In 1866, the Armwood family settled near the Alafia River in Seffner, FL. Over the years, the family played a major role in the social and political development of Hillsborough County, especially as related to the area's African American community.

In 1878, family patriarch Levin Armwood (1854 - 1936) married Margaret Holloman (1862 - 1936), the daughter of Hillsborough County pioneer Adam Holloman. Levin and Margaret Armwood had five children: Walter Adam (1879 - 1944), Idella (1881 - 1968), James (1883 - 1889), Henry (1884 - 1885), and Blanche (1890 - 1939). A citrus-grower by trade, Levin Armwood, Jr. served as Hillsborough County's first African-American deputy sheriff, Supervisor of County Roads, and Postmaster; he was also the first African-American police officer for the city of Tampa. In 1914, along with his son Walter, Levin Armwood opened the Gem Drugstore on Central Avenue- the first African-American owned drugstore in Tampa. Levin Armwood, Jr. served as Hillsborough County's first African-American deputy sheriff, Supervisor of County Roads, and Postmaster; he was also the first African-American police officer for the city of Tampa. In 1914, along with his son Walter, Levin Armwood opened the Gem Drugstore on Central Avenue- the first African-American owned drugstore in Tampa.

One of the most widely recognized members of the Armwood family, Blanche, is regarded as one of Hillsborough County's most prominent women of the early 20th century. An educator and speaker who rose to national heights, Blanche Armwood began her professional career as a teacher for Tampa's African-American schools. In 1914, the same year that her family opened the Gem, Blanche was contacted by the Tampa
Gas Company to serve as a demonstrator. Later that year, Armwood established the Tampa School of Household Arts, where African-American women and girls learned domestic science skills. She served as principal, instructor and course developer for the school and eventually established a sister school, the New Orleans School of Domestic Science, in Louisiana. Based on Armwood’s success, other domestic science schools were established in Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina. Other significant accomplishments of Blanche Armwood include appointment as Supervisor of Negro Schools for Hillsborough County (1928 - 1934) and co-founder and first executive secretary of the Tampa Urban League. In 1985, Armwood Senior High School was dedicated in her honor. <p style="color: rgb(34, 34, 34); font-family: Arial,Verdana,sans-serif; font-size: 12px; font-style: normal; font-variant: normal; font-weight: 400; letter-spacing: normal; orphans: 2; text-align: left; text-decoration: none; text-indent: 0px; text-transform: none; -webkit-text-stroke-width: 0px; white-space: normal; word-spacing: 0px;"> Walter Armwood III died on September 30, 2009.

Scope Note
The collection provides a general overview of the Armwood family's numerous accomplishments and professional and personal activities. Birth, marriage, and death certificates are included as well as photographs, correspondences, legal documents, military service records, newspaper clippings, brochures and other printed materials, diaries, manuscripts, and speeches.

Arrangement Note: Record groups. The collection is divided into the following record groups: (1) Armwood Family papers; (2) Armwood Family photographs. Record Group (1) is further subdivided into 3 sub-groups: (1) General Family papers; (2) Blanche Armwood papers; (3) Walter Armwood. Within each subgroup, items are arranged alphabetically by name, type of material or chronologically.

Arrangement
Record groups. The collection is divided into the following record groups: (1) Armwood Family papers; (2) Armwood Family photographs.

Record Group (1) is further subdivided into 3 sub-groups: (1) General Family papers; (2) Blanche Armwood papers; (3) Walter Armwood.

Within each subgroup, items are arranged alphabetically by name, type of material or chronologically.

Subject Headings

Corporate Names: Tampa School of Household Arts Tampa Urban League (Tampa, Fla.)

Personal Names: Armwood, Blanche Armwood, Walter Armwood -- Correspondence

Family Names: Armwood family Armwood family -- Correspondence Armwood family -- Genealogy

Geographic Names: Florida -- Genealogy -- Periodicals Tampa (Fla.) Tampa (Fla.) -- Politics and government

COLLECTION CONTENTS

Record Group : Armwood Family papers

Series 1 : General Family papers

BOX 1 : Alexander, Mrs. Marzell Orsely - Marriages

FOLDER 1 : Alexander, Mrs. Marzell Orsely
FOLDER 2 : Armwood, Garrett Ward, Sr., 1978
FOLDER 3 : Armwood, Gertrude Horton, 1956
FOLDER 4 : Armwood, Henry Proseus, (1914-1986)
FOLDER 5 : Armwood, Jesse, (1883-1947)
FOLDER 6 : Armwood, John Holoman
FOLDER 7: Armwood, Levin & Holloman, Margaret, (1855-1936)

