

MSS. Collection #148

Joseph T. Melvin Sr. Family Papers, 1920-1949. 1 box (11 folders), 27 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

The Joseph T. Melvin Sr. Family Papers consist primarily of items pertaining to Greensboro High School, Asheville High School, and the Melvin family. Of particular interest is Virgil Hicks Melvin's scrapbook, which contains a variety of materials relating to the two high schools, such as newspaper clippings and commencement invitations. Also included in the collection are items from local theaters and businesses. The Melvin family is known in Greensboro because Edwin Samuel "Jim" Melvin's served as mayor from 1971-1981. Researchers interested in this family, Greensboro High School, or selected local theaters and businesses may find this collection useful.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into four series and arranged within series by document type. The series are: **Financial**, 1938; **Photograph**, ca. 1930; **Printed Materials**, 1924-1949; and **Scrapbook**, 1920-1925.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Joseph T. Melvin Jr. in June 1999 and September 2000, and it was assigned the accession numbers 1999.20.2 and 2000.45.1-2.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by intern Rebecca Doss in June 2021.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph Taylor "Joe" Melvin Sr. (1904-1972) opened Melvin Brothers grocery store on Asheboro St. (later Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.) with his brother, Charles E. Melvin, in 1921 and the Joe Melvin Service Station at 1200 Asheboro St. in 1929. Around 1953, he took over a Gulf station at 1203 Asheboro St. and ran it as a Texaco until he was killed during a robbery in 1972. In 1927, he married Virgil Hicks (1906-1992) in Asheville, North Carolina. Virgil attended Asheville High School from 1921-1923 and Greensboro High School from 1924-1926.

The couple's eldest son, **Joseph Taylor Melvin Jr.**, played football at Greensboro High School, graduating in 1946. At UNC Chapel Hill, he served as warden of the Phi Kappa Phi fraternity and earned a Bachelor of Science in Commerce in 1950. After marrying Florence Morrill, he became a fabric salesman for Cone Export and Commission Company in New York. He was later transferred to Chicago and Kansas City, and he spent the last decade of his career in charge of the Greensboro sales office.

His younger brother, **Edwin Samuel “Jim” Melvin**, graduated from Greensboro High School in 1952 and from UNC Chapel Hill with a business degree in 1959. In 1971, he was elected mayor of Greensboro, remaining in the position for a decade before returning to banking. After retiring in 1996, Jim Melvin became the president and CEO of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, where he focused his efforts on the city’s parks. He was influential in the building of First National Bank Field and LeBauer Park, as well as in the campaign for Elon Law School’s location in downtown Greensboro.

Biographical Sources: The sources for this biographical note include the donor, materials in the collection, the Greensboro city directories, UNC Chapel Hill yearbooks, [a biography of Jim Melvin on the Civil Rights Digital Library](#), and the following newspaper articles: “Two Gunmen Kill Mayor’s Father” (*The Greensboro Record*, October 25, 1972) and “Rites Slated For Today” (*Greensboro Daily News*, October 26, 1972).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The types of materials in this collection include receipts, a photograph, a scrapbook, and printed materials such as a textbook, newspaper clippings, programs, and ration cards. The collection focuses on Asheville High School, Greensboro High School, and the Melvin family. Virgil Hicks Melvin’s scrapbook also contains items pertaining to Greensboro, High Point, and Asheville businesses and attractions. Researchers seeking information on Greensboro High School could find the documents relating to the football team and the senior classes of the 1920s, 1933, and 1945 informative. Those interested in early to mid-twentieth century Greensboro, High Point, and Asheville may find this collection useful for the items relating to local businesses, such as the Greensboro Motor Co., and local cultural attractions, such as the Grand Theatre in Greensboro and the American Theatre in High Point.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Financial. 1 folder (5 items). 1938.

Two receipts document Joseph Melvin Sr.’s purchase of a car from Greensboro Motor Co. Also included are the banknote used to pay for the car, the temporary registration in Virgil’s name, and a receipt for a gun on the back of a blank Joe Melvin Service Station receipt.

2. Photograph. 1 folder (1 item). ca. 1930.

This photo shows the gas station owned by Joseph Melvin Sr. on the corner of Randolph Rd. and Asheboro St. (later Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.).

3. Printed Materials. 8 folders (20 items). 1920-1949.

This series contains items relating to the American Red Cross, Greensboro High School, Greensboro and High Point vaudeville theatres, and the Melvin family. Newspaper clippings

from *The Daily Tar Heel*, the *Greensboro Daily News*, *The Greensboro Record*, and the Greensboro High School newspaper titled *High Life* contain information about Greensboro High School football (3:3-5), the senior classes of 1933 and 1945 (3:5), and members of the Melvin family (3:3-4). Greensboro High School football is also the subject of three football programs with Joseph Melvin Jr. on the roster (3:6). Theater programs from the Grand in Greensboro and the American Theatre in High Point provide information about shows in the 1924-1925 season, including those by the traveling B.F. Keith vaudeville company (3:7). Also included in this series are an American Red Cross *First Aid Text-Book* owned by Virgil Melvin and given to Joseph Melvin Jr. (3:1), as well as gasoline ration books for 1942-1944 (3:8).

4. Scrapbook. 1 folder (1 item). 1920-1925.

This scrapbook was compiled by Virgil Hicks Melvin during her time at Asheville High School and Greensboro High School. The contents include personal notes and addresses from classmates; tickets to high school and collegiate sporting events; candy wrappers and cigarettes; brochures and postcards from Chimney Rock; several pages of her friends' photos; theatre programs; Asheville High School's fight song; newspaper clippings about both high schools and her peers; and commencement invitations from Asheville High School, Greensboro High School, and Spencer High School in Salisbury, North Carolina.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Financial	-- Receipts -- Greensboro Motor Co. (1938)
2	1	Photograph	-- Texaco (ca. 1930)
3	1	Printed Materials	-- <i>First Aid Text-Book</i> (American Red Cross, 1940)
	2	"	-- Newspaper clipping -- <i>The Daily Tar Heel</i> (1949)
	3	"	-- Newspaper clippings -- <i>Greensboro Daily News</i> (1938-1945)
	4	"	-- Newspaper clippings -- <i>The Greensboro Record</i> (1932-1942)
	5	"	-- Newspaper clippings -- <i>High Life</i> (1933-1945)
	6	"	-- Programs -- Football (Greensboro High School; 1944-1945)
	7	"	-- Programs -- Theater (1924-1925)
	8	"	-- Ration books (1942-1944)
4	1	Scrapbook	-- Virgil Hicks Melvin (1920-1925)