

MSS. Collection #237

Mildred S. Davis Papers, 1954-2013 [bulk 1966-1984]. ½ box (16 folders), 99 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 Mildred S. Davis Papers consist of materials relating to the Extension Homemakers Association and the Mount Tabor community. The collection covers the local, county, state, and national levels of the organization, with the bulk of items relating to the North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association. Materials include meeting agendas, correspondence between agents, photographs of club activities, and event programs. Researchers interested in the activities and goals of the Extension Homemakers, particularly at the state level, will find this collection useful. Also of note in the collection are documents about the 100th anniversary of Mount Tabor United Methodist Church and newspaper clippings about local African American figures.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into five series by subject and arranged within those series by document type or subject. The series are: **Guilford County Extension Homemakers Council, 1970-1983; Miscellaneous, 1955-2013; Mount Tabor Homemakers Club, 1954-1970; National Extension Homemakers, ca. 1974-1985; and North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association, 1969-1984.**

Provenance: This collection was donated by Richard and Margarett Davis in May 2016 and assigned accession number 2016.31.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by volunteer Kimberly Oliver in July 2016.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Mildred Strickland Turner Davis (1921-2013) was born to Eva and Causey Strickland in Guilford County. After her father died, her mother married Lawrence Turner and the family took his surname. Mildred grew up in Durham, where she graduated from Hillside High School. She attended Immanuel Lutheran College in Greensboro, and married **John Henry Davis** (1915-2009) in 1937. The couple had three children: Johnnie, Richard, and Linda. Davis and her family returned to Guilford County where they lived in Mount Tabor, an African American community southwest of Greensboro city limits at the time. They attended Mount Tabor United Methodist Church before later joining Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Greensboro. Davis was a member of the North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association for many years, during which she served as President of the Mount Tabor Home Demonstration Club, Vice President of

the Guilford County Council, and chairman of various committees within those organizations. In addition, Davis was employed by Community Funeral Service and was very active within community and church organizations, serving as chairman of the Mount Tabor UMC 100th Anniversary Task Force.

The **Extension Homemakers Association** began as a series of “tomato clubs,” local groups that taught advanced agricultural skills and canning to women as a way to supplement farm incomes. In 1911, the General Education Board appointed home demonstration agents in each southern state. Jane McKimmon, the North Carolina agent, also hired an extension agent for each county. 4-H clubs were established in 1916 to focus on instruction for girls, while home demonstration clubs were redirected to serve women. In Guilford County, tomato clubs in various towns were organized into a county affiliation under the leadership of Lucille Kennett, who hired the first home agent in 1915. The North Carolina Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs was founded at State College (later North Carolina State University) in 1920, and evolved into the North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association by 1966. Over time, Homemakers clubs broadened their range of teachings to educate women on a variety of home economics subjects, including nutrition and sewing, all taught with the goal of sharing the most recent research. By the 1950s, home demonstration clubs began to teach family relations and financial management, and started programs to improve community welfare and safety. In 1999, the North Carolina Extension Homemakers Council disaffiliated with the national association and changed its name to the North Carolina Extension and Community Association, Inc., continuing the work of the Extension Homemakers with a special focus on serving low-income families.

Biographical/Historical Sources: The biographical information was gathered from materials in the collection. The historical information about the Extension Homemakers Association was obtained from various online sources: [“The History of Tomato Clubs,”](#) by Josh Shaffer (*Our State*, July 9, 2014); [“History of Home Demonstration in North Carolina”](#) (Green ‘N’ Growing, NC State University Libraries); and [General Information](#) (North Carolina Extension & Community Association, NC State University).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The materials in this collection include correspondence (1:2), photographs (3:2, 5:6) and printed materials, such as agendas (1:1), programs (1:3), newspaper clippings (5:4) and newsletters (5:4). Each item provides information about one level of the Extension Homemakers organization, whether local (3:1-2), county (1:1-3), state (5:1-6), or national (4:1). Information about each level covers the period in which Mildred Davis participated in it, and includes program goals, photographs of activities, and meeting agendas or programs. The bulk of the collection is related to the state Extension Homemakers Association from 1969 to 1984. A weakness is the lack of context for many materials, as well their limitation to the years Davis participated. In addition, few materials involve the Mount Tabor Homemakers Club, meaning that the collection will be most useful to researchers interested in the wider state organization rather than the local club. Miscellaneous materials also found in the collection relate either to Davis or the Mount Tabor community, and include information about the 100th anniversary of Mount Tabor United Methodist Church (2:3), local African American figures (2:4), and the Guilford County Parent and Teachers Association (2:2).

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Guilford County Extension Homemakers Council. 3 folders (9 items). 1970-1983.