FOLDER 8: Armwood, Levin Winfred, (1906-1966)

FOLDER 9: Armwood, Leonidas (Lonnie) Owen & Jackson, Rebecca

FOLDER 10: Armwood, Napoleon Bonaparte & Fykes, Mary

FOLDER 11: Armwood, Napoleon Bonaparte & Hamilton, Anna Mae

Scope/Content: (maiden name Sarah Gumsey Rogers)


FOLDER 14: Armwood, Hattie V., (1885-1976)

FOLDER 15: Armwood, Walter Adam, Jr. (1908-1973) & Massey, Ethel

FOLDER 16: Armwood, Walter Adam, III, (1943- )

FOLDER 17: Armwood, Willie Edward (1918-1985) & Armwood, Mrs. Willie Mae

FOLDER 18: Clarke, Paul T. & Gibson, Anita Sarah

FOLDER 19: Dixon, Kelvin Norman

FOLDER 20: Dixon, Norman R. & Armwood, Rosalie R.


FOLDER 22: Gibson, William Howard ( -1988) & Roulhac, Bernice

FOLDER 23: Gillison, James & Gibson, Anita Sara

FOLDER 24: Hamilton, Kittie Mae, ( -1979)


FOLDER 26: Holloman, Adam & Starks, Cynthia

FOLDER 27: Jackson, Archibald

FOLDER 28: Jackson, Ervin Albert (1901-1977)

FOLDER 29: Jones, Mrs. Melba Street ( -1998)


FOLDER 31: Lewis, Charles Lloyd (1913-1966)

FOLDER 32: McCardy, Mrs. Dorothy M. (Hendry) (1943-1988)

FOLDER 33: McLaurin, William Garrison ( -1968) & Armwood, Elsie Alicia

FOLDER 34: McVay, Lucy T. (1885-1986)

FOLDER 35: Maryfield, Walter Mack (1926-1996) & Anderson, Caesar Belle

FOLDER 36: Mickens, O.K. & Mickens, Christine E. ( -1983)

FOLDER 37: Middleton, Stephen Gillespie

FOLDER 38: Monroe, Robert E. (1915-1986) & Moore, Mary

FOLDER 39: Montgomery, Edward ( -1987)

FOLDER 40: Norton, Carl H.

FOLDER 41: Norton, E. P. ( -1933)


FOLDER 43: Orsely, Burnie H. & Armwood, Hazel Blanche

FOLDER 44: Phillips, Benjamin J. & Gibson, Hazel Louise

FOLDER 45: Poree, John A.

FOLDER 46: Rebel, Frank Anthony (1925-1986)

FOLDER 47: Savoy, John B., Sr. & Johnson, Cecilia

FOLDER 48: Smalley, Dave William (1913-1986)

FOLDER 49: Smith, Elijah & Armwood, Lula

FOLDER 50: Street, James L. & Armwood, Idella

FOLDER 51: Weatherly, Ida Mae Armwood

FOLDER 52: Williams, Otis Owen & Gibson, Alma Wilhelmina
Series 2 : Blanche Armwood papers
Series 3: Walter Armwood papers

BOX 6: Politics - Walter Armwood papers - Printed Material
  FOLDER 13: Correspondence, 1917-1947
  FOLDER 14: Legal Documents, 1976
  FOLDER 15: Literary Productions - Diaries, 1918-1919, 1934
  FOLDER 16: Literary Productions - Diaries - Transcripts, 1918-1919
  FOLDER 17: Literary Productions - Manuscripts, n.d.
  FOLDER 18: Literary Productions - Speeches, 1926, n.d.
  FOLDER 19: Miscellaneous, 1915-1943
  FOLDER 20: Printed Material - Brochures -- Brewer Normal School, 1926-1929
  FOLDER 21: Printed Material - Certificates, 1896-1943
  FOLDER 23: Printed Material - Programs, 1937-1944

