

Record Series #: 1121-116**Name: Gaston family papers****Dates: 1867-1945, no date****Extent/Size: 0.5 records carton, 1.0 oversized folder (0.6 cubic feet)****Language: English****Name of Creator(s):**

George Edward Davis

Maria Gaston Davis

Alexander Hamilton Gaston

Alexander Hamilton Gaston, Jr.

Eldridge Hamilton Gaston

Moses Gaston

Paul Gaston

Permelia Gaston

Rebecca Gaston

Elizabeth Ridgley

Archibald Tompkins

Sophronia Gaston Tompkins

Biographical History:

The Gaston Family was a large family of African American teachers, laborers, and veterans, who resided mostly in North Carolina and Savannah, Georgia.

Alexander Hamilton Gaston (1832-1909) and Permelia Capers (1847-1927) were married on June 12, 1867 in Bibb County, Georgia. Alexander Gaston was a barber and Permelia was a stay-at-home mother and dressmaker. The couple had eight children together, the first three born in Macon, Georgia, and then the family moved to Savannah, Georgia, by 1875, where most of the family remained for the rest of their lives. Alexander Gaston worked as a night watchman for the Savannah U. S. Custom House until the late 1880s. He continued his work as a barber for the rest of his life.

The first born was Moses C. Gaston (circa 1868-1902), a soldier of the 24th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army. The second-born child was Maria Gaston Davis (1869-1945), who married Dr. George Edward Davis (1862-1959), and lived with their five children in Charlotte, North Carolina. Maria Gaston Davis and Dr. Davis worked as teachers. Paul E. Gaston (1870-1930) was the third child; he held several jobs including, carpenter, technician, and fireman. Paul Gaston married Maria A. L. James (1883-1935) and they had one child together, Eldridge Hamilton Gaston (1897-1951). Rebecca Elizabeth Gaston (1873-1925) was the fourth child of Alexander and Permelia Gaston. Rebecca Gaston became a certified teacher in 1917 and taught in Savannah schools from 1919 until her death on January 9, 1925 from breast cancer. The next child to come along was Alexander Hamilton Gaston, Jr. (1875-1953), who attended Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith University), and was an electrician, divorced, and lived with his son George Gaston (1897-1968) in North Carolina. Olmstead Gaston (1877-1965), a carpenter, was the sixth child of the family and lived in Savannah, Georgia, with his wife, Isabella C. Deen (1880-unknown), and their eight children. The second to last child born to Alexander and Permelia Gaston was Sophronia Marie Gaston Tompkins (1885-1962). Sophronia

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Tompkins married Dr. Archibald Tompkins (1884-1955) on December 25, 1919. Sophronia Tompkins was an educator and principal of the Woodville School for over thirty years. After her retirement in 1955, the school was renamed Sophronia Tompkins High School. The last child born to the Gastons was Arnett Gaston (1890-1931), a carpenter; he married Henrietta (1894-1961) around 1914 and they had two children together.

The Gaston family are buried in North Carolina and at Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia.

Scope & Content:

The Gaston family papers (1867-1945, no date) contain marriage and financial records, and correspondence sent to and from various Gaston family members. The bulk of the papers are financial documents, including deeds, property taxes, receipts, banking records, and insurance policies. Other records in the collection include song books, sheet music, marriage licenses, envelopes, and teaching material. One record of note is a letter from John H. Deveaux, the first African American Customs Collector, sent on August 20, 1890 from Brunswick to Alexander Gaston communicating he received Gaston's favor and that local politics are "hot here as elsewhere."

System of Arrangement & Ordering:

The Gaston family papers are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Conditions Governing Access:

Collection is stored offsite and researchers must request desired records at least one (1) full business day before scheduled research appointment for access.

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Access Points:

African American universities and colleges

African American women teachers

Barber-Scotia College (Concord, NC)

Deveaux, John H., 1848-1909

Gaston, Alexander, 1832-1909

Gaston, Paul E., 1870-1930

Gaston, Permelia, 1847-1927

Gaston, Rebecca, 1873-1925

Gospel music

Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte, NC)

Macon-Bibb County, Ga.

Savannah (Ga.)

Songbooks

Tompkins, Archibald, 1884-1955

Tompkins, Sophronia, 1885-1962

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Local 256 (Savannah, Ga.)

Woodville Tompkins High School (Savannah, Ga.)

World War, 1914-1918

Sponsors/Funding:

Chatham County, Georgia, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funding.

