2018

Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Collection Finding Aid and Container List

Thomas G. Carpenter Library Special Collections and University Archives

Tammy Druash

University of North Florida

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Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Collection
Date range: 1957-2015
Bulk dates: 1960; 2008

**Abstract:** The collection consists of papers and memorabilia related to civil rights history in Jacksonville and Hurst’s experiences as a member of the NAACP Youth Council in the 1960’s. The collection focuses on the NAACP sit-ins of stores in Hemming Park (now Hemming Plaza), and Hurst’s book about Ax Handle Saturday.

**Acquisition:** The collection was acquired through donation from Rodney Hurst.

**Access restrictions:** The collection is open for research

**Citation:** Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Collection, University of North Florida, Thomas G. Carpenter Library, Special Collections and Archives.

**Historical/Biographical note:** Rodney Hurst is a Jacksonville resident, civil rights activist, and author. As a teenager in the 1960’s he was President of the Jacksonville NAACP Youth Council and helped lead the sit-in movement in downtown Jacksonville. The sit-in efforts culminated in the Ax Handle Saturday incident on August 27, 1960. Mr. Hurst wrote a book about Ax Handle Saturday titled “It was never about a hot dog and a Coke” in 2008, and continues to share his expertise on civil rights, black history and racism at speaking engagements throughout Florida.

**Scope and content note:** This collection contains Correspondence, Book Reviews, Collected Research, Miscellaneous Documents, Manuscripts, Programs, Nametags and Certificates, Published Memorabilia, Newspaper Clippings and Photographs related to the civil rights movement in Jacksonville and Hurst’s first book “It was never about a hot dog and a Coke!” The collection also includes a compilation of stamps from the Black Heritage stamp series issued by the US Post Office since 1978.

**Container List**

**Box 1: Correspondence and Documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correspondence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter to friends of Southeastern Friends Conference from J. William Greenleaf, Clerk, Southeastern Friends Conference, 1960.</td>
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<td>Letters from Florida House to Mrs. Greenleaf, 1963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Mayor Burns. 3/24/64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Rodney Hurst from Clarence Sears. September 26, 2000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Jean from Clarence Sears. September 8, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank-you card: to Rodney Hurst from Florida Humanities Council</td>
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<td>Letter to Rodney Hurst from the University of South Florida confirming Hurst as speaker for “The Civil Rights Movement in Florida” Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Rodney Hurst from Clenzenetta “Mickee” Brown, December 21, 2004</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Letter to Rodney Hurst from University of Florida regarding oral history interview
Letter from Rodney Hurst to Elliot Schwartz (Studio EIS) requesting permission to use photos. March 7, 2007.
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Sabrina Sunsion re: Sabrina Awards
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Mr. and Mrs. James D. Staton Jr. March 16, 2008
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Victor DiGenti re: Ponte Vedra Book Fair
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Jacksonville City Council re: the Runner-Up Award in the 2008 Beach Book Festival
Letter to Rodney Hurst from James Crooks
Letter to Rodney Hurst from James R. Olson re: 2nd Place in the Premier Book Awards, 9/15/08
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Jane Friedman, Publisher, Writer’s Digest
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Mitchel Weiss, Chair of the Jacksonville Historical Preservation Commission re: 2009 Historical Preservation Award, 5/1/09
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Dr. Ben D. Brotemarkle, Florida Historical Society re: Stetson Kennedy Award 2009 winner
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Clayton Ford Riley, May 20, 2009
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Mayor John Peyton, May 20, 2009
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Elaine Kitchings, May 26, 2009
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Lloyd Washington, President of Durkeeville Historical Society
Thank-you card: to Rodney Hurst from mayor Pam Iorio of Tampa, February 2010
Letter to Rodney Hurst from Edward S. Mallow, President of Beth Shalom Congregation
Thank-you card: to Rodney Hurst from University of North Florida Continuing Education
Copy of letter to editor of Times-Union from Clarence Sears, 7/6/12
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<tr>
<th>Book Reviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Press release: “Rodney Hurst: It was never about a hot dog and a coke”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Press release: National Best Books 2008 Awards award winners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biography of Rodney Hurst and book information for “It was never about a hot dog and a coke”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Wingspan Press. By Randy O’Brien</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Rawsistaz Literary Group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Book Review.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Rebecca’s Reads.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Reader views by Wiliam Phenn, April 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: All Books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Kaye Trout’s Book Reviews, April 5, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: Sabrina reviews, April 18, 2008</td>
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<td>Book review: IP Book Reviewers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review: excerpts of reviews from various sources</td>
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<td>Book review: excerpts of reviews from various sources</td>
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<th>Collected Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>Florida State Conference of Branches memo. August 18, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memo: Sit-ins at Jacksonville and St. Petersburg. August 24, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memo: Sit-ins at Jacksonville, August 24, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacksonville Situation, by Mrs. Ruby Hurley. August 30, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAACP Youth Council press release. September 11, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Press release: Jacksonville NAACP Increasing Operations to Meet Recent Challenge. September 15, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memo from Roy Wilkins to Gloster Current. August 29, 1960. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr. from J.H. Goodson, President of the NAACP Jacksonville branch. From the Papers of the NAACP, part 20, reel 6.</td>
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### Miscellaneous Documents

