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Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Northeasterners, Inc. records**

1930-2015 [bulk 1970-1990]

Sc MG 349

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2016.

## Summary

**Creator:** Northeasterners, Inc.

**Title:** Northeasterners, Inc. records

**Date:** 1930-2015 [bulk 1970-1990]

**Size:** 18.96 linear feet (40 boxes, 11 volumes)

**Source:** Donated by Vivian D. Hewitt, 1991 and 1995.

**Abstract:** The Northeasterners, Inc. was founded as a social organization for African-American women in 1930 by Agatha Scott Davis (d. 2002), the wife of Brigadier-General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. This organization brings together women of similar social and educational backgrounds to work on educational and other societal concerns. The collection holds certificates, clippings, correspondence, ephemera, minutes, photographs, printed matter, scrapbooks, artifacts, and audio visual material.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Conditions Governing Access:**

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2016.

**Related Materials:**

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## **Creator History**

The Northeasterners, Inc. was founded in 1930 by Agatha Scott Davis (d. 2002), the wife of General Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Her inspiration for the club originated after visiting African-American debutantes in different northeastern cities. She felt that their similar interests would be met with a social club.

Mrs. Davis was elected as the first national president and served one term in office from 1929 to 1931. Individuals elected to the presidency serve a term of several years. Chapters elect their own local president to organize events in the surrounding community.

At the first meeting held on June 1930 in New York City, the members selected the name the Gay Northeasterners to reflect the "bright, merry and gay" demeanor of the group. The women were known as gays and the men who joined the group at their annual meeting were called gaylords. Membership is by invitation only. The name was changed officially to the Northeasterners, Inc., in 1979. The first chapters were founded in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. New York City also serves as the national headquarters. The chapters expanded to include the cities of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh, and the state of New Jersey. The Northeasterners meet annually at different conclaves to promote aid to the local community and support educational causes. Scholarships and contributions include an annual scholarship to Howard University, and contributions to progressive and charitable organizations.

The Northeasterners also created their own prayer and song. Marion T.S. Thomas wrote the lyrics and music for the *Gay Northeasterners Song*. The *Gay Northeasterners Prayer* was written by Julia Bradby Duncan. In 1983, a tribute song entitled *O What a Gal* was written by Virginia Lewis.

Past and current publications generated include the *Gay Echoes*, the *Gay News*, the *Northeasterners Bulletin* and the *National Newsletter*.

Former president Thomy D. Joyner thought that it was important to preserve the legacy of the Northeasterners and to have their archives preserved at an African-American scholarly institution. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was selected by consensus. Vivian D. Hewitt acts as the liaison to the Schomburg Center and historian for the Northeasterners.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The collection, dated 1930 to 2015 (bulk dates, 1970-1990), documents the Northeasterners, Inc., a social organization for African-American women through certificates, clippings, correspondence, ephemera, minutes, photographs, printed matter, scrapbooks, artifacts, and audio visual material.

The records are arranged in two main sections: the national organization and the local chapters. The national organization records hold its administrative files, executive committee reports, minutes, financial information, roll calls and reports from the chapters. These records also include files about the installation of the city chapters, the national song and the national prayer, brochures celebrating the Northeasterners anniversaries, drawings for a national bracelet, the Northeasterners history, newspaper clippings about the organization and members, official proclamations, and brochures celebrating their 10th and 25th anniversaries, and the publications the *Gay Echoes*, the *Gay News* and the *National Newsletter*.

Local Chapter files represent the cities of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis, New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C. and the state of New Jersey. New York City, Detroit, and the state of New Jersey generated the most material consisting of correspondence, files

about the annual convention, application for membership, installation of the chapters, photographs, resumes, and rosters of members.

The New York Chapter holds the files of the corresponding secretary, representative of several secretaries who served in this position and includes the rosters of New York members; and files concerning the history committee, national meetings, projects and programs, memorials of members and national correspondence to chapters.

Vivian D. Hewitt's work on behalf of the Northeasterners is documented through her correspondence with the chapters as one of the corresponding secretaries and also as the historian and liaison for the organization.

