

M. L. Harris United Methodist Church Collection (SMC 106)

Organizational Note

The M.L. Harris United Methodist Church is located at 4601 Old Cusseta Road in Columbus, Georgia. It was founded in 1872 and has served the black community of Columbus for over 140 years. According to the late historian Alphonso Biggs, around 1872 a group of people regularly gathered under the grape arbors or wherever else they could find to worship. In 1882, the Georgia legislature granted the group a plot of land at the corner of 6th Avenue and 7th Street to build a church. The original Simpson Chapel Methodist Church was erected at 640 6th Avenue. It is thought that the church was named after Bishop Matthew Simpson, who presided over the 1869 general conference in Atlanta. This conference approved the resolution to organize colored churches in separate districts under the direction of Negro elders.

By the 1960s, the chapel was a very text-sm church surrounded by many larger ones. Church leaders decided that the church needed to move if it was going to grow. The church broke ground on property at Bedford St and Old Cusseta Road in 1963. Stovall Construction Company built the church for a cost of \$ 42,564. The church was renamed the M. L. Harris Methodist Church in recognition of the tremendous contributions that Rev. Marquis Lafayette Harris made toward its construction. In 1968 the church became the United Methodist Church.

Scope and Content

This text-sm collection relates the history of the M. L. Harris United Methodist Church, once the Simpson Chapel Methodist Church. There is a brief history of the church on its 141st anniversary included, along with a biography of the Rev. Marquis Lafayette Harris, for whom the church was named. Also included is a DVD entitled *When Two Become One*, an oral history of Simpson Chapel Methodist Episcopal and M. L. Harris United Methodist, 1872-2013. It was produced by the Communication Historian Committee of the church.

1862-2013 1 folder (.1 l.f.)

Permission to Publish

Permission to publish material from the M.L. Harris United Methodist Church Collection must be obtained from the Columbus State University Archives at Columbus State University. Use of the following credit line for publication or exhibit is required:

M.L. Harris United Methodist Church Collection (SMC 106) Columbus State University Archives Columbus, Georgia

Provenance

The materials in the M.L. Harris United Methodist Church collection were donated by the church on September 3, 2014 to the CSU Archives. The material was delivered by Joyce Leonard.