Inventory of the
Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order
of the Eastern Star, 1921 - 2000
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order of the Eastern Star,

Dates: 1921 - 2000

Creator: Order of the Eastern Star.

Abstract: The membership of the Order of the Eastern Star (O.E.S.) Prince Hall affiliated chapters are comprised of female relatives of men who are in the Prince Hall Masonry. In 1875, the first subordinate chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star Prince Hall affiliated chapter was created by Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F & A.M.), Brother Thornton A. Jackson in Washington, D.C. The Charleston chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star began circa 1912 and are known as Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order of the Eastern Star. Some of the O.E.S. activities include disbursing burial funds and endowments to member's family upon the death of a sister.

The Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order of the Eastern Star collection contains the administrative records, financial records, material relating to the rituals and ceremonies performed by the Order of the Eastern Star, and records relating Prince Hall Lodge No. 46, which is the Charleston Lodge. Topics of discussion in the minutes include recaps of O.E.S. conventions, notes about dues collected, attendance records, motions made, correspondence between the Charleston chapter and the Grand Chapter, membership petitions and potential members doctor's notes. Financial records detail the incomes and expenditures of the organization; and the charities they donated to. The collection also contains lyrics to Eastern Star songs, matron sashes, and burial instruction; as well as the meeting minutes, annual reports, and convention proceedings of the Prince Hall Lodge No. 46.

Extent: 1.6 linear feet(4 archival boxes)

Repository: Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston

Call Number: AMN 1076

Language of Material: Material in English

Historical Note

The membership of the Order of the Eastern Star Prince Hall affiliated chapters are comprised of female relatives of men who are in the Prince Hall Masonry. There is another Order of the Eastern Star for Caucasian women, but they link their founding to Robert Morris, a 19th century lawyer from Boston, Massachusetts. The Prince Hall Masons are believed to have been founded by Prince Hall and other African-American men in Boston, Massachusetts in 1787. In 1784, African Lodge #459 of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the first Lodge to be recognized by the Grand Lodge of England. The Prince Hall Masonry was created because African-American men were barred from becoming members in Freemasonry, which was composed of Caucasian men. On September 6, 1901, a Lodge was organized in Charleston, South Carolina. The original officers of Prince Hall Masons Lodge No. 46 were Wm. Singleton, W.M; M.S. Frasier, S.W.; J.B. Moultrie,
According to Mrs. S. Joe Brown, who published *The History of the Order of the Eastern Star Among Colored People* in 1925, the "Order [of the Eastern Star] was originated by Master Masons for the protection of their wives, widows, mothers, sisters and daughters and hence cannot exist without the co-operation (sp) of the members."

In 1875, the first subordinate chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star African American chapter was created by A.F & A.M., Bro. Thornton A. Jackson in Washington, D.C. Between 1875 and 1876 he established nine chapters in total in the following cities: Alexandria, VA; Baltimore, MD; and Philadelphia, PA. In 1880, in Washington, North Carolina, Bishop J.W. Hood, "organized the first Negro Grand Chapter of O.E.S."

The Charleston chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star began circa 1912 and are known as Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order of the Eastern Star. Other O.E.S. chapters in the area were in St. Andrews Parish and in Columbia. According to O.E.S. No. 41 By-Laws the Charleston chapter met the third Tuesday of each month to conduct business. The chapter abides by the Constitution of the Grand Chapter and administrative responsibilities was divided into committees. The following committees were created: the sick committee, which was charged with contacting the sick members of the organization and providing assistance as long as necessary; the investigating committee, which was responsible for establishing the good standing of potential members; and the auditing committee, which was in charge of examining the secretary's and treasurer's books annually. Noted members of the O.E.S. Charleston chapter include Mamie Garvin Fields, Wilhelmina Lecque, Lady Loraine Moultrie, Marie Hutchinson (was a charter member and matron), and Rebecca Garvin.

During the period that the Order of the Eastern Star was created African-American women were taking on leadership roles and organizing themselves in addition to being a part of inter-gender organizations. Thus, African-American women were seeking new roles and were redefining what an African-American woman was supposed to do; as a result, their work represented a new trajectory of African-American political and social movement.

Some of the benefits of being a O.E.S. star member are obtaining relief in times of need (ex. death and sickness); helping future generations; and connecting with likeminded women. The women that are members of the Order are committed to uplift their community by providing assistance to those that need it the most.

