

COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Inventory of the
Isaiah Bennett Papers, 1932 - 2002**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Isaiah Bennett Papers,
Dates:	1932 - 2002
Creator:	Bennett, Isaiah, 1926-2002.
Abstract:	<p>Isaiah Bennett (1926-2002) served as a union representative for tobacco workers at the American Tobacco Company's "Cigar Factory" and as a leader and negotiator of the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike of 1969. Bennett also founded and was president of the Charleston chapter of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, an umbrella organization for black trade unions.</p> <p>This collection contains five small series that pertain to the life and career of Isaiah Bennett. 1.) The biographical series includes a album relating to Bennett's campaign for Charleston County Council in 1980; an obituary and funeral program; and the finding aid for the collection he donated to the Georgia State University archives pertaining to his involvement with the local 1199 Union. 2.) The second series consists of primary and secondary source material on the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike of 1969 and includes correspondence between Bennett and other leaders of the strike, memorabilia, photographs, and news clippings. 3.) The third series contains original items donated to the Avery Research Center for inclusion in the Isaiah Bennett Papers from Georgia State University archives collection on the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). These include strike bulletins, correspondence, and news releases regarding the national 1945 Tobacco Workers' Strike. 4.) Materials regarding the local South Carolina chapter and national A. Philip Randolph Institute constitute the fourth series. Included is correspondence, minutes, and bylaws. 5.) The miscellaneous series includes resolutions from the AFL-CIO on civil rights and from the South Carolina Democratic Party regarding state minimum wage, voter registration, and election reform as well as other material.</p>
Extent:	0.5 linear feet(1 archival box)
Repository:	Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston
Call Number:	AMN 1056
Language of Material:	Material in English

Biographical Note

Isaiah Bennett was born in McClellanville, South Carolina on September 19, 1926 and died on February 24, 2002. He moved to Charleston, South Carolina and was employed at the American Tobacco Company's "Cigar Factory" in 1942. He was drafted in the second World War and served with the United States Army from 1943-1946. Bennett returned to work at the Cigar Factory until his retirement in 1973.

Active in Union work, Bennett served as the business director for the local tobacco workers' union (Local 15A of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union) and state director of the National Hospital Workers. He played a key role as a leader and negotiator of the Charleston Hospital Worker's Strike of 1969. In 1969, he joined the staff of the Local 1199-B of the the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). He also founded and was president of the Charleston chapter of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, an umbrella organization for black trade unions.

Bennett was active in politics and ran unsuccessfully for Charleston County Council in 1980.

Collection Overview

This collection contain five small series:

The first series consists of biographical documents regarding Isaiah Bennett's life. They include a disassembled album regarding Bennett's campaign for Charleston County Council in 1980, with a letter from Rosalynn Carter; an obituary and funeral program; and the finding aid for the collection he donated to the Georgia State University archives pertaining to his involvement with the local 1199 Union.

The second series consists of primary and secondary source material on the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike of 1969 and includes correspondence between Bennett and other leaders of the strike, memorabilia, photographs, and news clippings.

The third series contains original items donated to the Avery Research Center for inclusion in the Isaiah Bennett Papers from Georgia State University archives collection on the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). These include strike bulletins, correspondence, and news releases regarding the national 1945 Tobacco Workers' Strike.

Materials regarding the local South Carolina chapter and the national A. Philip Randolph Institute constitute the fourth series. Included is correspondence, minutes, and bylaws.

The miscellaneous series includes resolutions from the AFL-CIO on Civil Rights and the South Carolina Democratic Party regarding state minimum wage, voter registration, and election reform as well as other material.

Collection Arrangement

1. Biographical, 1930-2002
2. Hospital Workers' Strike, 1969-1994
3. The American Tobacco Workers' Strike, 1945
4. A. Philip Randolph Institute, 1976-1981
5. Miscellaneous, 1970-1980

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

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Subject Headings

African American labor union members -- South Carolina -- History -- 20th century.

African Americans -- Civil rights -- South Carolina -- Charleston -- History -- 20th century.

African Americans -- Politics and government -- South Carolina -- History -- 20th century.

American Tobacco Company.

A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Bennett, Isaiah, 1926-2002.

Carter, Rosalynn.

Factories -- Employees -- Labor unions -- South Carolina.

Hospitals -- Employees -- Labor unions -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Hospital Workers' Strike, Charleston, S.C., 1969.

Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union. Local 15-A (Charleston, S.C.)

Riley, Richard W. (Richard Wilson)

Tobacco workers -- Labor unions -- South Carolina -- Charleston.

Tobacco Workers' Strike, Charleston, S.C., 1945.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Isaiah Bennett Papers, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Donated by Isaiah Bennett, May 1992

Processing Information

Processed by Jessica Lancia, April 2008

Encoded by Melissa Bronheim, August 2010

Edited by Melissa Bronheim, August 2010, and Amanda Ross, February 2011

Funding from the **Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation** supported the processing of this collection.

