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FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Inventory of the
Harleston Funeral Home Papers, 1900 - 1976**

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Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary.....	3
Historical Note.....	3
Collection Overview.....	4
Restrictions.....	4
Subject Headings.....	5
Administrative Information.....	5
Detailed Description of the Collection.....	7
1. Funeral Records, 1910-1958.....	7
2. Insurance Records, 1951-1970.....	9
3. Financial Records, 1900-1957.....	10

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Harleston Funeral Home Papers,
Dates:	1900 - 1976
Creator:	Harleston Funeral Home.
Abstract:	<p>The original Harleston Funeral Home was established in Charleston, South Carolina in 1901 by Edwin G. "Captain" Harleston (1854-1931) and his brother, Robert Harleston (1846-1915), under the name Harleston Brothers Funeral Home. It was one of the first funeral homes for African Americans in Charleston.</p> <p>The Harleston Funeral Home Papers consist of 17 volumes which document the deceased, customers, and funeral expenses. They are organized into three series. The Funeral Records (1910-1923; 1929-1950; 1953-1958) are chronologically organized account books detailing funeral and related expenses. All of them contain indexes; some indexes list the deceased while others list the person paying for the funeral. Extensive biographical statistics are often given, and there are various mentions of other businesses using hearses such as those run by N. C. Boags, R. M. Snype and others and references to the Mickey Brothers and Eugene Gadsen (or Gadsden) funeral homes. The Insurance Records (1951-1970) also list deceased and related expenses, but include individual insurance information, and omit extensive biographical information. The Financial Records (1905-1907; 1951-1957) consist of an inventory, receipt, and account book, which lacks individual funeral records and statistics, but detail business expenses with hundreds of decorative bill heads.</p>
Extent:	3.5 linear feet(7 archival boxes)
Repository:	Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston
Call Number:	AMN 1014
Language of Material:	Material in English

Historical Note

The original Harleston Funeral Home was established in Charleston, South Carolina in 1901 by Edwin G. "Captain" Harleston (1854-1931) and his brother, Robert Harleston (1846-1915), under the name Harleston Brothers Funeral Home. It was one of the first funeral homes for African Americans in Charleston. The same year that it was founded, it merged with Mickey Funeral Home following the death of its proprietor, Edward H. Mickey (1850-1899). Mickey had married E.G. Harleston's sister, Hannah Harleston Mickey (1848-1928). As a widow, she joined with her brother E.G. Harleston as joint proprietors of the business and in 1903, the name was changed to Mickey and Harleston Funeral Home. In 1913 the firm was dissolved and E.G. Harleston established a separate funeral operation by erecting a building at 121 Calhoun Street. The business was thereafter known as Harleston Funeral Home. That same year, E.G. Harleston enlisted his artist son, Edwin A. Harleston (1882-1931) to help with the business. They ran the funeral home together until 1931, when they both died. The business then stayed in the Harleston family until 1961, when Jobe Colbert bought controlling

interest. In 1978, Grippon A. Boags purchased the business and renamed it Harleston-Boags Funeral Home. It still (2006) operates at 121 Calhoun Street.

Collection Overview

The Harleston Funeral Home Papers consist of 17 volumes which document the deceased, customers, and funeral expenses. They are organized into three series. The Funeral Records (1910-1923; 1929-1950; 1953-1958) are chronologically organized account books detailing funeral and related expenses. All of them contain indexes; some indexes list the deceased while others list the person paying for the funeral. Extensive biographical statistics are often given, and there are various mentions of other businesses using hearses such as those run by N. C. Boags, R. M. Snype and others and references to the Mickey Brothers and Eugene Gadsen (or Gadsden) funeral homes. The Insurance Records (1951-1970) also list deceased and related expenses, but include individual insurance information, and omit extensive biographical information. The Financial Records (1905-1907; 1951-1957) consist of an inventory, receipt, and account book, which lacks individual funeral records and statistics, but detail business expenses with hundreds of decorative bill heads. **Researchers are required to use microfilmed records.**

Collection Arrangement

1. Funeral Records
2. Insurance Records
3. Financial Records

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Papers have been microfilmed. Researchers are required to use microfilm.