The scrapbooks or memory books of the local chapters include the local constitution, activities, photographs of the members; installation of the chapter; report of activities; newspaper clippings, and ephemera. One of the scrapbooks of interest is about the original three chapters, located in New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Photographs of the members are located throughout the collection. There are several oversize photographs taken at the annual conventions.

The artifacts include a corsage and flower badges, lapel pin, name tags, table runner, and several tote bags of various sizes.

The audiovisual material consists of several audio and video recordings of chapter meetings in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American intellectuals -- 20th century  
African American women -- Societies and clubs  
Societies -- New York (N.Y.)

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Artifacts (object genre)  
Clippings  
Correspondence  
Ephemera  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sound recordings

### **Names**

Davis, Agatha Scott

## Container List

- National Organization 1940-2015
  - Annual Conventions
    - b. 1 f. 1-19 1940-1992
    - b. 2 f. 1-9 1998-2000
    - b. 3 f. 1-6 2001-2015
    - b. 3 f. 7 Certificate Of Incorporation 1952
    - b. 3 f. 8 Certificate Of Agreement For Name Change 1979
    - b. 3 f. 9 Chapter Installation Rituals 1950-1964
  - Chapter Rosters
    - b. 3 f. 10-14 1966-1979
    - b. 4 f. 1-2 1984-1995
    - b. 38 f. 1-5 1966-2012
  - Constitution And Revisions
    - b. 4 f. 3-8 1931-2015
    - b. 38 f. 6-7 1951, 2010
  - Correspondence
    - b. 4 f. 9-13 1980s-1994
    - b. 5 f. 1-5 1995-2015
    - b. 5 f. 6 Drawings For National Bracelet 1939 (Two original pencil drawings on paper.)
    - b. 5 f. 7 Economic Committee 1980
  - Financial
    - b. 5 f. 8-10 1945, 1980s-1990s
    - b. 38 f. 8 2008, 2010
    - b. 5 f. 11 Golden Anniversary Committee Meetings 1977-1980
    - b. 5 f. 12 Historical Materials Transferred To Schomburg 1990-1999
    - b. 5 f. 13 History Committee 1988
    - b. 5 f. 14 History Of The Northeasterners 1990
    - b. 38 f. 9 *Installation Ceremony For National Officers* 1994
    - b. 5 f. 15 Installation Ritual. Candelight Service Of Induction
  - Minutes
    - b. 6 f. 1-7 Executive Committee Minutes 1963-1995, 2007
    - b. 6 f. 8-12 General Committee Minutes 1948-1994
    - b. 38 f. 10 Executive And General Committee Minutes 1995-2009
    - b. 6 f. 13 National Newsletter Committee 1975-1976
    - b. 6 f. 14 National Project Committee 1971-1972
    - b. 38 f. 11 *(The) Northeasterners Protocol And Traditions Manual* 2008
  - Office Of The President
    - b. 7 f. 1-3 Annual Meetings 1974, 1986
    - b. 7 f. 4 Bulletins 1984-1993

National Organization (cont.)

Office Of The President (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 5 Cleveland Chapter Installation 1986
- b. 7 f. 6 Constitution And Rosters 1986-1988
- b. 7 f. 7-9 Correspondence 1984-1988
- b. 7 f. 10 Executive Committee Report 1987
- b. 7 f. 11 Expansion Plans 1980s
- b. 7 f. 12 Financial 1975-1986
- b. 7 f. 13 National Newsletter Correspondence 1986-1988
- b. 7 f. 14 Nominating Committee Reports 1988
- b. 7 f. 15 Proposals 1985-1986
- b. 8 f. 1 Resort Committee 1986-1988
- b. 8 f. 2 Resort Meeting 1983
- b. 8 f. 3 *Prayer. Gay Northeasterner Prayer*

