

Collection #
M1549

**MARTIN LUTHER ROBERTS FAMILY
COLLECTION, CA. 1870-1963**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 half size box of photographs, 3 tintypes

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1870-1963

PROVENANCE: Purchased from Carolina Rare Books, Aiken, SC

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2025.0069

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Martin Luther Roberts (January 30, 1871-May 20, 1940) was the son of William Penn and Mary Knight Roberts, the brother of Martha Lucetta Roberts Gilliam, Maggie Roberts Harvey, and Rev. Willie Roberts. He was born, raised, and educated in Roberts Settlement, near Arcadia in Hamilton County, Indiana. Eventually, Roberts settled in Terre Haute, Indiana where he lived with his wife, Lillie Bell Hill. The couple had four children, Luther, LeRoy, Joseph, and Maybelle. Roberts was a skilled craftsman, working in piano and furniture repair and he was noted on multiple occasions for providing a vocal selection at a Roberts Chapel gathering.

Lillie Bell Hill Roberts (January 3, 1874-August 16, 1946) was the daughter of John and Margaret [Margarite?] "Maggie" Birkholder [Burkhold?] Hill and the sister of Scioto Hill Green, Mabel Hill Richardson, Ella May Hill Palmer, Harry McNight Hill and Carrie Roberts Hill. She was born in Terre Haute and was raised in Indianapolis before returning to Terre Haute where she raised her children.

Luther Hill Roberts (June 22, 1901-March 5, 1983) was the son of Martin Luther Roberts and Lillie Bell Hill Roberts. He was born and raised in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he attended Lincoln School and Indiana State Normal School (now known as Indiana State University). On December 29th, 1929, Roberts married Musetta Virginia Scott Roberts (April 11, 1906-April 18, 2006) of Princeton, Indiana. In 1935, the family moved to Evansville, Indiana. Both Luther and Musetta had degrees in education. Luther taught Industrial Arts at Lincoln School and Musetta at Head Start of Evansville. The couple had three children, Luther A. Roberts, Robert Lowell Roberts, and David Matthew Roberts. Luther, who had been very active in the Boy Scouts of America in his youth continued his involvement with the organization as a scoutmaster and pack committee member as an adult.

Sources:

"Death of Luther Roberts, Age 73," *The Noblesville Ledger*, 25 October 1944, Page 3.

"Home Coming at Roberts Chapel," *The Noblesville Ledger*, 7 July 1925, Page 1.

"Obituary of Mrs. M. Hill," *The St. Louis Argus*, 26 December 1919, Page 8.

"Scoutmaster and Wife Train in New Mexico," *Evansville Courier and Press*, 13 August 1963, Page 4.

"Musetta (Scott) Roberts," *Princeton Daily Clarion*, 26 April 2006, Page 3.

"Luther Hill Roberts," *Evansville Press*, 6 March 1983, Page 21.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains diaries, letters, and photographs documenting the Martin Luther Roberts family of Terre Haute, Indiana. A significant portion of the collection is made up of four diaries kept by Martin Luther Roberts' son, Luther Hill Roberts. The diaries capture the time between 1917 and 1923 and document Roberts' perspective as a young Black man growing up in Terre Haute. Roberts makes quick entries each day commenting on a variety of happenings- his involvement with the Boy Scouts, the different jobs he works, going out for ice cream, swimming at Lost Creek, taking college classes at Indiana State Normal School (now Indiana State), playing in the orchestra, singing in a choir, attending church, and spending time with friends and family. Peppared into his accounts are mentions of larger events in town and nationally, like attending the formal opening of the Lincoln School, watching a KKK parade, and the death of President Harding.

Also in the collection are fifty-one photographs, carte de visites, and tintypes, mostly all portraiture, of Roberts and Hill relatives. Individuals who are identified include: Jefferson Neal and Rebecca Roberts Newal, John Hill, Mabel Hill Jones, Augustus Rice, Lillie Rice, Daisy Roberts, Scioto Hill Green, Sallie Smith, Robert Bruce Sweat, Henry Thornton, R.R. Wright, Lillie Bell Hill Roberts, and Martin Luther Roberts.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Manuscripts

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Miscellaneous blank postcards, clippings, and ephemera, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 1
Souvenir, Rev. J.P.Q. Wallace and Family, ca. 1890s	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, Luther Hill Roberts, 1907-1909; 1952	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, Ella Hill Palmer, ca. 1909	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, Mabel Hill Jones, 1910; 1915	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, Martin Luther Roberts, 1911	Box 1, Folder 6
Diary, Luther Hill Roberts, 1917	Box 1, Folder 7
YMCA Fund, Honor Roll of Service Card, 1918	Box 1, Folder 8
Diary, Luther Hill Roberts, 1919	Box 1, Folder 9
Diary, Luther Hill Roberts, 1920	Box 1, Folder 10
Diary, Luther Hill Roberts, 1923	Box 1, Folder 11
Boy Scout Membership Cards, 1931; 1933	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, Musetta Scott Roberts, 1963	Box 1, Folder 13

Series 2: Visuals

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Portrait, Clara Roberts Cook	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 1
Portrait, John Hill	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 2
Portrait, [Daughter of John Hill?]	Tintypes
Portrait, Scioto Hill Green	Tintypes

Portraits, Mabel Hill Jones	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 3
Portrait, Jefferson Neal and Rebecca Roberts Neal	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 4
Portraits, Augustus Rice	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 5
Portrait, Lillie Rice	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 6
Portrait, Daisy Roberts	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 7
Portraits, Martin Luther Roberts and Lillie Bell Hill Roberts	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 8
Roberts Settlement Homecomings, ca. 1950s	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 9
Portrait, Sallie Smith	Tintypes
Portrait, Robert Bruce Sweat	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 10
Portrait, Henry Thornton	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 11
[R.R. Wright and Unidentified Man]	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 12
Unidentified Children	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 13
Unidentified Groups	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 14
Unidentified Home Interior	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 15
Unidentified Men	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 16
Unidentified Women	Photographs, Box 1, Folder 17