Materials in this series include agendas for three county council meetings (1:1), miscellaneous correspondence from Agricultural Extension agents regarding various committee meetings and goals (1:2), and programs from meetings of the Guilford County Extension Homemakers Clubs (1:3).

2. Miscellaneous. 4 folders (18 items). 1955-2013.

This series contains materials not directly related to the Extension Homemakers Association. Included is information specific to Davis, such as her obituary, an undated photo from late in her life, and an issue of the *Graphic Report* with an article about a typing class she attended. Also included are a partial resume and a 1976 volunteer leader's achievement report containing Davis's application for a leadership award and detailing offices she held, information about her family, and all of her volunteer activities within the Homemakers Association and in other organizations (2:1). The series also contains materials related to the Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, including programs from the 1966 and 1971 Woman's Days, a 1996 speech, and an undated letter to the Bishop of the Western North Carolina United Methodist Church. Of note are documents relating to the 100th anniversary of Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, including a report from the Anniversary Task Force (of which Davis was chairman), letters of invitation to the celebration, and an announcement that includes a brief history of the church (2:3). Additional materials include a 1955 program from the Commemorating Founder's Day of the Guilford County Parent and Teachers Association (2:2), as well as a newspaper article about road changes affecting the Mount Tabor community (2:4). Other newspaper clippings focus on local African American figures, covering the deaths of oldest Boy Scout B.S. Austin, educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and racial justice activist Ervin Brisbon (2:4).

3. Mount Tabor Homemakers Club. 2 folders (10 items). 1954-1970.

This series contains various materials relating to the Mount Tabor Homemakers Club, including its revised bylaws, a 1959 community development progress report, and the agenda of a "What Every Family Should Know" workshop given by the club. Also included are an announcement and souvenir program from the club's 23rd anniversary celebration (3:1). Photographs in this series show the club in 1954, a 1958 tour through a meat packing company, Davis and Ava Shoffner at a 1960 Extension Tea, and Davis showing off a refinished mirror frame (3:2).

4. National Extension Homemakers. 1 folder (8 items). ca. 1974-1985.

This series consists of materials relating to the National Extension Homemakers, including a program for the 1974 annual meeting (in which are written names and addresses of various members), suggested questions for the organization's oral history project, and lyrics to homemakers' songs. Samples of information distributed by the national organization include a diagram of home management, guide to vital documents, and information about mushrooms

from the Mushroom Processors Association. Also found within this series are a letter to Davis from Congressman Howard Coble regarding her interest in funding for the Agricultural Extension Program, and a NEH guide to writing letters to congressmen (4:1).

5. North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association. 6 folders (56 items). 1969-1984.

The materials in this series relate to the state level of the Extension Homemakers Association, and include the association's constitution and bylaws as revised in 1979 (5:1) and two editions of the newsletter *Tarheel Homemakers* (5:5). Also included is correspondence between Davis and state agents regarding state and district meetings, Davis's achievements and her appointment as State Vice Chairman of the Home Economics Committee, and program goals for that committee (5:2). Newspaper clippings include an announcement of Davis's representation of the state at the National Extension Homemakers meeting in 1974, and several articles detailing the history and programs of the North Carolina Extension Homemakers (5:4). The series contains many items from the 1974 "University Days on Wheels" tour through the mid-Atlantic to New York City, including an agenda, a brochure from Winterthur Museum, Davis's report notes, and photographs of locations visited on the tour (5:6). Additional materials include a list of addresses of 1973 Home Economics Committee members, a 1975 committee report, a program from the 1979 meeting, the club's Collect and Creed, and forms for officer applications and program reports (5:3).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Guilford County Extension Homemakers Council	-- Agendas (1979-1980)
	2	“	-- Correspondence (1971-1983)
	3	“	-- Programs (1970-1980)
2	1	Miscellaneous	-- Davis, Mildred (1960-2013)
	2	“	-- Guilford County Parent and Teachers Association (1955)
	3	“	-- Mount Tabor United Methodist Church (1966-1996)
	4	“	-- Newspaper Clippings (ca. 1985-1999)
3	1	Mount Tabor Homemakers Club (1959-1970)	
	2	“	-- Photographs (1954-1961)
4	1	National Extension Homemakers (ca. 1974-1985)	
5	1	North Carolina Extension Homemakers Association	-- Constitution (1979)
	2	“	-- Correspondence (1969-1984)
	3	“	-- Miscellaneous (1973-1982)
	4	“	-- Newspaper Clippings (1974-1984)
	5	“	-- <i>Tarheel Homemakers</i> (1974-1975)
	6	“	-- “University Days on Wheels” Tour (1972)