

Collection #  
M0972  
BV3639-3648  
OM 0475

**ROCHELLE COURT #14 ORDER OF THE CALANTHE  
RECORDS, 1906–1933, N.D.**

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Processed by

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

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 document case; 4 oversize folders; 10 bound volumes
COLLECTION DATES:	1906–1933
PROVENANCE:	French Lick, Indiana, December 2005
RESTRICTIONS:	
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	None
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2006.0097
NOTES:	

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Order of Calanthe and the Prosperpine Lodge were part of a national organization known as the Knights of Pythias of North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. The first black Pythian lodge was in Vicksburg, MS. The North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia were added to distinguish them from the white Knights of Pythias.

From its beginning the African American Pythians offered life insurance known as an endowment to its members, and also members of the Calanthe order. This life insurance could provide \$300 up to \$3,000 to the member's survivors. Rival African American organizations called this benefit a scheme and a fraud as they were fearful of competition. The insurance program also contributed to friction in the Pythian organization with several state Pythian organizations demanding control over their own insurance funds. A high percentage of African American Pythians owned insurance through the organization.

The Order of Calanthe (O of C) was established in 1883 by the Knights of Pythias of North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to be composed of knights, their wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and widows. As a women's organization; it was designed to be an auxiliary to the Knights of Pythias. "The Ritualistic Ceremonies of the Order of Calanthe of 1907" indicates that women should be a helpmate to the men of the lodge in a work of charity, purity, fidelity, harmony, and love. The object of the Order of the Calanthe is "to improve the heart, exalt the mind, promote virtue and morality, purity, unity, and race pride. Its mission will not be accomplished till every man is elevated to the highest type of manhood, and every woman clothed with that virtue and modesty which will make her an angel on earth". It should be noted that initials F. H. L. meaning Fidelity-Harmony- Love is inscribed at the closing of most Calanthe correspondence

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

Nina Njagkij (ed.), *Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations*. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2001

Coy Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers : African heritage in Orange County, Indiana*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1994.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is divided into three series.

**Series I:** The Rochelle Court #14 Order of Calanthe of French Lick, Indiana material 1906-1932 consists of twenty folders, three oversized folders and seven bound volume ledgers. The material in the folders includes, but is not limited to meeting minutes, correspondence, by-laws, performance bonds, and insurance certificates. Correspondence indicates that members worked in hospitals and hotels throughout the Midwest and the French Lick area. The material in the bound volume ledgers consist of membership rosters and records of income in the form of dues and expenditures.

- BV3639      Roll of officers and members, minutes of monthly meetings that include health reports of members and some financial records, 1906–1910.
- BV3640      The book contains monthly meeting minutes and financial rolls of members. There is a discussion of endowments including an endowment list of burial policy holders, 1910–1911. Pages 1–80 are missing.
- BV3641      Ledger record book with roll of members, attendance records, meeting minutes, income and disbursements, 1917–1921, n.d.
- BV3642      Roll of officers, attendance of members. The book also contains monthly meeting minutes and financial records, 1921–1931
- BV3643      Attendance, meeting minutes, and financial records, 1911–1917
- BV3644      The book contains a roll of members for each year and monthly meeting minutes, 1914–1915
- BV3645      Dues record book, 1912–1918

**Series II:** The Proserpine Lodge #27 of French Lick, Indiana material is contained in six folders, one oversize folder, and three bound volume ledger books. The materials in the folders include a sick payment schedule and proclamations. The ledgers contain membership rosters. There are records of dues and expenditures. A listing of burials in the Proserpine Lodge Cemetery at French Lick is found in *Forgotten Hoosiers* by Coy Robbins.

- BV3646      roster of lodge members: living, suspended, those deceased during the year, and insurance beneficiaries. There are also financial records, 1911-1916
- On page 261 there are notes of a call meeting held on September 29, 1916 to discuss the burial of a member whose death was the result of foul play.