Preferred Citation:

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Processed by:

M. Kerkhoff, January 2021.

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Inventory

Box

Folder

Folder title, date(s) [Archivist's notes]

Box 1121-000-0003

Folder 1121-116-0001	Alexander Gaston and Permelia Capers marriage license, Bibb County, Georgia, June 12, 1867
Folder 1121-116-0002	"Bowles Favorite Gospel and Spiritual Melodies No. 3" by Bowles Music House, circa 1939
Folder 1121-116-0003	Correspondence, 1873, 1878, 1890-1898 [notable correspondents: Customs House, Collector's Office, Savannah, Georgia, April 2, 1873; John H. Deveaux, Brunswick, Georgia, August 20, 1890]
Folder 1121-116-0004	Correspondence, 1901, 1903-1910
Folder 1121-116-0005	Correspondence, 1911-1913
Folder 1121-116-0006	Correspondence, 1914-1917
Folder 1121-116-0007	Correspondence, 1922-1925, 1929
Folder 1121-116-0008	Correspondence, no date
Folder 1121-116-0009	Detached song books, unknown artists, no date
Folder 1121-116-0010	Envelopes, no date
Folder 1121-116-0011	Financials, 1908, 1914-1915, 1921, 1925, no date
Folder 1121-116-0012	Financials, banking records, 1869, 1899, no date
Folder 1121-116-0013	Financials, deeds, 1895, 1898
Folder 1121-116-0014	Financials, deeds, 1903, 1916, 1919
Folder 1121-116-0015	Financials, deeds, 1921-1925
Folder 1121-116-0016	Financials, fire insurance, 1914-1915, 1919-1925, 1929
Folder 1121-116-0017	Financials, handwritten notes, 1881, 1912, no date
Folder 1121-116-0018	Financials, insurance, 1904-1906, 1915, 1923-1924, no date
Folder 1121-116-0019	Financials, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company records, 1903-1913, 1925, no date
Folder 1121-116-0020	Financials, pension documents, 1894, 1912
Folder 1121-116-0021	Financials, real estate documents, 1919
Folder 1121-116-0022	Financials, receipts, 1878, 1885, 1889
Folder 1121-116-0023	Financials, receipts, 1898
Folder 1121-116-0024	Financials, receipts, 1900-1903
Folder 1121-116-0025	Financials, receipts, 1904-1910
Folder 1121-116-0026	Financials, receipts, 1913-1915
Folder 1121-116-0027	Financials, receipts, 1916-1917
Folder 1121-116-0028	Financials, receipts, 1918-1919
Folder 1121-116-0029	Financials, receipts, 1920
Folder 1121-116-0030	Financials, receipts, 1921
Folder 1121-116-0031	Financials, receipts, 1922-1923
Folder 1121-116-0032	Financials, receipts, 1924-1925

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| Folder 1121-116-0033 | Financials, receipts, no date |
| Folder 1121-116-0034 | Financials, receipts for water service payments, 1903-1925 |
| Folder 1121-116-0035 | Financials, receipts for Woodville School paid to Homemade Candy Company, 1925 |
| Folder 1121-116-0036 | Financials, taxes, bills and notices, 1902-1903, 1911-1918, 1921, no date |
| Folder 1121-116-0037 | Financials, taxes, receipts, 1889, 1892-1909 |
| Folder 1121-116-0038 | Financials, taxes, receipts, 1910-1925 |
| Folder 1121-116-0039 | "Frye's Gospel Melodies," songbook, edited by Theodore R. Frye, circa 1945 |
| Folder 1121-116-0040 | Martin Studio of Gospel Music, sheet music for "Didn't it Rain," and "Go Shepherd, Feed my Sheep," by Roberta Martin, 1936, 1939 |
| Folder 1121-116-0041 | Moses C. Gaston's estate document, October 1902 |
| Folder 1121-116-0042 | Paul E. Gaston's United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America membership card, 1901-1902 |
| Folder 1121-116-0043 | Petition to the United States' Congress from Georgia citizens, urging Congress to create more polling stations for Georgia elections, 1873 [no signatures] |
| Folder 1121-116-0044 | Rebecca Gaston's teacher certificate from North Carolina, July 1917 |
| Folder 1121-116-0045 | Sheet music, various, 1937-1944 |
| Folder 1121-116-0046 | "The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly," Standard Edition, Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1872 [partial, only two front pages] |
| Folder 1121-116-0047 | Teaching material, no date |

Oversized Box 1121-000-0004

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| Folder 1121-116-0048 | Sophonria Gaston and Dr. Archibald Tompkins marriage invitation and license, December 25, 1919 [oversized] |
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