

Collection Contents

RG 196: Records of the Syphax Family, 1920-1993 (17 records)

RG 196: Records of the Syphax Family, 1920-1993

The name Syphax has been present in northern Virginia since the early 1800s. Some historians believe that Maria Carter Syphax might have been the daughter of George Washington Parke Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington and adopted by George Washington. Maria grew up at Arlington House, the slave of Parke Custis, and married Charles Syphax, another slave owned by Parke Custis. After their marriage, they were granted 17 acres of land which was officially deeded to them by an act of Congress in 1866. William Syphax, one of Maria and Charles' ten children, became the first president of the trustee board of Colored schools in Washington, D.C. This William Syphax was the great-uncle of William Thomas Syphax.

William Thomas Syphax, who was born in Arlington, Virginia, became one of the leading black business entrepreneurs in the 1970s. His wife, Margarite Reed Syphax, was one of the first black business women to be designated a Certified Property Manager. This prominent couple started a real estate and construction business that was recognized in *Black Enterprise*'s first list of the 100 Top Black Businesses in 1973. While building his business, William also found the time to get a Masters' Degree in Engineering Administration from George Washington University, and a PhD in Behavioral Philosophy from Pacific Western University. He had earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the Virginia State College for Negroes in 1942 and became its Rector in 1974.

William and Margarite met when both were serving the United States during World War II. William was a Group Electronics Officer in the United States Army Air Corps and Margarite toured as an acrobatic dancer with the USO. When William and Margarite returned to Arlington County after World War II, housing was still heavily segregated. In the early 1950s they started selling real estate and then filled a need by designing and building housing for other black residents who were then living in substandard housing in the area then known as "Johnson Hill" and now called Arlington View; William and Margarite lived at 1327 S Queen St. They also built an apartment complex that had an open rental policy – unlike other apartment buildings at the time that were race restrictive. Photographs of the first houses they built are found in the "The Syphax Story – Getting Started."

Margarite Syphax and Members of the Arlington Metropolitan Chorus Board of Directors

"A Day at the Office -- Working Together"

Wedding Day, 1945

Arlington Bicentennial "Get to Know Your Commission Margarite Syphax" Profile

Northern Virginia Sun March 23, 1972 "Syphax Groundbreaking National Children's Center"

Property Management Certificate

Margarite Syphax 1978 Professional Resume

Margarite Syphax, USO Dancer, 1943

LINKS, Inc. Honoring Margarite Syphax

Letter from Margarite Syphax to LINKS, Inc.

The LINKS, Inc. Honors "Black Women in Business" Program

Margarite Syphax and Female Co-worker

Margarite Syphax and a Mother and Daughter

Margarite Syphax and Female Co-worker, n.d.

Margarite and William Syphax

Margarite Syphax, 1976

Margarite Syphax at Luncheon

Series 1: William Thomas Syphax, 1920-1989

Subseries 1: Personal Life

File 1: Birth and death certificates

File 2: Education

File 3: United States Army service

File 4: Letters to Jessie Thomas Syphax (Mother of William), 1943

CollectiveAccess

File 5: Marriage, 1945

File 6: Death – Funeral Program and obituaries

File 7: Death – Condolence letters

File 8: Death – Burial arrangements

Subseries 2: Professional Life

File 1: The Syphax Story: Getting Started – Building of Homes, Apartments and Jobs

File 2: The Syphax Story: Real Estate -- Black Business – Growing, Finances

File 3: The Syphax Story: Black Enterprise

File 4: The Syphax Story: Miscellaneous items found in front of binder

File 5: Syphax Enterprises – “A Unique Investment Opportunity”

File 6: Syphax Enterprises brochure

File 7: Phoenix Food Systems, Inc., 1984 – Phoenix Concept for Black Economic Progress

File 8: Phoenix Food Systems, Inc., 1984 -- A Unique Investment Opportunity

File 9: Phoenix Food Systems, Inc., [n.d.] – Business Concept -- J.J.’s Urban Foodcenter System

File 10: Blueprint for Economic Survival – Dissertation (draft) – 2 copies

File 11: Copyright Registration for Blueprint for Black Economic Survival, 1983

File 12: Vantage Press – Publishing Contract for Blueprint for Black Economic Survival, 1984

File 13: Resumes

File 14: Letters

File 15: Newspaper articles

Series 2: Margarite Reed Syphax (b.1923)

Subseries 1: Education

Subseries 2: Professional Life (3 records)

Letter from Margarite Syphax to LINKS, Inc.

Property Management Certificate

Margarite Syphax 1978 Professional Resume

File 1: Certified Property Manager Certificate

File 2: Resumes

File 3: Honors (2 records)

The LINKS, Inc. Honors "Black Women in Business" Program

LINKS, Inc. Honoring Margarite Syphax

File 4: Newspaper articles

Series 3: Photographs

File 1: William Thomas Syphax

File 2: Margarite Reed Syphax

File 3: Group photographs

Series 4: Other Syphax Family Members

CollectiveAccess

File 1: Jessie Thomas Syphax (1895-1984)

File 2: Archie Douglas Syphax (1921-1988)

File 3: Evelyn Frances Reid Syphax (1926-2000)

Series 5: History of Syphax Family

File 1: Maria Carter Syphax (1803?-1886)

File 2: William Syphax (1825-1891)

Series 6: Magazines

File 1: Black Enterprise, June 1973 (2 copies)

File 2: Black Enterprise, June 1975 (2 copies)

File 3: Black Enterprise, June 1976 and August 1976

File 4: Black Enterprise, June 1977 (2 copies)

File 5: Black Enterprise, November 1978 and January 1982

File 6: Black Enterprise, June 1973

File 7: Ebony, August 1977

Series 7: Miscellaneous Personal Items

College diploma of WTS – Virginia State College for Negroes, Ettrick, Virginia, 1942

Certificate of Merit to MRS – Virginia State College, Petersburg, Virginia, 1978

Dog tag of WTS

Drivers' licenses of WTS and MRS

US Civil Service Commission Annuitant Identification Card of WTS

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., life membership card of WTS

Inter-Service Club Council, Past Recipient Man of the Year plaque, 2000