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<tr>
<td>Form: Copyright registration for book “It was never about a hot dog and a coke”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form: Copyright registration for book “Unless we tell it...it never gets told!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special communication (memo) re: The Jacksonville human relations story with reference to the riots of 8/27/60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief history of Northeast Florida Council on Human Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral history of Hurst conducted by the University of Florida, 2/18/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Florida Citizenship Education Project overview.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes from the Florida Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights</td>
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### Manuscripts

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<tr>
<td>Typed manuscript: &quot;It was never about a hot dog and a coke&quot;, unbound</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typed manuscript: &quot;It was never about a hot dog and a coke&quot;, spiral-bound</td>
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### Publication Mockups

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<tr>
<td>Folio cover mockup: &quot;It was never about a hot dog and a coke&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small title page mockup: “It was never about a hot dog and a coke”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cover mockup: “Ax Handle Sunday”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small cover mockup: &quot;It was never about a hot dog and a coke&quot;</td>
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### Box 2: Memorabilia

### Programs

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program: NAACP Freedom Banquet and biography of speaker Charles Evers. September 2, 1966.</td>
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<td>Program: funeral of Rutledge Henry Pearson. May 5, 1967.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program: Ax Handle Saturday 40th anniversary. August 26, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program: University of South Florida's &quot;The Civil Rights Movement in Florida&quot; Conference. 2004.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program: Rodney Hurst Sr presents It Was Never About a Hot Dog and a Coke: his personal account. April 18, 2008.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Program: Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission Preservation Awards. 2009
Program: Jacksonville District celebrates Black History Month, February 4, 2010.
Program: "Stony the road we trod: a look back at Ax Handle Saturday". Ritz Theatre and Museum exhibit, 2010.

Nametags and Certificates
Nametag: Florida Historical Society Annual Meeting. Rodney Hurst, Stetson Kennedy Award winner.
Name Badge: Much Ado About Books festival.
Nametag: Rodney Hurst, featured author, Amelia Island Book Festival
Nametag: Florida Heritage Book Festival, 2008
Flyer: Jacksonville March for Jobs & Freedom, 10/5/63
Flyer: NAACP list of grievances
Certificate: appreciation to Rodney Hurst from Blue Cross
Certificate: appreciation to Rodney Hurst from Jacksonville Historical Society
Certificate: to Rodney Hurst for participation in Writer's Digest 16th Annual Self-Published Book Awards.
Certificate: appreciation to Rodney Hurst for 2nd Annual Black History Leader Luncheon, 2/15/05
Certificate: appreciation to Rodney Hurst for Urban Education Summit, 10/26/04

Miscellaneous Ephemera
Greeting card: commemorating the 46th anniversary of the Greensboro sit-ins, 2/1/06
Postcard: "Fifty years later: revisiting Ax Handle Saturday in Jacksonville, Florida". University of North Florida, March 15, 2010
Event ticket: Much Ado About Books festival, April 26, 2008
Color advertisement: Much Ado About Books festival.
Song lyrics: "Lift every voice and sing", by James Weldon Johnson
Copy of Times-Union letters from readers, July 16, 2008.  
Small clipping of Jet magazine cover with Rutledge Pearson  
Course listing: "It was never about a hot dog and a coke: Ax Handle Saturday", University of North Florida, April 23-May 7, 2012  
Speaker biographies for "The Civil Rights Movement in Florida" Conference  
Photo of Civil Rights sculpture (computer printout)  
Commentary sheet for "It was never about a hot dog and a coke". Writer's Digest 16th Annual Self-Published Book Awards.  

