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HELEN ARMSTEAD-JOHNSON THEATER COLLECTION  
A. Lincoln Harris Scrapbook, 1920s-1930s

Sc MG 599

Bulk Dates: 1920 –1930  
Shelving Unit:  
Extent: Linear feet: 2 linear inches

Source and Date: Helen Armstead-Johnson, December 1996.

Processor's Name: Paula Williams  
Date Finding Aid Completed: September 2000

Processed: Processed as part of the *Blacks on Stage: African-American Theater Arts Collections Project*. Funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the City and State of New York.

Abstract: A. Lincoln Harris was a playwright, producer, actor, and founder of the Lincoln Harris Players. The scrapbook contains documentation on Harris, the theatre group, and achievements by black personalities.

Provenance: The collection was donated to Helen Armstead-Johnson, by Frieda Harris. It was subsequently donated by Helen Armstead-Johnson, along with other theater-related collections to the Schomburg Center.

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Citation: A. Lincoln Harris Scrapbook, Helen Armstead-Johnson Theater Collection, Sc MG 599, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Index Terms  
Names: A. Lincoln Harris  
Lincoln Harris Players  
Subject: Theatrical producers and directors, African-American actors, African-Americans in the performing arts, African-American entertainers, Theater production and direction

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## **Preface**

This inventory was prepared as part of an archival preservation project to arrange, describe, and catalog resources essential for the study of African-American theater history. The necessary staff and supplies for the *Blacks on Stage: African-American Theater Arts Collections Project* were made available through a combination of funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the City and State of New York.

**A. LINCOLN HARRIS. SCRAPBOOK (1920s-1930s)**  
**(2 linear in.)**

A. Lincoln Harris was a playwright, producer, actor, and founder of the Lincoln Harris Players. On Broadway Harris was known as the understudy for the leading role in Marc Connelly's, "Green Pastures." He was also reportedly the first black playwright to feature black people in dramatic works. Among the one and two act plays Harris either wrote, appeared in, or produced are: *The Advanced Negro*, *The Tenth Calvary in Mexico*, *For Her Father's Sake*, *Tallaboo*, *The New Negro*, *The Colored Gents From the USA*, *The Government Spy*, *Richard III*, *Waena* (an all race drama), *What Jealousy Will Do*, *A Trusted Friend*, *High Life in Haiti*, *The Out-Law* (two act comedy), *Prince of Hayti* and *Dessalines*.

**Scope and Content Note**

The A. Lincoln Harris scrapbook is undated with the exception of a few items that are dated from the 1920s to the 1930s. The volume contains reviews and advertisements for Harris' one and two act plays and for the theatre company. Plays in which the Lincoln Harris Players were featured include: *The Advanced Negro*, *Waena*, *High Life in Haiti*, and *A Trusted Friend*.

There is very little information on Harris, his plays, or the theatrical company in the reviews and advertisements. Articles on black people's accomplishments in general and in sports specifically, comprise most of the material in the scrapbook. Among the contents are newspaper articles on Dr. Louis T. Wright (surgeon at Harlem Hospital), Marion Anderson, Augusta Savage, Anita Bush, and Uma Marson (secretary to Haile Selassie). The contents of the scrapbook also include a copy of the Official Souvenir Album of the Celebration of the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and Negro Progress (1934) and the Official Souvenir Journal, The Message Magazine (1939).

**Provenance**

Gift of Helen Armstead-Johnson, 1996  
SCM96-38

Processed by Paula Williams  
November 2000

**Container List**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Volume</u>
1	1

Reviews: *All God's Chillun'*, *Green Pastures*, *The New Negro*, *For Her Father's Sake*, *Waena*, *Tallaboo*, *The Tenth Calvary in Mexico*, *What Jealousy Will Do*;

Articles: Marian Anderson, James Weldon Johnson, Augusta Savage, Joe Louis, and Anita Bush;

Printed Material: an Official Souvenir Album of the Celebration of the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and Negro Progress (1934) and an Official Souvenir Journal, The Message Magazine (1939)