Publications

- b. 8 f. 4-11 *Bulletin* 1965-2002
- b. 8 f. 12 *Gay Echoes* 1945-1950
- b. 8 f. 13 *Gay News* 1962-1963
- b. 9 f. 1-3 *Northeasterners National Newsletter* 1986-1998
- b. 9 f. 4 *President's Newsletter* 1979, 2009
- b. 9 f. 5 Presentation Of The Archives To The Schomburg Center; Scrapbook Information 1990, 1998

Resort Meetings

- b. 9 f. 6-11 1979-2014
- b. 38 f. 12 2009

Songs

- b. 9 f. 12 *A Gay Is A Gay* 1949  
Detroit Chapter
- b. 9 f. 13 *Gay Northeasterners' Song* 1953
- b. 9 f. 14 *Oh What A Gal* 1983

Local Chapters 1940-2014

Baltimore

- b. 9 f. 15 Annual Conventions Held In Baltimore 1954-1969, 1981
- b. 9 f. 16 Annual Reports 1957, 1964
- b. 9 f. 17 Clipping 1950s-1980s
- b. 9 f. 18 Financial 1950s-1980s
- b. 38 f. 13 General Information 1998-2010
- b. 9 f. 19 History 1985
- b. 9 f. 20 Local News 1967-1981
- Installation Of New Members
  - b. 10 f. 1 1985, 1989
- b. 38 f. 14-15 2011
- b. 38 f. 16 Members Directory 2010

Local Chapters (cont.)  
Baltimore (cont.)

- b. 10 f. 2 Minutes 1968-1988  
Newsletters
- b. 10 f. 3 *The Gay Baltimore Reporter* 1960  
Convention Edition
- b. 10 f. 4 *The Grapevine* 1956-1968
- b. 10 f. 5 Rosters 1980-2008
- b. 10 f. 6 *Song. The Chesapeake Bay Ballad*

Boston

- b. 10 f. 7-13 Annual Conventions Held In Boston 1957-1977
- b. 10 f. 14 Clippings 1953
- b. 10 f. 15-16 Installation Of New Members 1953  
Invitations
- b. 10 f. 17-18 1960s-2005
- b. 11 f. 1-2 2006-2007
- b. 11 f. 3 Minutes 1979-2006
- b. 11 f. 4-5 Photographs Of Chapter Members 2005
- b. 11 f. 6 Rosters 1953, 1980-2007

Chicago

- b. 11 f. 7-10 Annual Conventions Held In Chicago 1972-2012  
History And Membership News
- b. 11 f. 11-14 1961-2000s
- b. 38 f. 17 2009-2011
- b. 11 f. 15 Minutes 2014
- b. 11 f. 16 Rosters 1972-2007

Cleveland

- b. 11 f. 17 Clippings 1989
- b. 11 f. 18 Correspondence 1980s
- b. 11 f. 19 Deceased Members Remembered 1988-2009
- b. 11 f. 20 History 1986
- b. 12 f. 1-2 Installation Of Chapter And Members 1986, 1989
- b. 12 f. 3 Invitations
- b. 12 f. 4 Local Newsletter 1987
- b. 12 f. 5 Minutes 1986-1990
- b. 12 f. 6 Officers And National Officers 1988
- b. 12 f. 7 Rosters 1989-2007

Columbus

- b. 36 f. 1 *Columbus Black Heritage. The Bicentennial Celebration Edition* 2012
- b. 12 f. 8 Local News and Events 1970-2000  
Minutes
- b. 12 f. 9 2002-2011
- b. 36 f. 2 2011-2012

Local Chapters (cont.)

Columbus (cont.)

