



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

Guide to the

American West Indian Ladies Aid Society records

1915-1965

Sc MG 498

Summary

Creator: American West Indian Ladies Aid Society

Title: American West Indian Ladies Aid Society records

Date: 1915-1965

Size: 0.67 linear feet (2 boxes)

Source: Gift, November 1993.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The American West Indian Ladies Aid Society (AWILAS) records are fragmentary in content, making it difficult to determine the actual transition of officers and other organizational activities, the exception being sick and death claim requests and payments. There are some financial and medical records and related correspondence; minutes; a few membership applications; correspondence with other benevolent organizations; and a folder of printed material, consisting of tickets, raffles, flyers, programs, invitations to events hosted by different organizations, Communist Party literature, bulletins, commercial solicitations, and political literature. There is correspondence between Ashley L. Totten, A. Philip Randolph (National President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) and Casper Holstein discussing issues of concern to all Virgin Islanders.

Preferred citation: [Item], American West Indian Ladies Aid Society records, Sc MG 498, 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 Ira Jefferies and Diana Lachatanere, October 1993.

Creator History

The American West Indian Ladies Aid Society, Inc. (AWILAS), a benevolent society, was founded in 1915 by Virgin Island immigrant women in the United States for the purpose of fostering "love, fraternity and benevolence among all women of the Virgin Islands." All female Virgin Islanders were eligible for

membership.

In addition to providing burial and medical funds to their members, AWILAS also gave assistance in other areas, such as education, as a means of uplifting the "Negro culture" to a higher standard. According to a resolution in their by-laws, an ultimate goal was to join forces with other Virgin Island societies and collectively put monies into a sinking fund to buy land or property. There were approximately thirty Virgin Island benevolent societies in New York City, including the Virgin Island Congressional Council of which Casper Holstein was president, and the Virgin Island Civic Association, whose president was Ashley L. Totten.

Following the recorded minutes of April 28th, 1936, AWILAS appears to have merged with The Sons and Daughters of Florida Club, a benevolent society which was founded in 1932; the last recorded records of this organization are May 11, 1965.

Scope and Content Note

The American West Indian Ladies Aid Society (AWILAS) records are fragmentary in content, making it difficult to determine the actual transition of officers and other organizational activities, the exception being sick and death claim requests and payments. There are some financial and medical records and related correspondence; minutes; a few membership applications; correspondence with other benevolent organizations; and a folder of printed material, consisting of tickets, raffles, flyers, programs, invitations to events hosted by different organizations, Communist Party literature, bulletins, commercial solicitations, and political literature. There is correspondence between Ashley L. Totten, A. Philip Randolph (National President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) and Casper Holstein discussing issues of concern to all Virgin Islanders.

Key Terms

Subjects

Minorities -- Political activity -- United States
West Indians -- New York (State) -- New York
Women -- New York (State) -- New York -- Societies and clubs
Women immigrants -- New York (State) -- New York
Women in charitable work -- United States

Names

American West Indian Ladies Aid Society

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Minutes and related correspondence 1928-1936
- b. 1 f. 2-5 General correspondence 1924-1936
 - Correspondence with other organizations
- b. 1 f. 6 American Virgin Islands Society, Inc 1925-1935
- b. 1 f. 7 Virgin Islands Congressional Council 1927-1939
- b. 1 f. 8 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (A. Philip Randolph) 1930-1934
- b. 1 f. 9 The Virgin Islands Civic and Industrial Association 1931-1934
- b. 1 f. 10 American West Indian Benevolent Society, Inc 1932-1935
- b. 1 f. 11 Medical and death records 1925-1963
- b. 1 f. 12 Membership applications
- b. 1 f. 13-14 Financial records
 - Sons and Daughters of Florida Club
- b. 2 f. 1 Minutes, by-laws, resolutions, and revisions 1948-1963
- b. 2 f. 2 Death claims 1957-1963
- b. 2 f. 3 Death and sick claims ledger fragment 1943-1951
- b. 2 f. 4 Financial records 1956-1965
- b. 2 f. 5 Dues book fragment 1954-1963
- b. 2 f. 6 Accounts receivable and disbursement ledger 1956-1958
- b. 2 f. 7 Danish West Indian Benevolent Society
 - Includes constitution, by-laws, and rituals.
- b. 2 f. 8 Printed matter