, Awards Ephemera and Research Material. The first subseries contains ephemera from events honoring Evans' legacy posthumously. The second subseries has photocopies of research material aggregated about Evans and her work.

### Awards Ephemera

Box 1, Folder 1            Invitation and program from BellSouth to the unveiling of the 1996 South Carolina African-American History Calendar at Koger Center for the Arts Columbia, South Carolina, 1995

Box 1, Folder 12        Program for "The Inaugural Trumpeter Gala" , 1982

### Research Material

Box 1, Folder 13        Photocopy of title page "Contributions of Black Women to America" with cut out of biography of Evans, 1982

Box 1, Folder 13        Photocopy of unknown book page on History of Evans Clinic Association, undated

Box 1, Folder 13        Photocopy of title page photocopy of SAGE A Scholarly Journal on Black Women with biography of Evans , 1985

Box 1, Folder 14        Photocopy of booklet "Hospital and Training for Nurses. Established 1901. Incorporated" , undated

Box 1, Folder 15        Photocopy, "Dr. Matilda Arabelle Evans" by Burnett W. Gallman, Jr., M.D, 1931

Box 1, Folder 16        "MATILDA ARABELLA EVANS (1872-1935) Black Doctor gave hope, health to Columbians in Depression", 1994

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