Box 1 - See Reel 1

Box 2 - See Reel 2

Box 3 - See Reel 3

Box 4 - See Reel 4

Box 4 - See Reel 4

Box 5 - See Reel 5

Box 6 - See Reel 6

Box 7 - See Reel 7

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Subject Headings

African American businesspeople -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
African Americans -- South Carolina -- Charleston -- Statistics, Vital.
Boags, N. C.
Eugene Gadsden Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Funeral homes -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Funeral rites and ceremonies -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Harleston Brothers Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Harleston, Edwin Augustus, 1882-1931.
Harleston, Edwin Gaillard, 1854-1931.
Harleston Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Harleston, Robert, 1846-1915.
Mickey and Harleston Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Mickey Brothers Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Mickey Funeral Home (Charleston, S.C.)
Mickey, Hannah Harleston, 1848-1928.
Snype, R. M.
Undertakers and undertaking -- Equipment and supplies.
Undertakers and undertaking -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

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Acquisitions Information

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Processing Information

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Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Funeral Records, 1910-1958

Box 1 Folder 1 Account book (September 1910 - September 1913) of funeral and related expenses.

Accounts appear chronologically under the name of the person or party responsible for payment. Account notations, with amounts and dates paid, include such items as coffins, embalming, hearse and carriage rentals, cemetery, and church fees. The roughly alphabetical index in the front and back of volume (of those paying for the funeral) includes person's address, name of deceased (except if an infant), and often relationship to person paying, with place of death, and place of burial (town, or cemetery) often given. 290 pages.

Box 1 Folder 2 Loose papers from 1910-1913 account book. Consists of two funeral signs.

Box 1 Folder 3 Account book (January 1914 - January 1917) of funerals and related expenses.

Accounts appear chronologically under the name of the person or party responsible for payment. Account notations, with amounts and dates paid, include such items as coffins, embalming, hearses, cemetery and church fees. A roughly alphabetical index (of those paying for the funerals) includes person's address, name of deceased (except if an infant), and often relationship to the person paying, with place of burial (town, or cemetery) given. The second half of the volume documents rentals of hearses and cars to clients identified as Jason Brown, J.D. Parker, C.M. English, Mazyck, Vandross, R.M. Snype, Hoffman, with notations regarding "hospital and training school" charges; charges paid and outstanding debts. Related letters and bills are clipped to pages. 600 pages.

Box 1 Folder 4 Loose papers from 1914-1917 account book.

Notes, receipts, letters regarding caskets, hearses, and flowers. Includes several letters and notes addressed to E. G. Harleston, undertaker, a life insurance company's blank physician certificate and blank proof of death sheet.

Box 1 Folder 5 Account book (January 1917 - December 1919) of funerals and related expenses.

Accounts (beginning on page 100) appear chronologically under the name of the person or party responsible for payment. Account notations, with amounts and dates paid, include such items as coffins, embalming, hearse rentals, cemetery and church fees. A roughly alphabetical index (of those paying for the funerals) includes person's address, name of deceased (except if an infant), and often relationship to the person paying, with place of burial (town, or cemetery) given. The front of the volume documents rentals of hearses and cars to Swinton and Dandridge, Eugene Gadsen, Mickey Brothers, J.A. Robinson and Sons, N.C. Boags, R.M. Snype and others. Also included are notations of rent paid by Dr. M.M. Edwards for 88 Calhoun Street and income tax return calculations for 1917. Of note is a physical description of an "unknown man," injured near Beaufort, South Carolina found on page 153. 488 pages.

Box 1 Folder 6 Loose papers from 1917-1919 account book

Contains receipts, lists, and a blank check from the Commercial National Bank with notations on back.

Box 2 Folder 1 Account book (January 1920 - March 1923) of funerals and related expenses

Accounts (beginning on page 200) appear chronologically under the name of the person or party responsible for payment. Account notations, with amounts and dates paid, include such items as coffins, embalming, hearses, cemetery and church fees. A roughly alphabetical index (of those paying for the funerals) includes person's address, name of deceased (except if an infant), and often relationship to the person paying, with place of burial (town, or cemetery) given. The front of the volume documents rentals of hearses and cars to N.C. Boags, Swinton and Dandridge, Julius Fielding, R.F. Holmes, Eugene Gadsen, R.M. Snype, Mickey Brothers. List is continued on p. 500. Related letters and bills are paper clipped to pages. Casket orders and expenses are also listed. 600 pages.

Box 2 Folder 2 **Loose papers from 1920-1923 account book**

Includes receipts, lists, notes and a letter regarding settling funeral payments and debts owed.

