

MSS. Collection #180

**Maco Beauty College Collection, ca. 1935-2006 [bulk 1941-1968].
2 boxes (28 folders), ca. 250 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

This collection centers on Maco Beauty College, its founders and its students. Established in 1935 by Sadie Mack and Edward D. London, the school trained over one thousand cosmetologists in its 34-year-history. Materials in the collection include correspondence regarding student enrollment and exam records, school bulletins, student newspapers, commencement programs, educational textbooks and lesson planning guides, photographs and an audio interview. Researchers interested in local African American history and institutions during segregation will find this collection of use.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into five series by document type and/or subject. The series are: **Correspondence**, 1941-1974; **History & Biography**, 1942-1978, undated; **Photographs**, ca. 1935-1968; **Printed Materials**, 1948-1967, undated; and **Students & Alumni**, ca. 1968-2006, undated

Provenance: This collection was donated by G. Sitrena McLendon in July 2005 and assigned the accession number 2005.22.1. The donor is the granddaughter of Edward D. London through his daughter from his first marriage, Evelyn London Nelson (1918-1998).

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was begun by volunteer Candace Cook in October 2015. It was reorganized and the finding aid was completed by volunteer Olivia Cardeaux in October 2017.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Born in South Carolina, Sadie Mack (ca. 1898-1942) was interested in beauty from a young age and went to New York City to pursue it as a career. She studied cosmetology and the manufacture of beauty products at Poro Beauty College, then graduated and was licensed in New York. After moving to Greensboro to care for her ill brother, she opened a beauty shop in her home and met a recently widowed tailor named Edward D. London (1894-1978); the two were married in 1930.

Soon after their marriage, the Londons opened a joint business at 812-814 East Market Street – she ran a beauty salon, and he operated a cleaning and pressing tailor shop. At this time, Sadie Mack London also began to teach cosmetology to other women, and she encouraged them to take

the N.C. State Board of Cosmetics examination. Most of her unofficial students passed the examination and went on to careers in cosmetology.

In 1935, Edward D. London left the tailoring business and with his wife opened Maco Beauty College at 505 E. Market St. The first class graduated in 1936. Despite Sadie Mack London's failing health in 1941, enrollment rapidly increased, and the school moved to a former hotel at 800 E. Sycamore St. In addition to classrooms and a beauty shop, this location provided space for dormitory rooms, a student kitchen-dining room, a recreation room, and a laboratory for manufacturing beauty products.

Sadie Mack London died in 1942, but Maco Beauty College continued to flourish under her husband's direction. With the area around 800 E. Sycamore St. slated for redevelopment, the school moved to 229½ S. Elm St., above Schiffman's Jewelry, in 1963. Edward London closed the school in 1969, and the remnants were sold to Dudley Products, Inc. in 1971. During the course of its existence, over one thousand students were trained at Maco Beauty College. Its graduates operated beauty shops, taught cosmetology and even operated their own beauty schools.

Historical Sources: The bulk of the historical information was obtained from undated histories in the collection (2:4). Additional information was found through the Greensboro city directories, Ancestry.com, and "Here, Black was always beautiful – Only mementoes and memories remain of a Black-owned beauty college that thrived for 28 years on East Market Street in Greensboro" (*News & Record*, March 20, 2005).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection includes correspondence, photographs, printed materials and an audio interview relating to Maco Beauty College, its founders and its students. The collection's strength lies in its many items relating to the school's African American students: grades, instructional guides, photographs, and enrollment and alumni records. Those researching the history of black-owned businesses in Greensboro and the Piedmont during segregation will find this collection of interest.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Correspondence. 7 folders (ca. 165 items). 1941-1974.

The correspondence consists primarily of exam and enrollment notices from the North Carolina State Board of Cosmetic Art. These notices verified student enrollment (1:5) and informed Maco Beauty College of its students' grades on the examination (1:6-7). Other letters include communications between the college and the board regarding student hours, withdrawal notices and payment requests (1:3-4). Attached to a letter to college alumni are the constitution and by-laws of the Maco Alumni Association (1:2). A letter from Cecil Bishop, pastor of Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church, accepts the school's invitation to speak at the 1961 commencement (1:1).