Funding from the **Council on Library and Information Resources** supported the encoding of this finding aid.

Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Biographical, 1930-2002

This series contains biographical documents regarding Isaiah Bennett's life. They include a disassembled album regarding Bennett's campaign for Charleston County Council in 1980, with a letter from Rosalynn Carter; an obituary and funeral program; and the finding aid for the collection he donated to the Georgia State University archives pertaining to his involvement with the local 1199 Union.

Box 1 Folder 1 Campaign for Charleston County Council: Album, circa 1980

Includes correspondence, news articles, photographs and other miscellaneous memorabilia from Bennett's campaign. Includes campaign advertisements and handwritten voting requests.

Box 1 Folder 2 Campaign for Charleston County Council: Album - Loose Files, circa 1980

Box 1 Folder 3 Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University: Inventory of Accession

Includes list of materials donated by Bennett.

Box 1 Folder 4 Miscellaneous Biographical Materials, 1930-2002

Includes obituary and funeral program about Isaiah Bennett; photograph of Bennett as a young boy; and a letter with signed photograph of Bennett and Governor Dick Riley.

Box 1 Folder 5 Plat, 1977

Document regarding selling of land owned in McClellanville, South Carolina by Isaiah Bennett and Edward Bennett.

2. Hospital Workers' Strike, 1969-1994

This series consists of primary and secondary source material on the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike of 1969 and includes correspondence between Bennett and other leaders of the strike, memorabilia, photographs, and news clippings.

Box 1 Folder 6 Articles, 1969 and 1994

Includes articles on the Charleston Hospital Worker's Strike and a letter by Stephen Hoffius to Bennett regarding getting oral histories on the Hospital Workers' Strike.

Box 1 Folder 7 Article by Stephen O'Neill: "The Struggle for Black Equality Comes to Charleston: the Hospital Worker's Strike of 1969," 1986

Box 1 Folder 8 Hospital Workers' Strike Album, 1969

Contains telegrams, articles, photographs and other miscellaneous memorabilia regarding the strike and Isaiah Bennett's activism as a labor leader.

Oversize Paper Folder 1056/OPF-1 Certificate of Affiliation: Local 15A Union

Includes a certificate of affiliation between the national Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union and the Local 15A of Charleston, South Carolina. The certificate names people constituting the local union, including Isaiah Bennett.

3. The American Tobacco Workers' Strike, 1945

This contains original items donated to the Avery Research Center for inclusion in the Isaiah Bennett Papers from Georgia State University archives collection on the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). These include strike bulletins, correspondence, and news releases regarding the national 1945 Tobacco Workers' Strike.

Box 1 Folder 10 Correspondence and Printed Material, 1945

Includes strike bulletins; letter asking for support of strike; news release and correspondence related to strike; and call to join the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

4. A. Philip Randolph Institute, 1976-1981

This series consists of correspondence, minutes, and bylaws regarding the local South Carolina chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) as well as materials from the national organization.

Box 1 Folder 11 Organizational Material, 1976-1981

Includes constitutions and bylaws; correspondence; lists of members and officers; materials regarding Solidarity Day March; budget form; minutes; and printed materials of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana Ad Hoc Committee regarding APRI financial crisis. Also includes statistics on loss of black voting power in South Carolina.

Box 1 Folder 12 Correspondence, 1978-1980

Includes letter from Isaiah Bennett to Norman Hill, Executive Director of APRI updating on political activities in South Carolina; correspondence regarding a program for home rehabilitation with letters from Ernest Hollings, South Carolina Senator; and correspondence regarding an APRI State Convention held in Charleston, South Carolina. Also includes memoranda concerning local South Carolina APRI activity and of Bennett's resignation due to his candidacy for County Council; letters from Barbara Van Blake, National APRI board member to Marsha Dean, President of Florida APRI regarding improving her leadership; and voting registration correspondence.

Box 1 Folder 13 National APRI, 1979

Includes lists of officers; memoranda from national headquarters to local chapters; instructions on building a successful APRI chapter and objectives, principles, and strategies; affiliate report blanks; and a booklet regarding A. Philip Randolph Memorial Tribute.

5. Miscellaneous, 1970-1980

This series contains resolutions from the AFL-CIO on Civil Rights and the South Carolina Democratic Party regarding state minimum wage, voter registration, and election reform as well as other material.

Box 1 Folder 14 Amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1977

Box 1 Folder 15 Local 15 AFL-CIO Club: Beer and Wine Retail Permit

Box 1 Folder 16 Resolutions, Statement, and Pamphlet

Includes a 1979 South Carolina Democratic Party resolution dealing with state minimum wage, voter registration postcard, agency shop, and election reform. Also includes resolution adopted by AFL-CIO regarding civil rights; a position statement on desegregation from the National Task Force on Desegregation Strategies; a 1980 AFL-CIO pamphlet "Memo From Cope" regarding George Meany.