- BV3647 Proserpine Lodge financial ledger book contains listing of money paid by members at lodge meetings and disbursements. Some meeting notes are found in the first sixty-six pages, 1912-1916.
- BV3648 Proserpine Lodge ledger book with roster of members; listing of past officers; and payments by members and disbursements, 1922-1930

**Series III:** The collection also contains the bulletin of the *70<sup>th</sup> Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Indiana*. The convention was held in Marion, Indiana on August 18--20, 1926. This group is also known as the Prince Hall Masonic order which is African American in membership. The book indicates that the Grand Lodge of England on September 24, 1784 granted to African Americans Prince Hall, Boston Smith, Thomas Sanderson, and several others a charter to the Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons under the title of the African Lodge to be opened in Boston. Prince Hall was appointed as Master. This booklet contains a wealth of information about African American lodges in Indiana during the 1920s. It includes membership list by city, location of lodges, and an inventory of activities of the Indiana Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: Rochelle Court #14 Order of Calanthe**

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Correspondence, 1911—1922	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, 1924–1930	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, 1931–1933, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 3
Minute and Financial Book 1906–1910	BV 3639
Minute and Financial Book 1910–1911	BV 3640
Minute and Financial Book 1917–1921 n.d.	BV 3641
Minute and Financial Book 1921–1931	BV 3642
Minute Book 1911–1917	BV 3643
Attendance Book 1914–1915	BV 3644
Rochelle Court #14 Minutes, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 4
Report of Grand Court Sessions, 1916–1923	Box 1, Folder 5
Grand Court of Calanthe, Minutes, 1926–1928	Box 1, Folder 6
By-Laws of the Rochelle Court#14 of the Order of the Calanthe, 1911, n. d.	Box 1, Folder 7
Order of the Calanthe of Indiana By-Laws & Constitution, 1927	Box 1, Folder 8
Order of the Calanthe Ritual Ceremonies, 1907	Box 1, Folder 9
Rochelle Court # 14, Order of The Calanthe Inventory of Possessions, 1921---1927	Box 1, Folder 10
Membership Application, 1926, n. d.	OM 0475, Folder 1
Grand Order of the Calanthe Proclamations, 1921–1930	Box 1, Folder 11

Proclamations, 1922---1929	OM 0475, Folder 2
Rules Governing Special Assessment for the Sick, n.d.	Box 1, Folder,12
Rochelle Court #14 Sick Reports, 1916—1930, n. d.	Box 1, Folder,13
Order of the Calanthe, insurance certificates, 1914	Box 1, Folder14
Rochelle Court #14 Order of the Calanthe burial insurance policy, 1926	OM 0475, Folder 3
Grand Court Order of the Calanthe certificate	Box 1, Folder 15
Rochelle Court #14 Order of the Calanthe event ticket, n. d.	Box 1, Folder 16
Rochelle Court #14 Order of the Calanthe bonds, 1921,1932	Box 1, Folder 17
Death notices, n. d.	Box 1, Folder 18
Dues record, 1912–1918, n. d.	BV 3645
Financial records, 1911–1927	Box 1 , Folder 19
Financial records, 1930–1932, n. d.	Box 1, Folder 20

## **Series 2: Knights of Pythias**

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Knights of Pythias, Prosperpine Lodge Minute Book, 1911—1916	BV 3646
Knights of Pythias, Prosperpine Lodge Financial Records 1912–1916	BV 3647

Knights of Pythias, Prosperpine Lodge Financial Records, 1922–1930	BV 3648
Knights of Pythias of Indiana Proclamation 1928	Box 1, Folder 21
Prosperpine Lodge, Knights of Pythias Sick Payment Schedule	Box 1, Folder 22
Knights of Pythias tickets	Box 1, Folder 23
Reception program for Ernest Tidrington	Box 1, Folder 24
Knights of Pythias burial benefits letter, 1930	Box 1, Folder 25
Knights of Pythias Uniform Rank Appointment, 1917	OM 0475, Folder 4

**Series 3: Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Indiana. (Prince Hall)**

CONTENTS

70<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons of The State of Indiana, 1926

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 26



## 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 0972).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.