- b. 12 f. 10 Rosters 1982-2007
- Detroit
- b. 12 f. 11 Attendance And Dues 1982-1984
- b. 12 f. 12 Constitution 1940s-1980s
- Correspondence
- b. 12 f. 13 1962-1965
- b. 13 f. 1-8 1966-1990s
- b. 38 f. 18 1992-2011
- Financial
- b. 13 f. 9 1985-1987
- b. 39 f. 1 1980s-2000s
- b. 13 f. 10 Founder's Lunch 2005 (Photographs)
- b. 13 f. 11 Guest Book 1953-1966
- b. 13 f. 12 Installation
- b. 13 f. 13 Logos 1953
- b. 13 f. 14 Lord's Activities 1978
- Lothery, Helen  
President
- b. 13 f. 15-16 1984-1988
- b. 14 f. 1-3 1985
- b. 39 f. 2 Minutes 1985, 2000-2006
- b. 39 f. 3 Obituaries 2000-2011
- b. 14 f. 4-10 Programs 1952-1990s
- b. 14 f. 11 Report And Proposal Of National Project Committee 1971
- Rosters
- b. 14 f. 12-13 1970-2006
- b. 39 f. 4 1990-2010
- Indianapolis
- b. 14 f. 14 Annual Convention Held In Indianapolis 1982
- b. 14 f. 15-16 Rosters 1972-2007
- New Jersey
- Annual Conventions Held In New Jersey
- b. 15 f. 1-4 1976-1989, 2002
- b. 17 2002 (Binder)
- b. 39 f. 5 Certificate For Claire Walker 2006
- Constitution
- b. 15 f. 5 New Jersey Constitution 1986-2010
- b. 15 f. 6 National Constitution and Revisions 1992-2010
- Correspondence
- b. 15 f. 7-12 1967-2005
- b. 16 f. 1-2 2006-2014

- Local Chapters (cont.)
- New Jersey (cont.)
  - Correspondence (cont.)
    - b. 39 f. 6-7 1984-2009
    - b. 16 f. 3 History 1970
    - b. 16 f. 4-6 Installation Of New Jersey Chapter 1963-1964
    - b. 16 f. 7 Meetings And Agendas 1995-2006
    - Membership
      - b. 16 f. 8 New Membership 1999-2003
      - b. 16 f. 9-10 Resumes 1960, 1990-2000s
    - Minutes
      - b. 16 f. 11-13 1978-2013  
The volume dates from 1978 to 1988.
      - b. 39 f. 8 1985-2011
    - b. 40 f. 7 Photographs 1986-2007
    - Presidents
      - b. 17 f. 1 Dickson, Barbara 1984-1986
      - b. 17 f. 2 Robinson, Yolanda 1989-1991
      - b. 17 f. 3 Russell, Lucille 1989-1991
    - b. 16 f. 14 Rosters 1972-2006
- New York
  - General Records
    - b. 18 f. 1-7 Annual Conventions Held In New York 1962-1998
    - b. 18 f. 8-9 Clippings 1950s, 1990s
    - b. 18 f. 10-11 Constitution And Revisions 1964, 1970
    - Correspondence
      - b. 18 f. 12-13 1975-1985
      - b. 19 f. 1-9 1986-2015
      - b. 39 f. 9-10 1983-2015
    - Financial
      - b. 20 f. 1 1976-1999
      - b. 39 f. 11 2000s
      - b. 20 f. 2 Good Will Committee 1978
      - b. 20 f. 3 History 1990
      - b. 20 f. 4 Information For Bulletin 1969, 1980
      - b. 20 f. 5-6 Invitations To Join The Northeasterners 1992-1999
      - b. 20 f. 7-8 Invitations, Programs 1945-1984
      - b. 20 f. 9-10 Meetings, Agendas 1982-2000
      - b. 20 f. 11 Memorials For Members 1980s-2000s
    - Minutes
      - b. 20 f. 12-15 1955-1976
      - b. 21 f. 1-4 1976-2013
      - b. 39 f. 13 2009-2011



Local Chapters (cont.)

New York (cont.)

General Records (cont.)