The symbol of the Order is the pentagram (a.k.a. star pentagon) and the five points symbolizes the tenets of the Order, which is based upon the women in the Bible. Adah is blue and stands for fidelity; Ruth is yellow and stands for constancy; Esther is white and represents loyalty; Martha is green for faith; and Electra is red for love.

**Collection Overview**

This collection contains the administrative records, financial records, material relating to the rituals and ceremonies performed by the Order of the Eastern Star, and records in relation to their affiliated lodge, Prince Hall Lodge No. 46.

The collection is divided into four series:

1. **Administrative Records** includes organizational bylaws, 1936-1946 meeting minutes, committee reports, membership petitions, women's doctor's notes, O.E.S. proceedings for the following years, 1935, 1956, 1974, and 1977, and letters regarding death claims paid and funeral programs for deceased sisters. Topics covered within meeting minutes include discussion of dues collected, attendance records, motions made, and reports back from the women who attended the conventions. There is a subseries that contains administrative correspondence, which consists of letters between the chapter and the Grand Chapter regarding membership and dues, and letters from the district about meeting times and locations. The subseries also contains, financial correspondence in regards to changing membership dues and death claim payouts, records denoting their
charity donations, and their business with Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply. Other records in the subseries comprises of invitations and cards; and blank stationary, envelopes, and meeting reminders.

2. **Financial Records** includes financial reports, 1949-1978 bank statements from the South Carolina National Bank, cancelled checks, check ledgers, receipts, business letters, and individual members' financial books. The financial books are of the following members: Mrs. Virginia Lemon, Miss. Celia Robinson, Mrs. Dottie Williams, Mrs. Rosalee Williams, Sis. Rebecca Garvin, and Sis. Mamie Fields.

3. **O.E.S. Rituals and Ceremonies** include the lyrics to the Eastern Star Songs, such as "We Meet We Part;" "The Light;" and "On Being a Star." Other records in the series include printed syllabus of Amaranth and the revised version of the Eastern Star syllabus, burial instruction information, and five sashes to represent each point on the star.

4. **Prince Hall, Lodge No. 46 Records** includes their 1924-1934 meeting minutes, which records meeting attendance, motions made, and election results; 1935 and 1936 annual reports; programs from the 1970 and 1979 Grand Lodge Communications; raffle ticket books; and 1954-1957 Temple Association reports, which documents their expenditures and revenues.

**Collection Arrangement**

1. Administrative Records, 1929-1977, and undated


3. O.E.S. Rituals and Ceremonies, undated

4. Prince Hall, Lodge No. 46 Records, 1924-1979, 2000, and undated

**Restrictions**

**Access Restrictions**

No restrictions.

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**Subject Headings**

African American women--South Carolina--Societies and clubs--History.

African American women--South Carolina--Charleston--Societies and clubs.

African American fraternal organizations.

African American freemasonry.

Women and freemasonry--United States.
Order of the Eastern Star. Grand Chapter of South Carolina.

Order of the Eastern Star.

**Administrative Information**

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Prince Hall Chapter No. 41, Order of the Eastern Star, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

**Processing Information**

Processed by Aaisha Haykal, 11, 2011

Encoded by Aaisha Haykal, 11, 2011

**Bibliography**

Sources consulted by Aaisha Haykal


Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Administrative Records, 1929-1977

Topics covered within meeting minutes include discussion of dues collected, attendance records, motions made, and reports back from the women who attended the conventions. The subseries contains administrative correspondence, which consisting of letters between the chapter and the Grand Chapter regarding membership and dues, and letters from the district about meeting times and locations.

- Box 1 Folder 1 Printed By-Laws, nd.
  The folder contains the By-Laws of Prince Hall Chapter No. 41 and of Daughters of St. Andrews Chapter O.E.S. Prince Hall Affiliation No. 283

- Box 1 Folder 2 Committee Lists and Member Names, 1951, 1958, and undated

- Box 1 Folder 3 Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1929-1935

- Box 1 Folder 4 Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1936-1939

- Box 1 Folder 5 Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1941-1943

- Box 1 Folder 6 Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1945-1946, and undated

