



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

Guide to the

National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses records

1908-1958

Sc Micro R 6565

Processed by Debra Carter.

Summary

Creator: National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses

Title: National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses records

Date: 1908-1958

Source: The papers and pamphlets were presented by Alma Vessells John, Executive Secretary of the NACGN, March 1951. The minute books were acquired July 1981. SCM8I-3

Abstract: Records document the organization and development of the Association consisting of minutes, 1908-1937; correspondence, including letters from the Citizens' Advisory Committee especially documenting efforts to integrate black nurses into the Armed Forces during World War II, 1937-1951; reports and speeches, 1937-1955; studies and surveys, 1940-1950; and printed material consisting of newsletters, convention programs, pamphlets, press releases, and scrapbooks of news clippings of the Association and black women in the nursing field.

Conditions Governing Access:

Researchers are restricted to microfilm copy.

Alternative Form Available: Collection available on microfilm; Scholarly Resources, Inc

Preferred citation: National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses records, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Debra Carter; Machine-readable finding aid created by Apex Data Services; revised by Terry Catapano.

Creator History

The National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) was organized in 1908 when a group

of fifty-two graduate nurses met in New York City. Martha Franklin of Connecticut, a graduate of the school of nursing of the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia, spearheaded the development of the organization. Franklin had spent much of her time and personal monies on collecting data to determine existing conditions among black nurses. At the conclusion of her survey she called a meeting at St. Marks Methodist Church in New York City. The meeting was sponsored by the Lincoln School for Nurses Alumnae Association. Miss Franklin was elected president at the first meeting. The goals of the new organization were: to achieve higher professional standards, to break down discriminatory practices facing black nurses, and to develop leadership among black nurses.

The first convention of black nurses was held in Boston in 1909. Twenty-six attended at the invitation of Mary Mahoney, the first black professionally trained nurse in the country. In 1918 temporary headquarters were established in New York City through the courtesy of the 137th Street Young Women's Christian Association. When headquarters in the YWCA were closed, Belle Davis, the executive secretary of the National Health Circle for Colored People provided space at her organization's office.

In 1934 a conference was held in New York City to determine a future course of action for the NACGN. Present among the officers and executive board of the NACGN were representatives of the American Nurses' Association, the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, the National League of Nursing Education, the New York State Board of Nurse Examiners, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the National Health Circle for Colored People, and the National Medical Association. The conference stressed the fact that black nurses needed jobs without the pressures of racial bias. Among other things, the conference participants decided to establish permanent headquarters in office space loaned to them by the National Health Circle for Colored People. The executive board employed a nurse executive with a grant from the Rosenwald Fund, and an executive secretary was hired to implement a day-to-day program. In addition, a Citizen Advisory Committee was organized, regional sections were established, and a program was outlined. The program was carried forward with community assistance and financial support from NACGN's membership. Two years later a substantial increase in membership and volume of work made it necessary for the NACGN to establish an office of its own and to hire additional staff.

Through the war years, the NACGN worked tirelessly to interpret the needs of black nurses and led a vigorous campaign to end discrimination in the field. The first quota of fifty-six black nurses for the U.S. Army was announced in 1942; at the end of the war the Army had commissioned over five-hundred black nurses. During the same period the Federal government was taking other steps to increase the numbers of and opportunities for black nurses. An important breakthrough was the passage of the Bolton Act (1943) which provided for the training of nurses for the armed forces, government and civilian hospitals, health agencies, and war industries through grants to institutions providing such training. The act stated that there would be no discrimination in the administration of benefits and thus brought about an increase in the number of black nursing students in the country.

As early as 1942, the National League of Nursing Education had set a precedent by changing its by-laws. These changes made it possible for any eligible applicant to be admitted into the national organization if barred from membership in her state League. This stimulated several state Leagues to admit black nurses. By 1948 only nine states and the District of Columbia still barred black nurses. In 1949 at the NACGN convention in Louisville, Kentucky, the NACGN unanimously accepted the suggestion of the American Nurses Association (ANA) that NACGN functions be taken over by the ANA and that its program be expanded for the complete integration of black nurses. Under the leadership of President Mabel Staupers, author of a history of the organization titled *No Time for Prejudice*, NACGN membership voted the NACGN out of existence in 1951.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses document the organization and development of the association, and its eventual dissolution. Some files for the Citizens' Committee Affiliated with the New York Local of Colored Graduate Nurses are included. The materials have been divided into the following series: Minutes, By-Laws And Articles Of Incorporation, Correspondence, Memoranda, Speeches And Testimony, Studies And Reports, Publications Of The National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses, and Printed Material.

