

# A Guide to the Alfred William Harris Papers

Alfred William Harris Papers 1879,1887  
1879,1887

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A Collection in Special Collections and Archives 1981-17 o.s.  
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## History

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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Alfred William Harris Papers

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## Profile Description

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**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

1981-17

**Language**

English

**Abstract**

Law Degree and photograph of the founder of Virginia State University. Mr.Harris Esquire, was also a member of the General Assembly of Virginia.

**Collector**

Alfred William Harris

**Repository**

Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University

## Administrative Information

**Access**

There are no restrictions.

**Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

**Preferred Citation**

Alfred William Harris, 1981-17, Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA.

## Biographical/Historical Information

Alfred W. Harris was born free in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1854, the son of Henry Harris. Alfred W. Harris was a member of the very large family of Harrises in the counties of Fairfax and Prince William. They were free in these counties as early as the year 1776.

Harris attended the public schools in Alexandria, Virginia. He studied law privately in the office of a African American lawyer, George W. Mitchell, and finally enrolled in the law department of Howard University, where he graduated in 1881. Alfred Harris moved to Petersburg, Virginia in the 1870's. Here he became involved in local politics and began his practice of law.

In 1881 Harris was elected to the House of Delegates representing Dinwiddie County. Mr. Harris served in the house until 1888. In 1882 Alfred Harris presented the bill chartering the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, now Virginia State University. Mr. Harris was a very active in a number of civic and social organizations in and around the city of Petersburg.

Mr. Harris served as the first secretary of the board of visitors for Virginia State University and was later Principal of the John A. Dix School in Dinwiddie.

## Scope and Content Information

Two items, each in itself documenting the accomplishments and achievements of an African American male activist, politician, and educator, during the first years after the abolishment of the institution of slavery in Virginia.

## Arrangement

Series I. Printed One Law Degree.

Series II. Photograph of the African American members of the Virginia State and the General Assembly of Virginia in 1887.

## Contents List

### Series I: Printed

#### **Law Degree (Howard University) 1881**

**Box-folder** 1:1

### Series II: Photograph

#### **Photograph c.a. 1887**

**Box-folder** 1:2

