



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

1947-1987

Sc MG 361

Summary

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

Title: St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection

Date: 1947-1987

Size: .4 linear feet (1 archival box)

Source: Gift, Riley, Juanita R, 1989

Abstract: The St. Mark's United Methodist Church Collection consist principally of printed matter consisting of anniversary journals and programs. The collection focuses on the years when Reverend John Hicks was pastor, and contains church programs, and programs from services and special events, such as the Annual Debutante Cotillion, and the Business and Professional Club, and church anniversaries.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: St. Mark's United Methodist Church collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

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, to establish a Methodist Episcopal Church for African Americans. 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 which was bounded by 137 and 138 Streets and by St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenues in Harlem, 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: first to form a literary forum for all denominations, first African American church to become a full member of a

white annual conference, first African American congregation to build a church costing more than a half million dollars, and to have two of its pastors appointed as district superintendent. Several of the church's pastors were actively involved in community service. These include 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, was also associated with the NAACP and the Harlem Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, and was involved in community service in other ways as well.

By the mid 1940's St. Mark's had developed a strong social work agency. In 1958 educational and social service programs were developed to reach people of all age groups, and 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

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Key Terms

Subjects

African American churches -- New York (State) -- New York
African American clergy -- New York (State) -- New York
African Americans -- Religion

Titles

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

Names

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