

**Harris County Archives
Houston, Texas**

Finding Aid

Vera D. Harris Scrapbook Collection

Dates: 1937-1973 (Bulk: 1949-1973)

Manuscript Collection MC018

Size: 1 volume

Accession Number: 2006.026

Restrictions on Access: None

Processed by: AnnElise Golden, 2006

Restrictions on Use: None

Acquisition: Vera Dial Harris, 2006

Citation: [Identification of Item], Vera Dial Harris Scrapbook, MC018, Harris County Archives, Houston, Texas.

Creator Sketch:

Vera Dial Harris was born the seventh child of Caesar Albert and Estella Pryor Dial November 10, 1912, in Palestine, Anderson County, Texas. She graduated from Lincoln High School May 1930 and in September 1931 she enrolled in Prairie View A&M College with the dream of becoming a Negro Home Demonstration Agent. In May 1935 she was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics.

In July 1935 Southern Newspaper Features of Dallas, Texas hired Harris to travel throughout the small urban areas of southern and eastern Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana and teach African American residents to cook using modern equipment and products. In 1937 she joined the Texas Agricultural Extension Service as a County Negro Home Demonstration Agent in Austin County. Harris worked with female African American clients instructing them in general home economics and working with the young women in 4-H clubs. In the late 1930s she participated in Austin County's first Federal Mattress Program. This program provided low income families with the supplies and expertise to make their own mattresses.

In 1941 Vera Dial Harris moved to Harris County and continued her work as a County Negro Home Demonstration Agent. While working for Harris County, Harris continued her work with African American girls and women and participated in the desegregation of the department during the 1960s. Vera Dial Harris retired as a County Home Demonstration Agent on May 19, 1973.

Collection Summary:

Photographs, printed materials, newspaper clippings, and correspondence document the professional career of Vera Dial Harris as a Negro County Home Demonstration Agent in Austin and Harris County from 1937 until her retirement in 1973. The bulk of the collection contains newspaper clippings and printed materials that record her involvement in 4-H and home demonstration (1949-1973). Of special interest is a photograph of the first mattress made under the Federal Mattress Program in Bellville, Texas, in the late 1930s. Harris wrote articles concerning sewing and cooking tips and a newspaper column called the "Murmuring Brook" for *The Forward Times*, an African American newspaper in Houston, Texas. Correspondence includes letters to and from Harris concerning professional activities and annual Christmas greetings.

Archivist's Note:

For preservation reasons, the contents of the scrapbook were removed from the original binder and rehoused. To learn more about County Negro Home Demonstration and the career of Vera Dial Harris please see her oral history on the Harris County Archives website at <http://www.hctx.net/CmpDocuments/20/Oral%20History/OH04HarrisFINAL.pdf> .

Inventory

Series: Scrapbook

Size: 1 volume

Dates: 1937-1973

Title	Description	Date	Location
Scrapbook	Newspaper Clippings	1937-1973	0401-X-01
Scrapbook	Photographs	1937-1973	0401-X-02
Scrapbook	Correspondence	1937-1973	0401-X-03
Scrapbook	Printed Materials	1937-1973	0401-X-04