2. History & Biography. 4 folders (9 items). 1942-1978, undated.

This series contains historical and biographical information relating to Maco Beauty College and its founders. Included are several draft histories of Maco Beauty College (2:4) and draft biographies of Edward D. London (2:2). Materials relating to Sadie Mack London consist of her obituary on Maco Beauty College letterhead, as well as handwritten resolutions from the Greensboro Negro Business League and Providence Baptist Church following her death (2:3). Also included in the series is a short history of the Gate City Beauticians' Club (2:1).

3. Photographs. 5 folders (49 items). ca. 1935-1968.

The photographs show Maco Beauty College students on campus and around Greensboro. They include images of students in class, posing for graduation and class photographs, and in various social clubs. Many photos relate to the Miss Maco Beauty Pageant (3:3) and several show the student basketball team (3:4). Also included are a portrait of Edward D. London and what appears to be a family portrait of him with daughter Evelyn and second wife Sadie Mack London (3:2).

4. Printed Materials. 7 folders (12 items). 1948-1967, undated.

Materials in this series include Maco Beauty College textbooks, teachers' guides, and miscellaneous blank papers such as labels and a blank release form. Of particular interest are student newspapers (4:7), commencement programs (4:4), and a college bulletin (4:1); the latter two both contain the lyrics of the school alma mater.

5. Students & Alumni. 5 folders (13 items). ca. 1968-2006, undated.

This series relates to the students and alumni of Maco Beauty College. Included are alumni addresses (5:1), a list of graduates (5:3), and materials documenting the enrollment of student Faye Green and the hours she completed in certain areas of study (5:4). An audiocassette contains an oral history interview conducted by Greensboro History Museum staff with alumni Ada Motley, Clara Shoffner and Lucy Sligh on March 22, 2006. The women describe the school's curriculum and building, talk about their relationships with customers, and discuss their careers. Side B of the cassette includes the three women singing their school alma mater to the tune of *Danny Boy* (5:2).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Correspondence	-- Bishop, Cecil (1961)
	2	“	-- Maco Alumni Association (1961)
	3	“	-- Maco Beauty College (1960-1974)
	4	“	-- N.C. State Board of Cosmetic Art (1961-1964)
	5	“	-- N.C. State Board of Cosmetic Art -- Enrollment notices (1956-1968)
	6	“	-- N.C. State Board of Cosmetic Art -- Exam notices (1941-1959)
	7	“	-- N.C. State Board of Cosmetic Art -- Exam notices (1960-1969)
2	1	History & Biography	-- Gate City Beautician's Club (1978)
	2	“	-- London, Edward D. (ca. 1970s)
	3	“	-- London, Sadie Mack (1942)
	4	“	-- Maco Beauty College (undated)
3	1	Photographs	-- Graduation/class photographs (ca. 1941-1968)
	2	“	-- Miscellaneous (ca. 1935-1954)
	3	“	-- Miss Maco (1941-1965, undated)
	4	“	-- Student basketball team (1954, undated)
	5	“	-- Students in class/at work (1940-1957, undated)
4	1	Printed Materials	-- Bulletin (1953)
	2	“	-- “Cosmetology lessons and lesson planning” (undated)
	3	“	-- Miscellaneous (undated)
	4	“	-- Programs (1964-1965)
	5	“	-- <i>Standard teacher's guide for beauty culture</i> (1965)
	6	“	-- <i>Standard textbook of cosmetology</i> (1967)
	7	“	-- Student newspapers (1948, 1965-1966)
5	1	Students and Alumni	-- Alumni addresses (undated)
	2	“	-- Audio interview (March 22, 2006)
	3	“	-- Graduates, 1931-1968 (undated)
	4	“	-- Green, Faye (1968, 1976, undated)
	5	“	-- Miscellaneous (1975, undated)