- b. 21 f. 5-6 Rosters, Constitution And Minutes 1971-1982  
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- b. 21 f. 7-10 Rosters 1955-2013
- b. 39 f. 12 Photographs 1970s-2000s
- b. 21 f. 11-13 Photographs Of Members 1970s-1990s
- b. 21 f. 14 Schedule Of Meetings 1976-1984

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- b. 22 f. 1 Clippings 1980s-1990s
- b. 22 f. 2-12 Correspondence 1979-1996
- b. 23 f. 1 Financial 1991-1998
- b. 23 f. 2 History, Notes 1990
- b. 23 f. 3-5 History Committee 1987-2001
- b. 23 f. 6-7 Meeting Notices 1979-1994
- b. 23 f. 8 Minutes 1980s
- b. 23 f. 9 Newsletter Draft
- b. 23 f. 10-12 Programs 1980s-1990s
- b. 23 f. 13 Rosters 1979-1990

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- b. 24 f. 1-2 Preparations 1986
  - b. 24 f. 3-6 Programs 1948, 1986, 2000
  - b. 24 f. 7 By-laws of Chapter 1983
  - b. 24 f. 8 Clippings 1973-1998
  - b. 24 f. 9-10 Correspondence 1965-2005
  - b. 24 f. 11 Financial 1963-1978
- Minutes
- b. 24 f. 12-13 1981-1986
  - b. 36 f. 3-9 1987-2011
  - b. 25 f. 1 Photographs Of Members 1994
  - b. 25 f. 2 Rosters 1978-2007

Pittsburgh

- b. 25 f. 3 Memorial, Programs 1970s-2000s
- b. 25 f. 4 Rosters 1971-2005
- b. 39 f. 14 Assorted Materials 1975-2011

Washington, D.C

- b. 25 f. 5 Correspondence 1979-2006
- b. 25 f. 6-7 Rosters 1971-2007

Scrapbooks 1930-2001

Baltimore

- v. 1 1979-1985
- v. 2 1950s-1990s

Scrapbooks (cont.)

- b. 26 f. 1-3 Boston 1965-1990
- b. 26 f. 4 Chicago 1961-1998
- Columbus
- b. 26 f. 5-6 1963-2001
  - v. 3 1963-1990
  - v. 11 1963-2011
- Detroit
- v. 4 1948-1955  
Newspaper clippings have deteriorated
- b. 26 f. 7 1950s-1960s  
Supplemental copies of newspaper clippings.
- v. 5 Indianapolis 1963-1991
- New Jersey
- v. 6 1963-1991
- b. 26 f. 8 1989-1998
- v. 7 New York, Philadelphia and Washington 1930-1945
- b. 26 f. 9 New York 1995-1998
- Philadelphia
- v. 8 1940-1986
- v. 9 1943-1986
- b. 26 f. 10-12 1966-2001
- Pittsburgh
- v. 10 1948-1998
- b. 27 f. 1 1990-1998
- Washington D.C
- b. 27 f. 2-3 1952-1998
- b. 28 1962-1990
- Photographs 1965-2007
- Annual Convention
- b. 29 f. 1 1965
- b. 29 f. 2 1991
- b. 29 f. 3 1999
- b. 29 f. 4-5 2005
- b. 29 f. 6 2007
- b. 40 f. 1-6 1965-2005
- b. 29 f. 7 Northeasterners At Social Events 1980s
- b. 29 f. 8 Northeasterners. Original Members  
Copy of original photograph of three members in New York City, 1930.

Certificate, Proclamations 1973-2004

Certificate, Proclamations (cont.)

- b. 30 f. 1 Certificate Of Life Membership 1973  
Offset copy.

Proclamations

- b. 30 f. 2 Boston 2004
- b. 30 f. 3 New York City 1990
- b. 30 f. 4 Pennsylvania 1973

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- b. 31 Corsages 1983
- b. 32 f. 1 Envelope With Invitation 2006
- b. 32 f. 2 Envelope, Name Tag, and Pencil 1980
- b. 32 f. 3 Napkin and Name Tag 1980
- b. 32 f. 4 Lords Handkerchief
- b. 35 Name Tags
- b. 32 f. 5 Opera Glasses (Constructed of cardboard.)
- b. 32 f. 6 Shoe Pin (Small box)
- b. 32 f. 7 Shopping Bag 2006
- b. 32 f. 8 Unidentified. Light For Ceremonies (?)
- b. 33 Tote Bags And Scarf 2004, 2010
- b. 34 Carrying Case For Convention Materials 2004 (Constructed of cardboard.)
- b. 37 Time Capsule  
Closed until 2025