



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

Guide to the

Samuel Joseph Martin papers

1926-1989

Sc MG 338

Processed by Hanna Bailey.

Summary

Creator: Martin, Samuel Joseph, 1905-1984

Title: Samuel Joseph Martin papers

Date: 1926-1989

Source: Donated by Mrs. Clarice Martin, March 27, 1989. SCM 89-14

Abstract: The collection documents some aspects of Samuel J. Martin's career as an Episcopalian minister and contains sermons, correspondence, writings, and printed material. Included is Martin's dissertation written for the Divinity School of the University of Chicago entitled "Significant Leaders in the Modern Religion and Health Movement, 1942". Correspondence and other material deals with the mental health movement and its relationship to religion. There are also manuscripts for his sermons and other religious writings. Printed material includes a St. Edmund's Church (Chicago) newsletter written prior to Martin's ordination as minister, 1926; a program celebrating the tenth anniversary of this church, 1938; the 1949 issue of "Advance," the Diocese of Chicago publication featuring St. Edmund's Church; a program dedicating the Dean Samuel J. Martin Annex of the Parochial School of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, 1966; other publications about the Episcopal Church; and newspaper clippings regarding St. Edmund's Episcopal Church and biographical information about Martin.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Samuel Joseph Martin papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

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

Creator History

The Reverend Samuel J. Martin was born in 1905 in Huntsville, Alabama. The son of a Baptist minister, John Martin, and his wife Dorrence, Martin was raised by a Catholic aunt in Indiana. He spent three years studying at Boston and Tufts universities before he received his Baccalaureate degree from

Illinois Institute of Technology in 1933. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Virginia Episcopal Seminary in 1939, and was awarded the title Master of Sacred Theology by Seabury-Western Seminary in 1935. He did post-graduate work at the University of Chicago. Martin was ordained a Deacon in the Episcopal Church in 1928; a year later he was ordained a priest. At this time, he was named Deacon of St. Edmund's Mission, which was established on the south side of Chicago in 1906, without a congregation. It was Martin's job to secure a congregation over which he would then preside. By 1940 Martin had built a congregation of over three hundred people, and St. Edmund's was officially named a parish in Chicago's Episcopal Diocese. In 1946, the church boasted the second largest Episcopal congregation in Chicago, with twelve hundred members. Today St. Edmund's has over two thousand members; it is the largest African American Episcopal congregation in the Chicago area. Throughout Martin's forty-two years as St. Edmund's rector, he worked to strengthen and expand his church and community. In 1933 he began editing "The Advocate," a quarterly publication which carried news about the activities at St. Edmund's. In 1947, Martin established St. Edmund's Parochial School, which by 1963 had enrolled approximately four hundred students. In 1948, after the congregation had expanded, St. Edmund's moved to a larger church building. Martin worked constantly to raise funds for his parish and brought personalities such as the opera singer, Lenotyne Price to perform in a benefit concert for St. Edmund's. The proceeds of Price's concert helped to build a community center. Martin also established a credit union, an old age home, a nursery school, and a tutoring program. In addition to his work with St. Edmund's, Martin was an advocate for civil rights. Beginning in the 1930's he actively demonstrated against housing and school segregation and other civil rights violations. Though busy with community action, he always remained in close contact with his parishioners. Martin also published articles in several religious journals. One of his interests, in which he did some writing and research both in school and independently, focused on the relationship between psychology and the role of the church. Martin received several honors in his lifetime. In 1936, Bishop George Stewart of Chicago awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross for Conspicuous Service. In 1958, he became the first African American ever elected president of the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. He was a member of the Diocesan counsel from 1959 to 1960, and was elected to the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C.. In 1965, the Woodlawn Community Service Agency honored him for his role in easing race relations in Chicago. Martin was made an honorary canon of St. James Episcopal Cathedral in 1970, the same year in which he retired to Cassopolis, Michigan. He remained active in the Episcopal Church until he died in 1984. Martin married Clarice E. White in 1931. They had two children: Samuel Jr., and Annette Teresa.

Scope and Content Note

The Samuel J. Martin Collection dates from 1926 to 1985. The collection consists of Martin's personal papers, his writings, articles on St. Edmund's Church and on the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, and a few papers by other authors.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American churches -- Illinois -- Chicago
African American clergy -- Illinois -- Chicago
African American preaching
African Americans -- Religion
Mental health -- United States
Mental health counseling -- United States
Sermons, American -- African American authors

Titles

Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project funded by the Lilly Endowment

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Sermons

Names

Martin, Samuel Joseph, 1905-1984

Episcopal Church

St. Edmund's Episcopal Church (Chicago, Ill.)

Container List

b. 1 Personal Papers

The first series, *PERSONAL PAPERS* 1926-1981, contains documents and certificates, funeral programs and obituaries, newspaper articles about Martin's achievements, and letters. Many of the items in this series were removed from a scrapbook, dismantled because of its poor condition. It contained primarily clippings and letters. The letters are primarily RSVP's and congratulatory notes responding to various events in Martin's career. Personal letters, letters related to St. Edmund's finances, and lastly letters of condolence written to Martin's wife after his death, are in the file.

- b. 1 f. 1 Documents 1926-1979, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 2 Letters 1934-1985, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 3 Tributes, Obituaries, Funeral Programs 1984
- b. 1 f. 4 Clippings 1931-1981

Writings

The *WRITINGS SERIES* 1935-1982, covers a broad range of genres: sermons, research papers, articles, and songs. The sermons, most of which are undated, are arranged alphabetically by title, or if untitled, by the first word of the sermon. The research papers are principally on the theme of the relationship between religion and psychology. These papers appear to be both course assignments and personal research projects. Folder twelve is a research file containing correspondence, sources, and some reports by Martin. The final folder of this series is entitled Miscellaneous as it is unclear whether its contents are sermons, articles, or reports. It is important to mention that in a few cases Martin's authorship was assumed, although complete proof was lacking.

- b. 1 f. 5 Sermons (A-N) 1966-1978, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 6 Sermons (O-Z) 1963-1970, n.d.
- b. 1 f. 7 Thesis: "Case Studies In Pastoral Care," 1935
- b. 1 f. 8 "Meditations On The Prayer Book Collects," n.d.
- b. 2 f. 1 "Significant Leaders In The Modern Religion And Health Movement," n.d.
- b. 2 f. 2 Articles 1982, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 3 Songs n.d.
- b. 2 f. 4 Psychology And Religious Experience Research File 1940-1942, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 5 Miscellaneous Writings n.d.

St. Edmund's Church

The *ST. EDMUND'S CHURCH SERIES* contains printed material: news clippings, programs, newsletters, and a sketch of the church. The clippings include articles concerning church events, particularly featuring the event when a stone was brought from the original Abbey of St. Edmund's in England to St. Edmund's in Chicago. There are also clippings covering actor Richard Harrison's funeral over which Reverend Martin presided at St. Edmund's in 1935.

- b. 2 f. 6 Printed Materials 1940-1975, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 7 Clippings 1949-1962, n.d.
- b. 2 f. 8 Richard Harrison's Funeral - Clippings 1935

Episcopal Church

The series is comprised of printed material and clippings concerning the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago and/or its role in race relations.

- b. 2 f. 9 Printed Material 1940-1975, n.d.

Miscellaneous

The series contains other authors' works as well as unidentifiable texts.

Miscellaneous (cont.)

b. 2 f. 10 Other Authors n.d.