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HARPER, Solomon

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SOLOMON HARPER PAPERS
Collection 42-1

Prepared by Wilda D. Logan
June 1980
Revised by Greta S. Wilson
January 1981

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

Scope Note

The Solomon Harper Papers consist of 10 items relating to his career as an inventor for the period 1951-1969. There is a copy of his patent diagram for a "Mercury Switch Inductor Thermostat Controlled Electronic Hair Treating Implement", which was filed June 1951 in the U.S. Patent Office. Attached to the technical drawing is a two page detailed analysis of the drawing in highly technical terminology. The opening paragraphs explain the purpose and usefulness of the invention.

Also included as part of the collection, are some press releases, bulletins and programs. The press releases dated 1959 and 1960 and list 29 inventions by Mr. Harper, who was trained as an Electrical Engineer. He is credited with the invention of the First Automatic Airplane Bomb. The purpose of the press releases was to reveal the plight of Negro inventors and the problems they face in securing the proper rights and credits for their inventions.

The press release of 1960 states that Solomon Harper "has been gypped out of a billion dollars worth of inventions since 1909." Solomon Harper wanted people to be more aware of the problems in securing rights co patents in order to receive just compensation. There are programs from the Centennial Scientific Society dated 1963 where Mr. Harper spoke.

Biographical Data

Solomon Harper was born August 8, 1893, at Poplar Grove, Arkansas. He left home at the age of twelve, worked in a lumber camp and then as a section hand. As a young man he became an iron moulder and worked for various railways doing jobs such as that of a section hand, construction work, grading and locomotive work. In 1914 he applied for his first patent, for his invention of a new block system for controlling railway trains and prevention collision. This system was designed to prevent rear and head-on collisions, to prevent trains from running into open switches, to automatically reduce speed at dangerous places, to stop trains at railway junctions, to automatically apply the brakes and to record the time when this was done, and a number of other astonishing features.

Source: *The Crisis* volume 9, November 1914 p. 224

Series Description

- Series A**
Box 42-1 **Patents**
A copy of the patent on Harper's Mercury Switch-Inductor Thermostat Controlled Electric Hair Treating Implement which was patented June 5, 1956.
- Series B**
Box 42-1 **Press Releases**
Several press releases about Harper's battle for proper credit for his patents. Includes descriptions of some 29 inventions by Harper.
- Series C**
Box 42-1 **Programs, Invitations**
An invitation to attend the Household Guild 1959-60 nationwide cultural and educational series and a program for the George Washington Carver Day Celebration, January 6, 1963.

Container List

Series A

Patents

Box

Folder

42-1

1 Patent-Mercury Switch- Inductor Thermostat Controlled Electric Hair
Treating Implement - June 5, 1956 #2,748,782

Series B

Press Releases

2 Press Releases - 1959, 1960, 1969

Series C

Programs, Invitations

3 Programs, Invitations - 1959, 1963