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<tr>
<th>Speech and Play</th>
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<tr>
<td>Speech: Martin Luther King breakfast. By Rodney Hurst. 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage script draft: &quot;The Ax Handle Saturday Tour&quot;. By Howard Denson, 2007</td>
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<th>Published Memorabilia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Journal issue: Ex Libris. Published by Jacksonville Public Library Foundation. Spring 2008.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Booklet: &quot;Martin Luther King and the company of the faithful&quot;. By Vincent Harding and Rosemarie Freeney Harding.</td>
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<th>Box 3: Cataloged Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>Booklet: NAACP In Action (1961 Report)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comic book: &quot;Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Booklet: &quot;Treatise on the patriarchal or cooperative system of society...&quot; 2nd ed. 1829</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Magazine, 9/12/60. On page 37: &quot;Racial fury over sit-ins flares up in Jacksonville&quot;.</td>
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<th>Box 4: Newspapers and Scrapbook Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scrapbook Pages</td>
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<td>New sit-ins were suppressed (duplicate); Youth council to resume demonstrations in Jacksonville; 8 arrested in racial incidents. Undated</td>
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</table>
Florida edition of the Pittsburgh Courier, front page. Vol. 54, no. 5, February 2, 1963

20 Negroes sentenced; Santora, Jackson Row. Jacksonville Journal, March 20, 1964; Negroes picket establishments, Times-Union March 6, 1964; Four Negro ministers arrested for trespass; Downtown march held by NAACP. Burns pledges city will keep racial peace. Times-Union, March 22, 1964; Burns move draws fire of NAACP. Times-Union, March 23, 1964


William Rosecrans home bomber gets 7 years. Times-Union, April 18, 1964; Klansmen's dismissal plea denied. Times-Union, April 22, 1964

News photo with caption "While whites look on, a Negro who happened by is pummeled by segregationists on a thoroughfare of downtown Jacksonville, Florida". Undated.

Racial fury over sit-ins. Undated.

Downtown store boycott urged by Jacksonville NAACP; Mrs. Ruby Hurley speaker at NAACP Jacksonville meeting; White sit-inner rescued from white mob in Jacksonville; White NAACP member fined, plans appealed (3 copies). Undated.

NAACP urges selective buying drive in Jacksonville: “Don’t pay to be segregated”; Race relations talks planned in city; Some causes for the riot and remedies needed; Negro citizens urged to help keep order. Undated.

News blackout on Jacksonville sit-ins shows danger in press monopoly; Negro boys seized from picket lines; Downtown lunch counters are targets for sit-in groups. Undated

News blackout on Jacksonville sit-ins shows danger in press monopoly (duplicate); trespass statute halts Negroes bid at lunch counter; school board seeks injunction on boycott; school board to study suit. Undated

Head NAACP Conference Here Nov. 16-19; Jax will host Fla. NAACP Branches here Nov. 17-19; School integration suit returned to court here; Freedom riders plead not guilty in Ocala; Jacksonville complacency hit at NAACP meeting

Duval voters are warned to re-register at once; Youth council to step up job campaign and boycotts; Berriers hires another Negro; Jax NAACP plans events for new year. Undated.

Counter desegregation begun by local stores; 8 Negroes attempt series of sit-ins at city lunch counters; Grocery chains studied, employment office scored; Jax NAACP drive steps up. Undated

"Operation Neighborhood" Freedom riders break bias in Jacksonville; Youth organization wars on discriminatory hiring. Undated.
Youth Council survey teams near completion of projects; Airman Hurst visits family; NAACP proxy speaks here September 24. Undated.

NAACP mass meeting set for Sunday; Freedom in Florida; Sit-in leader released to his parents (2 copies). Florida Star. Undated.

**News Clippings**

"That Jaxon team" news photo

Photo of sit-ins from newspaper (2 copies)

Mayor calls for race relations committee. Undated.

Crisis building for 6 months, Negroes say. Undated.

Burns pledges city will keep racial peace; Burns move draws fire of NAACP; NAACP questions deputizing. Undated.

Action set to cease race strife; Burns sets action to halt race strife. Undated.

Ax Handle Saturday: the day we let you down. By Mark Woods. Undated.