The following items were removed from:

*Name of Collection/Papers*National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses Papers

*Accession Number*MG 16

*Donor:*Alma Vessels John

*Date received:*March 1951

*Date transferred:*1951

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

span class="emph">Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:/span>

1 albumen print of the First Convention of the National

Association of Colored Graduate Nurses

*Accessioned by:*Debra Carter

*Date:*1978

Arrangement: Records organized into seven series: I Minutes, By-laws and Articles of Incorporation; II Correspondence; III Memoranda; IV Speeches and Testimony; V Studies and Reports; VI Publications of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses; and VII Printed Material

Key Terms

Subjects

African American nurses -- Societies, etc
African Americans in medicine
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Discrimination in employment -- United States
Nursing -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Scrapbooks

Names

National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses

Container List

Minutes

There are two volumes of MINUTES (1908-1937) containing minutes of the Association's first meetings, annual meetings and minutes of executive board meetings.

- b. 1 Minutes 1908-1917
 - v. 1
- b. 1 Minutes 1917-1937
 - v. 2
- b. 2 f. 1 By-Laws And Articles Of Incorporation

Correspondence

The CORRESPONDENCE (1937-1951) documents a later period, particularly efforts to integrate black nurses into the armed forces during World War II. Letters from the Citizens' Advisory Committee are included.

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- b. 2 f. 2 General Correspondence 1937-1951
- b. 2 f. 3 Nurses In The Armed Forces 1940-1945
- b. 2 f. 4 Memoranda 1937-1951
- b. 2 f. 5 Speeches And Testimony 1937, 1951

SPEECHES AND TESTIMONY (1937-1951) includes a transcript of the public hearing on the condition of the urban black population held by New York State in 1937, during which Mabel Staupers, secretary of the NACGN, testified, and a copy of a speech by attorney William Hastie at an NACGN testimonial dinner in 1951.

Studies And Reports

The series STUDIES AND REPORTS contains a report to the Board of Directors of the American Nurses Association from the NACGN, as well as a report on a series of programs sponsored by the New York Local Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and the Citizens' Committee in 1942.

Studies

- b. 2 f. 6 Study Of The National Professional Nursing Organization With Regard To Structure 1945-1950
- b. 2 f. 7 Reports
 - National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses 1919-Ca. 1950
- b. 2 f. 8 Citizens' Advisory Committee Of The Local Graduate Nurses Association
- b. 2 f. 9 American Nurses Association And The Negro Nurse 1950-1958

Publications Of The National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses

PUBLICATIONS OF THE NACGN includes scattered issues of the Newsletter, the *National News Bulletin* and programs from the regional conferences.

- b. 2 f. 10 Press Releases 1942-1951
- b. 2 f. 11 Newsletter 1943-1947
 - b. 3 f. 1 The National News Bulletin 1932-1950
 - b. 3 f. 2 Programs - Annual, Biennial Conventions 1916, 1936-1949
 - b. 3 f. 3 Programs - Northeastern Regional Conference 1940-1948
 - b. 3 f. 4 Programs - Southeastern Regional Conference 1940-1948
 - b. 3 f. 5 Programs - Southern Regional Conference 1938-1946
 - b. 3 f. 6 Programs - West Central Regional Conference 1942, 1946

Publications Of The National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses (cont.)

b. 3 f. 7 Programs 1944, 1951

Printed Material

PRINTED MATERIAL (1942-1951), the largest series, consists principally of scrapbooks of clippings about NACGN, black women in the nursing profession and black nurses' struggles against racial discrimination.

b. 3 f. 8 Articles About The National Association For Colored Graduate Nurses

b. 3 f. 9 Articles -- American Nurses Association And The Negro Nurse

Scrapbooks And Clippings

b. 4 Clippings 1936
v. 1

29th Annual Meeting Of The National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses

b. 4 Clippings 1937-1939
v. 2

Plans For Regional Conference Of National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses

Discrimination In Medicine

b. 4 Clippings 1938
v. 3

General Articles On Health And Medical Field

b. 4 Clippings 1939-1940
v. 4

Growth Of The National Negro Nurses Association

b. 5 Clippings 1941
v. 5

National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses Convention, Los Angeles

b. 5 Clippings 1947
v. 7

Volume 6 is missing

National Association Of Colored Graduate Nurses Convention In Atlanta

b. 5 Clippings 1942-1951
v. 8

Black Nurses In Civil And Military Service

Discrimination Against Black Doctors By The American Medical Association

b. 6 Clippings, Miscellaneous

b. 6 f. 1 1944-1945

b. 6 f. 2 1945

b. 6 f. 3 1946

b. 6 f. 4 1950-1951

b. 6 f. 5 n.d