Box 2 Folder 3 **Funeral record book (February 1929 - July 1932)**

Contains chronological fill-in-the-blank sheets for biographical and funerary statistics, filled in to varying degrees. Data sought includes name and address of deceased (except if an infant); date of birth, death, and interment; place of birth and death; names of mother, father, and birthplaces; deceased's occupation, sex, age, marital status, and color or race; primary and secondary causes of death and certifying physician; place of burial, time of service, place of funeral services, and location of grave in cemetery. Also lists casket manufacturer, size, and number; embalming, hearse, and automobile fees; flowers, gloves, and newspaper fees, with amounts and dates paid. A roughly alphabetical index in front of volume lists deceased. Loose items are clipped to related records. 300 pages.

Box 2 Folder 4 **Loose papers from 1929-1932 record book**

Includes bills, receipts, letterhead and paper scraps with notations, blank debtors lists, a photocopy of a filled-out death certificate, and casket order forms.

Box 2 Folder 5 **Funeral record book (July 1932 - November 1936)**

Contains chronological fill-in-the-blank sheets for biographical and funerary statistics, filled in to varying degrees. Data sought includes name and address of deceased (except if an infant); date of birth, death, and interment; place of birth and death; names of mother, father, and birthplaces; deceased's occupation, sex, age, marital status, and color or race; primary and secondary causes of death and certifying physician; place of burial, time of service, place of funeral services, and location of grave in cemetery. Also lists casket manufacturer, size, and number; embalming, hearse, and automobile fees; flowers, gloves, and newspaper fees, with amounts and dates paid. A roughly alphabetical index in front of volume lists deceased. Loose items are clipped to related records. 300 pages.

Box 2 Folder 6 **Loose papers from 1932-1936 record book**

Includes newspaper clippings of death notices, blank letterhead paper, and an individual tax return for Edwin G. Harleston (funeral director) for 1931.

Box 3 Folder 1-7 **Funeral record book (November 1936 - October 1947)**

Disbound and separated into seven folders. Contains chronological fill-in-the-blank sheets for biographical and funerary statistics, filled in to varying degrees. Data sought includes name and address of deceased (except if an infant); date of birth, death, and interment; place of birth and death; names of mother, father, and birthplaces; deceased's occupation,

sex, age, marital status, and color or race; primary and secondary causes of death and certifying physician; place of burial, time of service, place of funeral services, and location of grave in cemetery. Also lists casket manufacturer, size, and number; embalming, hearse, and automobile fees; flowers, gloves, and newspaper fees, with amounts and dates paid. A roughly alphabetical index in front of volume lists deceased. Loose items are clipped to related records. 300 pages.

Box 3 Folder 8 **Loose papers from 1936-1947 record book**

Contains a bond exemption, several blank Elmwood cemetery certificates, a casket order form, etc.

Box 3 Folder 9 **Funeral record book (November 1947 - May 1950)**

Contains chronological fill-in-the-blank sheets for biographical and funeral statistics, filled in to varying degrees. Data sought includes name and address of deceased; date of birth, death, and funeral; place of birth and death; names of mother, father, and birthplaces; deceased's occupation, sex, age, marital status, and color or race; primary and secondary causes of death and certifying physician's name and address; place of burial, time of service, place of funeral services, and location of grave in cemetery. Funerary statistics, with amounts and dates paid, include: casket, embalming, flowers, gloves, newspaper, burial permit and open burial fees. Roughly alphabetical index lists deceased in front of volume. Of note is the publisher's note and a page of "Funeral Ethics" at the beginning of the ledger. 300 pages.

Box 3 Folder 10 **Loose papers from 1947-1950 record book**

Includes part of a blank statement of death form of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; a letter regarding advertising rates.

Box 4 Folder 1 **Funeral record book (May 1953 - September 1958)**

Contains chronological fill-in-the-blank sheets for biographical and funeral statistics, filled in to varying degrees. Data sought includes name and address of deceased; date of birth, death, and funeral; place of birth and death; names of mother, father, and birthplaces; deceased's occupation, sex, age, marital status, and color or race; primary and secondary causes of death and certifying physician's name and address; place of burial, time of service, place of funeral services, and location of grave in cemetery. Funerary statistics, with amounts and dates paid, include: casket, embalming, flowers, gloves, newspaper, burial permit and burial fees. Roughly alphabetical index lists deceased in front of volume. Of note is the publisher's note and a page of "Funeral Ethics" in front of book. 300 pages.