Jax shaken by race clash, turns into a city of fear. Miami Herald, undated.

Black eye for all of Florida. Undated.

$30,000 in Project Head Start grants approved for 2 organizations here. Undated.

Desegregation unit to discuss activities. Times-Union; ASSIST, Inc. to aid in school transition. Undated.

Jacksonville's native son leads fight against bias. Undated.

Some causes for the riot and remedies needed. By Eric Simpson. Undated.

Miami says: "it won't happen here". Undated.

State NAACP pres. Seeks more action in Jaxon protests; Miami church integration sought by white churchmen. Undated.

Top NAACP leaders spark Sunday's mass meeting here. Undated.


Need man like Pearson to harness youths' energy. Undated.

News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, February 27, 1960

News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, February 28, 1960

News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, March 6, 1960

News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, March 12, 1960

News for and about the colored people, unnumbered page. Times-Union, April 3, 1960

News for and about the colored people, page 11. Times-Union, May 6, 1960
News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, May 11, 1960
New sit-ins were suppressed. Jacksonville Journal, August 26, 1960
Negroes, whites clash downtown. Jacksonville Journal, August 27, 1960
Tight lid clamped on city after racial strife. Times-Union, August 28, 1960
Action set to cease race strife. Times-Union, August 29, 1960

Times-Union front page, August 30, 1960
Blame Burns-Collins for race riots (2 copies). Jacksonville Chronicle, September 2, 1960
Attention white citizens of Jacksonville and Duval County! Jacksonville Chronicle, September 2, 1960
News for and about the colored people, front page. Times-Union, September 9, 1960

NAACP mass meeting set for Sunday. Florida Star, September 9, 1960
Jacksonville Chronicle front page, September 16, 1960
NAACP secretary coming for rally; School board plans to fight integration. Florida Star, December 17, 1960
Integration of police seen as undesirable. Jacksonville Journal, March 23, 1963
Duval Negro urges job opportunities. Times-Union, March 23, 1963; Rights group to meet here.
Negroes march in Jacksonville today...why? Times-Union, October 5, 1963; Better jobs march held by Negroes. Times-Union, October 6, 1963

Blast rips house on Gilmore St. Times-Union, February 17, 1964
FBI launches probe of Gilmore St. bombing. Jacksonville Journal, February 17, 1964
Indiana man charged in home bombing here. Times-Union, March 5, 1964
Pleads guilty to bombing. Jacksonville Journal, March 13, 1964
FBI nabs 5 in Klan for bombing home. Times-Union, March 13, 1964

$$ sent to blast victims. Jacksonville Journal, March 17, 1964
Dynamite found in Ortega area. Jacksonville Journal, March 17, 1964
Navy divers recover stolen dynamite thrown into Ortega River after blast.
Times-Union, March 18, 1964

130 Negroes arrested as gangs roam streets. Jacksonville Journal, March 23, 1964
It's a local problem—Bryant; Tired lawmen keeping long, lonely vigil here.
Jacksonville Journal, March 25, 1964

Bombing of negro home; flammable liquid blamed in house fire. Jacksonville Journal, April 1964
Meet called for biracial group here. Times-Union, April 22, 1964; Integration straw vote requested. Times-Union, May 2, 1964

Power structure held harming in St. Augustine. Times-Union, June 12, 1964

Please don't hate', Negroes urged. Jacksonville Journal, September 3, 1966
Minister hauled from race rally. Jacksonville Journal, March 2, 1967
Front page—“Walking the walk, talking the talk”. Florida Star, September 2-8, 2000
Ax handle Saturday survivors deserve recognition for courage. Times-Union, September 4, 2000

40 years after Ax Handle. Times-Union, August 27, 2000
The day of ax handles. Times-Union, August 25, 2000
City loses its fastest man (Bob Hayes 1942-2002). Times-Union, September 20, 2002
History in our midst. Jacksonville Free Press, February 2002
Front page. Jacksonville Free Press, September 26-October 2, 2002

What are we teaching our children? Trumpet Magazine, March 2006
Story of a white man who joined the 60's sit-ins. Times-Union, February 4, 2008

The young led us. Times-Union. July 10, 2008
It was never about a hot dog and a coke: Civil Rights leader, author featured at book festival. By Ron Miller. Fernandina Beach News-Leader, September 26, 2008 (2 copies)


Another honor for Jacksonville author. Times-Union, May 24, 2009
Hurst to receive Kennedy Award. Jacksonville Free Press, April 30-May 6, 2009
A history of violence: Jacksonville remembers the brutal legacy of Ax Handle Saturday, 50 years on. Folio Weekly, August 24-30, 2010.

