

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Charleston, West Virginia Branch Records A&M 4158

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1922-1936



Title Statement

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Abstract

Typescript records of the Charleston, West Virginia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in the summer of 1918 and first led by Mordecai Johnson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston. During the years covered by these records, attorney T. Gillis Nutter served as president. The bound volume includes primarily typed minutes for regular monthly meetings, executive committee meetings, and branch meetings, generally in chronological order. A few handwritten documents and printed pamphlets are also included. The documents shed light on the general state of civil rights locally and nationally between World War I and World War II, as well as local dramatic, musical and other cultural events, including visits from James Weldon Johnson and William Pickens and programs with the local organizations including the Hi-Y club, Alpha Delta chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Theta Psi chapter of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the local chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and other fraternal organizations. The records show how much the local chapter of the NAACP also served as a social and political center for the black community in the early 20th century. Additional subjects include: West Virginia court cases *State v. Lattimar*, *Brown v. Board*, and *White v. White*; the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill; and discrimination and segregation in buses, employment, and the New Deal Homestead communities. See Scope and Content Note for more information. See Historical Note for other resources about this chapter of the NAACP.

Creator

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Charleston, West Virginia Branch

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West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

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Biographical / Historical

For additional information on this chapter of the NAACP, see Thomas J. Edge. "'An Arm of God': The Early History of the NAACP in Charleston, West Virginia, 1917-1925." *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional Studies* 7.2 (2013): 1-32. *Project MUSE*. Web. 18 Nov. 2015.

and

Library of Congress collection MSS34140, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People records, 1842-1999 (see link in External Documents).

Scope and Contents

Typescript records of the Charleston, West Virginia branch of the National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People (NAACP). This branch was founded in the summer of 1918 and first led by Mordecai Johnson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston; during the years covered by these records, attorney T. Gillis Nutter served as president. The bound volume includes primarily typed minutes for regular monthly meetings, executive committee meetings, and branch meetings, generally in chronological order. A few handwritten documents and printed pamphlets are also included. The documents shed light on the general state of civil rights locally and nationally between World War I and World War II, as well as local dramatic, musical and other cultural events, including visits from James Weldon Johnson and William Pickens and programs with the local organizations including the Hi-Y club, Alpha Delta chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Theta Psi chapter of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the local chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and other fraternal organizations. The records show how much the local chapter of the NAACP also served as a social and political center for the black community in the early 20th century. Additional subjects include: West Virginia court cases *State v. Lattimar*, *Brown v. Board*, and *White v. White*; the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill; and discrimination and segregation in buses, employment, and the New Deal Homestead communities.

Highlights include:

a typescript copy of a letter from Thomas West (p. 2-3, 1922/01/30), a white attorney from Williamson, WV, active in the case of Harry Lattimar, a black man accused of the rape of an eight year old white girl. Rushed through arrest, indictment, trial, and conviction over a two day period due to the risk of being lynched, Lattimar was sentenced to death by hanging, and he most probably would have been hanged had it not been for the efforts on his behalf by West. West managed to get the WV Supreme Court to rule in *State v. Lattimar* that Lattimar's rights had been infringed, and his life was spared, though he was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

mention of the arrangement of a recital by celebrated pianist Miss Helen E. Hagan in March 1922 (p. 6)

typescripts of letters (1922/05/23-1922/05/26), including one to and from Senator Howard Sutherland, in support of the passage of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill at the national level (p. 25-27)

special meeting minutes regarding an invitation extended to James Weldon Johnson, the first black executive secretary of the NAACP, to speak in Charleston (1927/03/24)

regular session minutes regarding an investigation into "jimcrowism" and bus seating discrimination (1927/03/13)

special meeting minutes regarding the group's response to a printed paper distributed by the Ku Klux Klan regarding racial intermarriage and "the Negro Situation" (1927/10/11)

executive meeting minutes regarding public library discrimination (1928/01/06) and a letter from Nutter to the Board of Education regarding a recent order to exclude African Americans from the Garnett Library (1928/02/09), which became the *Brown v. Board* case that Nutter would bring to the West Virginia Supreme Court in late 1928 which led to that library's desegregation

Executive Committee meeting minutes regarding the West Virginia Supreme Court's decision on the *White v. White* case (1929/12/06). Nutter represented Lewis and Cora White suing against restrictive real estate covenants; in this ruling, the WV Supreme Court outlawed racial and religious discrimination in the sale of property.

a letter regarding possible segregation in the State Auditor's office (1929/11/29)

executive branch meeting minutes recording a visit and talk by Mary White Ovington, co-founder of the NAACP (1930/09/28)

Executive Committee meeting minutes mentioning the Hawks Nest Tunnel disaster, in which hundreds of workers, including many African Americans, died of silicosis due to lack of protective equipment (1932/09/23)

a letter to Nutter from Clarence E. Pickett which explains the local decision to "use native born Americans and not to include Negroes" in the Arthurdale homestead effort (1933/11/22), and Nutter's letter in response citing the *Brown v. Board* case decided by the WV Supreme Court which decided that the public library could not discriminate based on color, race, or previous condition of servitude

branch meeting minutes mentioning a visit by Dean [William?] Pickens (1933/09/24)

a letter referencing efforts to make sure the Tygart Valley homestead project as well as Arthurdale include African Americans (1934/02/16)

Keywords

Charleston (W. Va.)

Civil rights -- United States

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Charleston, West Virginia Branch
Nutter, T. Gillis (Thomas Gillis), 1876-1959.