Box 4 Folder 2 **Loose papers from 1953-1958 record book**

Contains a letter from the Harleston Funeral Home to the Charleston County Probate Court requesting a hearing for uncollected funeral payments; a letter requesting payments for services; notepaper with notations; a section of Social Security form and a partially filled out application for a certified copy of a death record.

2. Insurance Records, 1951-1970

Box 5 Folder 1 **Insurance record (March 1951 - August 1953)**

Deceased are listed chronologically and entries include name and address, date of death, place of death, and place and date of burial. Insurance information is nearly always provided and includes name of company, policy holder names and often conflicting ages

when various policies were acquired, beneficiary name and relationship to deceased, policy number, date of purchase, and premiums. A roughly alphabetical index in front of the volume lists deceased. The front end sheet has several entries on deceased, with insurance information. The back of the volume contains records of car rental information including car destination, charges and payment information with a hearse hire listing. 140 pages.

Box 5 Folder 2 Insurance record (May 1953 - April 1957)

Deceased are listed chronologically and entries include name and address, date of death, place of death, and place and date of burial. Insurance information is nearly always provided and includes name of company, policy holder names and often conflicting ages when various policies were acquired, beneficiary name and relationship to deceased, policy number, date of purchase, and schedule of premiums. A roughly alphabetical index in front of the volume lists deceased. The front and back end sheets contain misc. notations. The back of the volume contains records of funeral car information including car destination, charges and payment information with a hearse hire listing. 184 pages.

Box 5 Folder 3 Loose papers from 1953-1957 insurance record

Consists of a record of claim for unemployment insurance of the Railroad Retirement Board and a receipt.

Box 5 Folder 4 Insurance book (May 1957 - August 1960)

Deceased are listed chronologically and entries include name and address, date of death, place of death, and place and date of burial. Insurance information includes name of company, policy holder, beneficiary, policy number, date of purchase, and premium payments. A roughly alphabetical index in front of the volume lists deceased. Also includes funeral car information including destination, charges and payments. 160 pages.

Box 5 Folder 5 Insurance book (September 1960 - October 1963)

Deceased are listed chronologically and entries include name and address, date of death, place of death, and place and date of burial. Insurance information includes name of life insurance company, policy holder, beneficiary, policy number, date of purchase, and premiums. A roughly alphabetical index in front of the volume lists deceased. 152 pages.

Box 5 Folder 6 Insurance book (October 1963 - August 1970)

Deceased are listed chronologically and entries include name and address, date of death, place of death, and place and date of burial. Insurance information includes name of life insurance company, policy holder, beneficiary, policy number, date of purchase, and premiums. A roughly alphabetical index in front of the volume lists deceased. 284 pages.

Box 5 Folder 7 Loose papers from 1963-1970 insurance record

Includes a life insurance pamphlet from Southern Life Insurance company, receipts, and a letter regarding insurance records for a 1967 death.

3. Financial Records, 1900-1957

Box 6 Folder 1 Miscellaneous loose receipts and order forms from 1900-1907 account book (see below).

Box 6 Folder 2-11 Account book (December 1900 - January 1907)

Disbound and separated into eleven folders, containing miscellaneous pasted-in invoices, receipts, and bills regarding coffins, caskets, undertaker supplies; buggy, carriage, and wagon repair and hires; telephone and telegraph bills; florist receipts; freight bills; newspaper advertising. Of note is an autopsy report detailing a man's death by smashed skull in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Note: fragile and brittle

Box 7 Folder 1 Inventory book (March 1951 - March 1954)

Listing funeral home supplies and equipment. Partial, roughly alphabetical index in front of volume lists the following items: caskets and vaults in stock, chairs and sofas, cemetery equipment, dressers and suits in stock, embalming equipment, light fixtures, and office equipment. Inventory often lists items, number of units, and total value. 124 pages.

Box 7 Folder 2 Miscellaneous loose receipts from 1951-1954 inventory book

Box 7 Folder 3 Receipt book (October 1953 - March 1957)

Carbon copy receipt stubs, mostly with originals, for funeral home billings. Book is organized chronologically and includes receipt stub number, date payment was received, name of person or party issuing and receiving payment, reason for payment, amount of money in account, amount paid, and balance due. Payments are mainly for funerals, check exchanges, the South Carolina Electric and Gas Company, hearse hires, and loans.