BOX 7: Oversized Materials

ITEM: Armwood Coat of Arms
ITEM: Certificate -- W.A. Armwood -- State of Florida Teacher's Certificate (First Grade), September 18, 1915
ITEM: Certificate -- W.A. Armwood -- State of Florida -- Notary Public, 1925
ITEM: Certificate -- Blanche Armwood Washington -- Notary Public, 1933
ITEM: Certificate -- Blanche Armwood Beatty -- Sociedad "La Union Marti-Maceo" Miembro de Honor
ITEM: Certificate -- Hazel Phillips
ITEM: Certificate -- Lomax High School -- Certificate of Proficiency
ITEM: Certificate -- New Orleans School of Domestic Science -- Certificate of Proficiency
ITEM: Certificate -- Tampa School of Household Arts - Certificate of Proficiency
ITEM: Class Picture -- Saint Cecilia's Academy -- Class of 1969
ITEM: Newspaper Clipping -- "Armwood papers preserve Tampa area's past" -- Tampa Tribune, 1991
ITEM: Newspaper Clipping -- "The School Messenger", January 24, 1927
ITEM: Proclamation -- The Board of County Commissioners, County of Hillsborough, 1991
ITEM: Proclamation -- City of Tampa- "Blanche Armwood Family Revival Day"
ITEM: Program -- United Charity Drive -- "Hear Mrs. Blanche Armwood-Beatty", 1921

BOX 8: Oversized Materials
ITEM : Book -- "In Memoriam" -- Hattie V. Armwood

ITEM : Book- "Holy Bible" – "Presented to my Grandmother, Mrs. Hattie V. Armood, by Walter A. Armwood, III, on November 8, 1969

ITEM : Oversized Legal Documents

Record Group : Armwood Family Photographs

- BOX 9 : Photographs 1-179

  Scope/Content: Box 1 contains photographs 1 through 179. Please refer to print finding aid for more detailed information regarding photographs.
  FOLDER 1 : 1-29
  FOLDER 2 : 30-58
  FOLDER 3 : 59-89
  FOLDER 4 : 90-119
  FOLDER 5 : 120-149
  FOLDER 6 : 150-179

- BOX 10 : Photographs 180-329

  Scope/Content: Box 2 contains photographs 180 through 329. Please refer to print finding aid for more detailed information regarding photographs.
  FOLDER 1 : 180-209
  FOLDER 2 : 210-239
  FOLDER 3 : 240-269
  FOLDER 4 : 270-299
  Scope/Content: Reburial of John Armwood
  FOLDER 5 : 300-329
  Scope/Content: Reburial of John Armwood

- BOX 11 : #330-381, Photographs – Reproductions – Blanche Armwood

  Scope/Content: Box 3 contains photographs 330 through 381, plus miscellaneous photographs and photographic reproductions. For more detailed information, please refer to print finding aid.
  FOLDER 1 : 330-359
  Scope/Content: Reburial of John Armwood
  FOLDER 2 : 360-381
  Scope/Content: Reburial of John Armwood
  FOLDER 3 : Miscellaneous photographs
  FOLDER 4 : Photographs – Armwood Family
  FOLDER 5 : Photographs – Reproductions
  FOLDER 6 : Photographs – Reproductions – Blanche Armwood

- BOX 12 : Miscellaneous Photographs

- BOX 13 : Oversized Photographs

ITEM : "US Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, ILL." Class Picture
ITEM : Framed photograph – Walter (brother of Blanche) and Hattie Armwood
ITEM : Framed photograph – Walter and Levin Armwood (holding hands), children of Walter Armwood
BOX 14: Oversized Photographs

ITEM: Oval framed photograph – Foster mother of Hattie Armwood
ITEM: Oval framed photograph – Hattie Johnson Armwood (child), wife of Walter Armwood
ITEM: Oval framed photograph – John Armwood (child), son of Walter Armwood
ITEM: Oval framed photograph – Ida Armwood (child), daughter of Walter Armwood, niece of Blanche Armwood

BOX 15: Oversized Materials

ITEM: Photocopy - Henry P. Armwood, President, Arwood Enterprises/The Armwoods of America, Inc.
ITEM: Oval reprint – unknown man (Rev. William Alexander Gibson?)
ITEM: Basketball player – “Chiefs” #41, signed, “To my darling Mother, Love Kelvin”, 1976 - 1977
ITEM: Photograph of unknown man in military uniform (Kelvin?)
ITEM: “God Bless Our Family” – Armwood Family Tree (incomplete)
ITEM: Portrait of unknown man (Levin Armwood, II, Blanche's father?)
ITEM: Portrait of Owen Armwood
ITEM: Portrait of Sarah Armwood
ITEM: Portrait of unknown woman (Idella Armwood?)
ITEM: Portrait of Ellen Armwood
ITEM: Portrait of Yulee Armwood
ITEM: Oversized Portrait of Blanche Armwood (young)
ITEM: Oversized Portrait of Blanche Armwood (later years)