Guide to the History of Harry Noble Simms (Simmons)

Prepared by Asia Bender & Catiana Foster



**Tuskegee University Archives**

# Tuskegee, AL 36088

Tuskegee University Archives

©2023, Tuskegee University. All rights reserved.

**Collection Summary**

**Creator:** Tuskegee University

**Title:** History of Harry Noble Simms

**Dates: 1914-2012**

**Quantity:** 21.333 cubic feet

**Identification:**

**Abstract:**

**Contact Information:** Tuskegee University Archives

Tuskegee University

Tuskegee, AL36088USA

Phone: (334) 725-2383

Fax: (334) 725-2321

Email**:** [**archives@mytu.tuskegee.edu**](mailto:archives@mytu.tuskegee.edu)

URL: [www.tuskegee.edu/ArchivesRepository](http://www.tuskegee.edu/ArchivesRepository)

### Administrative Information

**Preferred Citation**

History of Harry Noble Simms

**Acquisition Information**

Acquired in 2023 by the Tuskegee Archives from an unknown individual. The Tuskegee University Archives acquired the material as a donation from an unknown individual.

**Processing Information**

The records were received from an unknown individual in two bags, (1) a Go Green JoAnn fabric and craft store bag and (2) the other a laptop bag from the 4th Biennial Grand Boule held in New Orleans, LA. Materials were dropped off at Tuskegee’s Archival Department. Materials were removed from their binders (as necessary), and tabs and metal fasteners were removed. Each individual file was then replaced into a new, archival quality folder with the information on the old files replicated to the new. The original order was maintained.

##### *Biography*

Harry Noble Simms was born on September 21, 1914. Noble was the eldest of 4 children born to Harry and Alberta Simms of Snow Hill, Alabama. Noble Simms received his Bachelor of Science degree from Tuskegee Institute in 1938. As a student, he managed his family-owned business, Simms Sassafras Tea Co. of Tuskegee. After graduation, Noble began expanding Simms' Sassafras Tea Co outside of southern markets, reaching Detroit, Illinois, Wisconsin, and other regions. Sears and Roebuck began distributing the tea across multiple markets. Unfortunately, Simms’ Sassafras Tea Co was just one of many businesses that closed operations due to the ramifications of WWII.

Noble enlisted in United States Navy to serve during WWII. He founded and directed the school of music for black service members at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Great Lakes, Michigan. In addition, Noble oversaw over 100 band units that entertained naval personnel worldwide.

He received his master of arts degree and ED. S (Education Specialist) in School Administration from New York University. He was elected Vice President of the Graduate Students Organization as a graduate student. He was well acquainted with the New York school system serving as a public-school teacher, supervisor, principal, Performing Arts School, and New York University Instructor. Governor Rockefeller’s administration appointed Simms as “The Inspector General’s Office” for New York State Elementary and Secondary Education Program Overview. Noble Simms was the founder and president of “Outreach,” The Promotional Firm, INC, and Noble Greeting Cards.

Noble Simms served and affiliated with multiple organizations. He was a lifelong member of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, “The Boule.” In addition, he was the Vice President of the New York University School of Education Alumni Association and a Board Member of the Albany Symphony Orchestra and the New York Department of Education, among other prominent positions.

In 2008, the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame inducted Harry Noble Simms because of his many contributions to Jazz.

Unfortunately, Harry Noble Simms passed away on May 4, 2012, at the Vermont Veteran Home, Bennington, VT, at 97.

###### Scope and Contents

The collection consists of reports, documents, data, correspondence, and research spanning Harry Noble Simm's lifetime. Includes all his material specific to the U.S. Army Band Program.

###### Arrangement

The documents are arranged as the original series received from Harry Simms from an unknown individual.

###### Restrictions

There are no restrictions on access. Researchers are responsible for addressing copyright issues on materials not in the public domain.

### Inventory

**Box Folder**

1 1 Automatic Train Signal

1 2 Civil Rights Movement

1 3 Individual Photos of Harry Noble Simms

1 4 Noble Greeting Cards: Harry Noble Simms 1999

1 5 Oprah Winfrey

1 6 Snow Hill Institution

1 7 Tuskegee Institute, Harry Noble Simms

1 8 Tuskegee Institute Annual Report of the President 1975-1988

1 9 U.S. Navy School Band Photos 1942-1945

1 10 U.S. Navy Band 1942-1945

1 11 U.S. Army Training, Tuskegee Institute

1 12 Various Newsletters

**Box Folder**

2 1 Photos of H. Noble Simms and Family

2 2 Harry Noble Simms 1914-2012

2 3 The Albany Symphony Orchestra

2 4 Great Lakes Band Program at Great Lakes/ U.S. Navy 1942-1946

2 5 Albany Jazz Hall of Fame

2 6 Sassafras Product Company/ H. Simms and Sons Documents 1927-1945

2 7 The Bell Electrotyping Company Printing Plates 1938

2 8 Robert Simms and Family/ Friends Photos

2 9 Robert Simms meeting with Queen Elizabeth II 1991

2 10 My Life Before and Beyond Tuskegee, A Personal Account by H. Noble Simms

Class of 1938

2 11 Simmons Family Reunion and Family History

**Box Folders**

3 1 Booker T. Washington/ George Washington-Carver

3 2 Simms Family and Friends Photos

3 3 Vision and Fulfillment Tuskegee Institute Program

3 4 Aubrey Watkins Simms Memorial 2006

3 5 Correspondence from Robert Simms

3 6 News Clipping from Robert Simms

3 7 Robert Simms works in Dade County

3 8 Jet Magazine Exotic and Erotic; Josephine Baker Story, Stars Lynn Whitefield,

December 10, 1995

3 9 Family Obituary Documents