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

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Luther E. Hall, III
May 24, 2011

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</th>
<th>1 document case; 4 oversize folders; 10 bound volumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTION DATES:</td>
<td>1906–1933</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROVENANCE:</td>
<td>French Lick, Indiana, December 2005</td>
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<td>RESTRICTIONS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTERNATE FORMATS:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>RELATED HOLDINGS:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCESSION NUMBER:</td>
<td>2006.0097</td>
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<td>NOTES:</td>
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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.


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 70th 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.
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Series 1: Rochelle Court #14 Order of Calanthe

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Rochelle Court #14 Minutes, n.d.
Report of Grand Court Sessions, 1916–1923
Grand Court of Calanthe, Minutes, 1926–1928
By-Laws of the Rochelle Court#14 of the Order of the Calanthe, 1911, n. d.
Order of the Calanthe of Indiana By-Laws & Constitution, 1927
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Rochelle Court # 14, Order of The Calanthe Inventory of Possessions, 1921---1927
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BV 3640
BV 3641
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Box 1, Folder 8
Box 1, Folder 9
Box 1, Folder 10
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Box 1, Folder 11
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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

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Rochelle Court #14 Order of the Calanthe burial insurance policy, 1926 OM 0475, Folder 3

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Rochelle Court #14 Order of the Calanthe event ticket, n. d. Box 1, Folder 16

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

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.