- Box 1 Folder 7 Unbound Meeting Minutes, undated

- Box 1 Folder 8 Reports, 1938-1975
  Includes the reports from the various committees within the organization, auditing committee (1930-1973); committee on Birthday-Party Preparations (1946-1952, and undated); collection committee (1948-1952); committee on relief (1949-1957, 1973); committee on welfare (1950); social committee (1950-1957); committee of the Temple Association (1954); planning committee (1975); program committee (undated); and various reports (1951-1956, and undated)

- Box 1 Folder 9 Annual Reports from Chapter 41 O.E.S., 1937-1956, and undated

- Box 1 Folder 10 Petition for Membership Forms, 1934-1954

- Box 1 Folder 11 Petition for Membership Forms, 1955-1957, 1976, and undated

- Box 1 Folder 12 Potential Member's Doctor's Notes, 1948-1956, 1974-1977, and undated

- Box 2 Folder 13 Death Claims and Funeral Programs, 1941-1972, and undated


  1.1. Correspondence, 1934-1976

- Box 2 Folder 15 District Meeting Letters, 1946-1976

- Box 2 Folder 16 Grand Chapter Correspondence, 1934-1956, and undated

- Box 2 Folder 17 Financial Correspondence: General, 1935-1976

- Box 2 Folder 18 Financial Correspondence: Macoy Publishing, 1938-1956, and undated
Box 2 Folder 19  General Correspondence, 1957, 1974, and undated

Contains member correspondence regarding possible burial services and nominations for committees; and blank meeting reminder cards, stationary, and envelopes.

Box 2 Folder 20  Cards and Invitations


Includes financial reports, 1949-1978 bank statements from the South Carolina National Bank, cancelled checks, check ledgers, receipts, business letters, and individual members' financial books.

Arranged by subject and then chronologically.

Box 2 Folder 21  Financial Reports, 1951-1958, and undated

Box 2 Folder 22  Bank Statements, 1949-1956

Box 2 Folder 23  Bank Statements, 1964

Box 2 Folder 24  Bank Statements, 1965

Box 2 Folder 25  Bank Statements, 1966

Box 2 Folder 26  Bank Statements, 1968-1969

Box 2 Folder 27  Bank Statements, 1970

Box 2 Folder 28  Bank Statements, 1971

Box 2 Folder 29  Bank Statements, 1972

Box 2 Folder 30  Bank Statements, 1973-1974

Box 2 Folder 31  Bank Statements, 1975

Box 2 Folder 32  Bank Statements, 1976

Box 2 Folder 33  Bank Statements, 1977-1978

Box 2 Folder 34  Cancelled Checks and Ledger, 1949-1951

Box 2 Folder 35  Cancelled Checks, 1952-1954 and Check Ledgers, 1951-1957

Box 2 Folder 36  Checks, 1955-1957, 1966, and undated

Box 2 Folder 37  Check Stubs, 1969 and Check Ledger, 1975-1976

Box 2 Folder 38  Loose Receipts, 1937-1956 and Receipt Book, 1945-1947

Box 2 Folder 39  Business Letters and Receipts, 1947-1975, and undated

Box 2 Folder 40  Individual Members' Financial Books, 1921-1961

The financial books are of the following members: Mrs. Virginia Lemon, Miss. Celia Robinson, Mrs. Dottie Williams, Mrs. Rosalee Williams, Sis. Rebecca Garvin, and Sis. Mamie Fields.
3. O.E.S. Rituals and Ceremonies, undated

Box 4 Folder 41   Eastern Star Songs
Box 4 Folder 42   Order of the Eastern Star Syllabus
Box 4 Folder 43   Burial Instruction and Sashes

4. Prince Hall Lodge 46 Records, 1924-1979, 2000, and undated

Each Order of the Eastern Star was affiliated with a Prince Hall Lodge and the Charleston chapter of the Order was affiliated with Lodge No. 46. These records document some of the functions and activities of the Lodge.

Box 4 Folder 44   Meeting Minutes, 1924-1934
Box 4 Folder 45   Annual Report for Lodge 46, 1935-1936
Box 4 Folder 46   Temple Association Reports, 1954-1957
Box 4 Folder 47   Printed Programs for Grand Lodge 103rd and 111th Communication, 1970 and 1979
Box 4 Folder 48   Raffle Books, 1967, 2000
Box 4 Folder 49   Cloth Bookmark

A bookmark of unknown owner, includes the scripture "Thus He Shewed Me" from Amos chapters 7-8. The verse was used by the Masons to signify uprightness of conduct throughout one's life