I also had a dream. Times-Union, July 6, 2012

Box 5: Photographs

Roderick Freeman of the Youth Council (right) during a demonstration S1
Warren Folks holding Confederate Flag S2
Richard Parker during sit-in demonstration S3
Group escorting Richard Parker to black community. Robert Meyer Hotel, downtown Jacksonville

Group of spectators outside Woolworth during demonstrations

Spectators outside Woolworth during demonstrations

Spectators in front of JC Penney

White spectator out front of store

Rutledge Pearson speaking at an NAACP mass meeting.

Picketer holding sign "we want fair employment practiced"

Picketer holding sign "fair play is the democratic way"

Demonstrator being arrested

Youth Council meeting at Laura Street Presbyterian Church. Richard Parker is in the foreground.

Demonstrators protesting downtown

Reporters talk with Alton Yates and Rodney Hurst during the first sit-in demonstration, August 13, 1960

Youth Council members Isaac Carnes and Herman Grice picketing Cohen Brothers store

Marjorie Meeks, left, and Mary Alice King at first demonstration with other Youth Council members

View of Julia Street as Richard Parker is escorted to Woolworth

Rutledge Pearson at podium

Tillotson College Quartet

Rutledge Pearson and family

Spectators outside of Woolworth during sit-ins

White spectators outside store

Charles Evers, far right, and Rutledge Pearson, second from right, with two unidentified men

KKK marching in street, 1964

Black ministers speaking with police outside Morrison's Cafeteria, downtown Jacksonville.

Picketing outside Leb's Restaurant, downtown Jacksonville

Picketing outside downtown stores

Picketer holding sign "Khrushchev can eat here why can't we?", 1960

Group of demonstrators during sit-ins, 1964

Whites confronting blacks outside Woolworth

Group of demonstrators at diner

Demonstrator walking past Leb's Restaurant, downtown Jacksonville

Police confront demonstrators outside Robert Meyer Hotel

Police and whites confronting demonstrators

Picketer during the protest of Morrison's Cafeteria
Police talking with white business owners. The black policeman is Solomon Weston. M23
White spectators walking Richard Parker out of Woolworth M24
Ruby Hurley speaking at NAACP mass meeting, August 28, 1960. In attendance are Jacqueline Stephens, Isaac Karnes, and Earl Johnson of the Youth Council. M25
White men confronting blacks on street corner M26
Rutledge Pearson, center, with black ministers who helped integrate Morrison's Cafeteria. Bethel Baptist Church. M27
40th Anniversary of Ax Handle group photo: from left, State Senator Arnett E. Girardeau, Rodney Hurst, State Supreme Court Chief Justice Leander Shaw, Stetson Kennedy, Alton Yates, Judge Bill Maness M28
Larger (7x5) duplicate of 40th Anniversary group photo M29
40th Anniversary group photo near Historic Landmark sign, Hemming Plaza. Pictured from left: Richard McKissick, Mary Ann Pearson, Rodney Hurst, Arnett Girardeau, Alton Yates L1
Isaiah Blocker Junior High honor students sponsored by Rutledge Pearson L2
NAACP mass meeting, Second Baptist Church L3
Rutledge Pearson speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner. Mayflower Hotel. L4
Rutledge Pearson (center) with two other NAACP picketers outside City Hall. July 19, 1966 L5
From left: Rutledge Pearson, Dr. Alvin Gross, Gertrude Glover, Roy Wilkins L6
Vice Chair of the Florida Human Relations Commission speaking at NAACP mass meeting, August 29, 1960 L7

**Album: Black Heritage Stamp Series collection**
Harriet Tubman, issued 1978.
Martin Luther King, Jr., issued 1979.
Benjamin Benneker, issued 1980.
Whitney Moore Young, issued 1981.
Scott Joplin, issued 1983.
Mary McLeod Bethune, issued 1985.
Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, issued 1987.
Ida B. Wells, issued 1990.
Dr. Allison Davis, issued 1994.
Bessie Coleman, issued 1995.
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Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., issued 1997