



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Gladys H. MacDonald papers**

1924-1959

Sc MG 726

## Summary

**Creator:** MacDonald Gladys H., 1912-

**Title:** Gladys H. MacDonald papers

**Date:** 1924-1959

**Size:** 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift, Andrew Sinauer, May 2003.

**Abstract:** Gladys H. MacDonald was a Harlem-based librarian, community organizer, and founder of the community organization, Harlem Speaks. The Gladys MacDonald papers include documents from MacDonald's personal life and Harlem Speaks.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Gladys H. MacDonald papers, Sc MG 726, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Chantel Bell, September 2004, and Janice Quinter, June 2009.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

## Creator History

Gladys H. MacDonald was a Harlem-based librarian and community organizer. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, MacDonald worked in a variety of librarian and teaching positions for institutions such as the Schomburg Collection for Negro Literature and History (New York Public Library), New York *Amsterdam News*, 135th Street YMCA, and Brooklyn College.

In 1951, MacDonald founded Harlem Speaks, an interracial group that held community forums and meetings, and featured speakers such as Langston Hughes and George Schuyler. The organization suffered from a lack of funding and ceased functioning in 1959.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Gladys MacDonald Papers include documents from MacDonald's personal life and from the organization Harlem Speaks, a forum dedicated to stimulating discussion of major issues affecting community life. Most of the personal documents are biographical sketches and correspondence regarding her employment history and job search. Harlem Speaks material contains correspondence (1952-1958), event and meeting information such as flyers, invitations, minutes, notes and agendas. There are also financial reports, fundraising letters and proposals as well as press clippings. Address lists and approximately one hundred address cards provide membership information.

**Arrangement:** Arranged into two series: (1) Personal and (2) Harlem Speaks.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American librarians  
African Americans -- Societies, etc  
Associations, institutions, etc -- New York (State) -- New York

### **Geographic Names**

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)

### **Names**

MacDonald Gladys H., 1912-  
Harlem Speaks (Organization)

## Container List

### Personal 1924-1952

b. 1 f. 1 Biographical sketches and personal statements

#### Correspondence

b. 1 f. 2 ca. 1924-1949

b. 1 f. 3 1950-1952

b. 1 f. 4 undated

### Harlem Speaks 1951-1959

#### Correspondence

b. 1 f. 5 1951

b. 1 f. 6 1952

b. 1 f. 7 1953

b. 1 f. 8 1954-1959

b. 1 f. 9 1951-1958

b. 1 f. 10 Landlord 1955-1956

b. 1 f. 11 undated

b. 1 f. 12 Meeting minutes, notes, and agendas 1951-1952

#### Events

b. 1 f. 13 Flyers and invitations 1951-1955

b. 1 f. 14 Miscellaneous

b. 1 f. 15 Address lists

b. 1 f. 16 Cards and postcards 1952

b. 1 f. 17 Financial records 1951-1954

b. 1 f. 18 Fundraising letters and proposals

b. 1 f. 19 Press clippings 1956

b. 1 f. 20 Miscellaneous