



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection

1947-1988

Sc MG 361

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project and Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project, funded by the Lilly Endowment

Summary

Creator: St. Mark's United Methodist Church (Harlem, New York, N.Y.)

Title: St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection

Date: 1947-1988

Size: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of Juanita R. Riley, 1989.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection primarily consists of printed matter such as anniversary journals and programs. The collection focuses on the years when Reverend John Hicks was pastor, and contains church and special event programs, such as the Annual Debutante Cotillion and church anniversaries.

Preferred citation: [Item], St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection, Sc MG 361, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by H. Bailey, July 1991, and Rosalie P. Jeter, April 1998.4/98

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Creator History

St. Mark's United Methodist Church in New York City was organized in June 1871, by Rev. William F. Butler. At the time, he was associated with Mother African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania he was granted permission to establish a Methodist Episcopal Church for African

Americans in New York City. The church was incorporated in 1896.

The first several sites of the church were in midtown Manhattan. Under the guidance of pastors Dr. William H. Brooks (1897-1923) and Rev. John W. Robinson (1923-1931), a site was purchased between 137th and 138th Streets and St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenues, and a Gothic-inspired building was completed in 1926.

Historically a middle class congregation, St. Mark's was the first church to achieve the following: a literary forum for all denominations; a full membership to the all-white annual conference; first African American congregation to build a church costing more than a half million dollars; and first to have two of its pastors appointed as district superintendents. Several of the church's pastors were actively involved in community service, including Rev. Brooks, a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League. At the time, Brooks was considered New York City's most politically active African American minister. Rev. Dr. John J. Hicks, who commenced his relationship with the church in 1964, also was associated with the NAACP and the Harlem Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association and created a fund to help church and community members.

By the mid 1940s, St. Mark's had developed a strong social work agency. In 1958, educational and social service programs were developed for people of all age groups. In 1969, the church formed the Harlem Social Action Research Institute to insure the establishment of social services through community relations, education, and action, and to create links with other churches to achieve these goals.

Scope and Content Note

The St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection primarily consists of printed matter such as anniversary journals and programs. The collection focuses on the years when Reverend John Hicks was pastor, and contains church and special event programs, such as the Annual Debutante Cotillion and church anniversaries.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American churches
African American clergy
African American Methodists
African Americans -- Religion
Methodist Episcopal Church -- New York (State) -- New York

Geographic Names

Harlem (New York, N.Y.) -- Church history

Names

Hicks, John J., 1915-
St. Mark's United Methodist Church (Harlem, New York, N.Y.)

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Founders Observance and Business and Professional Club 1947-1987
- b. 1 f. 2 Operational reports 1963-1972
- b. 1 f. 3 Building Committee and sick visit reports 1964-1972
- b. 1 f. 4 Programs 1964-1981
- b. 1 f. 5 Debutante Cotillion 1965-1980
- b. 1 f. 6 Centennial booklet 1971
- b. 1 f. 7 Anniversary journal 1981
- b. 1 f. 8 Other printed matter 1982-1988