BERNICE WALKER
PAPERS, 1931–1984

Collection Information

Biographical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Wilma L. Moore
June 2013

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org
**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

| VOLUME OF COLLECTION:                  | 6 manuscript boxes; 2 oversize folders |
| COLLECTION DATES:                     | 1931-1984; Bulk 1973-1984               |
| PROVENANCE:                          |                                           |
| RESTRICTIONS:                        | None                                     |
| COPYRIGHT:                           |                                           |
| REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:                 | Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society. |
| ALTERNATE FORMATS:                   |                                           |
| ACCESSION NUMBER:                    | 1998.0124x                               |
| NOTES:                               | The Bernice Walker Papers was donated during the Black Women in the Middle West Project. The Black Women in the Middle West Project was a collecting effort to gather primary source materials of African-American women in Illinois and Indiana. The project, spearheaded by Darlene Clark Hine and Patrick Bidelman at Purdue University, was conducted in three phases from 1977-1985. Project records are located at five repositories within the two states including the Indiana Historical Society (IHS) [also houses the project’s administrative records], Calumet Regional Archives, and the Northern Indiana Historical Society in Indiana and the Chicago Historical Society and the Illinois State Historical Society in Illinois. (Although the implementation phase of the project was from 1984-1985, several of the collections were donated to IHS in 1986.) |
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bernice Walker (May 17, 1905–June 15, 1996) was born in Anderson, Indiana. Her parents were George Lewis (February 26, 1884 - death date unknown) born in Indianapolis and Sarah Etta McMurray Jones (July 3, 1888–March 7, 1964) born in Bridgeport, Indiana. As a child, she was a member of Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Anderson. After moving to Indianapolis, she became a member of the local Allen Chapel AME Church.

Walker attended Manual Training School in Indianapolis. She graduated from Wendell Phillips in Chicago. She attended Bookwood College in New York, majoring in Industrial Relations and Psychology.

She worked for Wainwright Music Camp, the Ft. Benjamin Harrison Army Finance Center, and the Internal Revenue Service.

As an active member of Allen Chapel AME Church, Walker belonged to the Flora Bryant Missionary Society, the Senior Choir, and the Laymen’s League. She was also affiliated with the Indiana State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, National Council of Negro Women, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Citizens Forum, Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association, and the Alpha Pi Chi Sorority.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of six manuscript boxes of material and two oversize folders divided into six series that pertain to Bernice Walker, an Indianapolis government worker who belonged to several religious, social, and women organizations.

**Series 1**  **Personal Materials** contains biographical information, personal correspondence, and essays and speeches related to Bernice Walker. Box 1, folder 4 contains a tribute written by Walker about her grandmother, who, according to the tribute, was enslaved before coming to Indiana.

**Series 2**  **Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church programs, records, and Women’s Missionary Society; African Methodist Episcopal Denomination** Walker was a longtime member of Allen Chapel AME Church in Indianapolis. Several folders in this series contain materials related to the Women’s Missionary Society of Allen Chapel AME. There are also church calendars, financial statements, and programs. These materials encompass most of boxes 1 and 2. Indiana AME churches are part of the 4th district of the denomination. The series ends with general AME denominational materials that pertain to its Indiana Annual Conference and layman’s organization.

**Series 3**  **Other Churches** There are several folders containing information about various churches located in Indianapolis, as well as Anderson, Detroit, Philadelphia, South Bend, and Montreal (Quebec, Canada) in Series 3. (Unless otherwise noted in the Box and Folder Listing, the church is located in Indianapolis.) These materials are arranged alphabetically by the name of the church.

**Series 4:**  **Organizations** Bernice Walker was a member of the Alpha Pi Chi Sorority, a national service organization incorporated in Chicago on 7 January 1963. Alpha Pi Chi seceded from Alpha Gammon Chi Sorority. The goals of the new organization included broadening the interests of women; training women for leadership positions; and developing its members culturally, socially, and intellectually to augment fuller personal success. The collection contains many records of Alpha Pi Chi Sorority, including correspondence, membership lists, programs, and proclamations. Walker worked for and volunteered at the Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association. Materials related to that organization along with several others including the Alpha Home, Baptist Ministers’ Wives Alliance, Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, Indiana State Federation of Associated Clubs, National Council of Negro Women, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Indianapolis Chapter, and the West Parkview Civic Club are located in boxes 3–5. Of special note are a program booklet from the 1951 conference of the National Association of Negro Musicians, a 1978 reprint of a 1902 history of the National Federation of Afro-American Women, and a 1965 Walker Beauty College graduation booklet.
Series 5  Individuals; Plays, Songs, and Booklists This series includes material related to various well-known individuals. It also has a copy of the Negro National Anthem and playbills for Showboat and Carmen Jones. Of particular interest is a Martin Luther King, Jr. program that highlights King’s appearance at Cadle Tabernacle in Indianapolis on December 12, 1958.

Series 6  Publications Copies of The Friday Caller, an Allen Chapel AME Church (Indianapolis) weekly newsletter dated from 1974 to 1984, are in boxes 5 and 6. There are other publications in the series, including a copy of The Testament, an Allen Chapel AME Church newspaper dated February 11, 1968. It includes a historical perspective of the church and an article about the Lutheran Church in the United States.
SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Personal Materials

CONTENTS CONTAINER
Biographical Materials, 1955–1979, n.d. Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, 1945–1984 Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence—Retirement greetings Box 1, Folder 3
“My Tribute to my Grandma” Box 1, Folder 4
Essays and Speeches Box 1, Folder 5

Series 2: Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church programs, records, and Women’s Missionary Society; African Methodist Episcopal Denomination

CONTENTS CONTAINER
Allen Chapel AME Programs, 1932–1972 Box 1, Folder 7
Allen Chapel AME Programs, 1973–1976 Box 1, Folder 8
Allen Chapel AME Programs, 1977–1979 Box 1, Folder 9
Allen Chapel AME Programs, 1980–1984, n.d. Box 1, Folder 10
Women’s Missionary Society (WMS) History (includes history of the WMS of the AME Church, One Hundred Years of Victorious Service, by Verdelle Jennings Johnston, ca. 1975; organizational chart) Box 1, Folder 12
Women’s Missionary Society Constitution and By-Laws Box 1, Folder 14
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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Women’s Missionary Society Annual Reports, 1973–1980, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 1, Folder 15</td>
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<td>Women’s Missionary Society Prayer Calendar, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 2, Folder 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Missionary Society Annual Convention, 1975–1980</td>
<td>Box 2, Folder 2</td>
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<td>Women’s Missionary Society Membership List</td>
<td>Box 2, Folder 4</td>
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<td>Women’s Missionary Society Biographies</td>
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<td>African Methodist Episcopal (AME) History</td>
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<td>African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) Catalog, 1979</td>
<td>Box 2, Folder 14</td>
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<td>African Methodist Episcopal Layman’s Directory, 1973–1982</td>
<td>Box 2, Folder 16</td>
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Series 3: Other Churches

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CONTAINER

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, Ind., 1974–1978  Box 2, Folder 17

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Muncie, Ind.  Box 2, Folder 18

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Noblesville, Ind.  Box 2, Folder 19

(Mother) Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  Box 2, Folder 20

Campbell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 1

Christ Missionary Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 2

Corinthian Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 3

First Friends Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 4

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 5

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 6

New Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 7

Notre Dame Church, Montreal, Quebec, Canada  Box 3, Folder 8

Olivet African Methodist Episcopal Church, South Bend, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 9

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, Detroit, Michigan  Box 3, Folder 10

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 11

Wallace Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Anderson, Ind.  Box 3, Folder 12
West Parkview Missionary Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind. Box 3, Folder 13

Witherspoon United Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Ind. Box 3, Folder 14

Series 4: ORGANIZATIONS

CONTENTS CONTAINER

Alpha Pi Chi History Box 3, Folder 16

Alpha Pi Chi Correspondence, 1965–1972 Box 3, Folder 17

Alpha Pi Chi Correspondence, 1973–1974 Box 3, Folder 18

Alpha Pi Chi Correspondence, 1975–1982, n.d. Box 3, Folder 19

Alpha Pi Chi By-Laws and Resolutions, n.d. Box 3, Folder 20


Alpha Pi Chi Membership Exams Box 3, Folder 24


Alpha Pi Chi Speeches Box 3, Folder 29


Alpha Pi Chi Newsletters, 1967–1984 Box 3, Folder 31
AMEZ (Alpha Methodist Episcopal Zion) meeting, 1949
Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., 1974
Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, 1980
Council of Social Agencies Community Institute, 1947
Health and Welfare Council of Indianapolis and Marion County, 1954
Indiana Civil Rights Commission Map showing segregation in Indianapolis from pre-1950 through 1967
Indiana Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs History
Indiana Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, 1969 - 1979
Indiana Women’s Prison
Indianapolis Bicentennial Committee, 1975–1976
Industrial Improvement Club, 1931 – 1932
National Association of Negro Musicians, 1951 – 1952
National Council of Negro Women
Noble Industries
Phyllis Wheatley Club, Anderson, Ind.
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association By-Laws and Statement of Purpose, 1935, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 4, Folder 19</td>
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<td>Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association Correspondence, 1950 - 1955, n.d.</td>
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<td>Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association Committees, 1947 - 1954, n.d.</td>
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<td>Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association Programs, 1932 - 1975, n.d.</td>
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<td>Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association Annual Reports, 1952 - 1953</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Home for the Aged</td>
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<td>Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Indianapolis chapter</td>
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<td>Suavettes</td>
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<td>Walker Beauty College graduation booklet, 1965</td>
<td>Box 5, Folder 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Dayton Area Council Self Help Center, Dayton, Ohio</td>
<td>Box 5, Folder 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Parkview Civic Club, 1958</td>
<td>Box 5, Folder 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Day of Prayer</td>
<td>Box 5, Folder 7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Young Women’s Christian Association (Indianapolis YWCA)  Box 5, Folder 8

**Series 5: Individuals; Plays, Songs, and Booklists**

**CONTENTS**

- Marian Anderson (memorabilia from her performance with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Fabien Sevitzky at the Cadle Tabernacle during the 1940s; also biographical booklet)  Box 5, Folder 9
- John Hunter (bishop with the AME denomination)  Box 5, Folder 10
- Martin Luther King, Jr. program, Cadle Tabernacle, Indianapolis, Ind., 12-12-1958  Box 5, Folder 11
- George P. Knox  Box 5, Folder 12
- Negro National Anthem; Black Book List  Box 5, Folder 13
- Playbills for Showboat and Carmen Jones  Box 5, Folder 14
- Plays, Prayers, Scriptures, and Hymns  Box 5, Folder 15

**Series 6: Publications**

**CONTENTS**

- *The Indianapolis Downtowner*, April 1972  Box 5, Folder 16
- *The Negro in 1944* (produced by the National Political Action Committee of the CIO)  Box 5, Folder 17
- *The Friday Caller*, 1974  Box 5, Folder 18
- *The Friday Caller*, 1975  Box 5, Folder 19
- *The Friday Caller*, 1976  Box 6, Folder 1
- *The Friday Caller*, 1977–1978  Box 6, Folder 2
- *The Friday Caller*, 1979  Box 6, Folder 3
- *The Friday Caller*, 1980  Box 6, Folder 4
- *The Friday Caller*, 1981–1984  Box 6, Folder 5
CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0541).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.