

# **National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Albany New York Branch Records apap074**

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English

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
<b>Creator:</b>	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Albany Branch
<b>Title:</b>	National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Albany New York Branch Records
<b>ID:</b>	apap074
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1966-1988
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3.2 cubic ft.
<b>Physical Location:</b>	The materials are located onsite in the department.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Collection of Records and materials from 1966-1987

### Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, National Association For The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Albany New York Branch Records, 1966-1988. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as [shortened name]).

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## Administrative History

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The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 in New York City, on the hundredth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Founded by a group of citizens who were concerned with the lack of civil rights for African Americans, the NAACP evolved over the next couple of decades into a powerful advocacy organization striving to end discrimination and

prejudice in this country. One of its primary tools to effect change was using legal action as a non-violent method of gaining full citizenship for African Americans.

The mission of the national NAACP soon expanded to the local level with the chartering of numerous regional branches. The Albany branch of the NAACP was founded in 1935 in response to "continuing unnecessary violence" on the part of the Albany police toward the African-American community. The branch's first meeting was held in February 1935 at the Israel African Methodist Church on Hamilton Street. The first president of the branch was Dr. William Fletcher Brown, an Albany dentist who personally raised many of the signatures necessary to warrant a charter from the national organization.

The causes taken up by the Albany branch were the same as those championed by the national organization. Members carried on the same struggles at the local level that were being fought nationally to attain equal rights-social, economic, and legal-for all citizens in the United States. Primary goals for the group were equal access to education, housing, and employment, garnering attention for African Americans in the media and in politics, and ending police brutality toward African Americans. Members used litigation, protests, and lobbying as peaceful means to achieve these goals.

In the first decade of its existence, the Albany branch began fighting against the racial discrimination African Americans encountered in all walks of life. Members helped in the national campaign for anti-lynching legislation, pressed for the integration of the U.S. military, and advocated the employment of African Americans in local department stores. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the branch carried on its fight against police brutality and discrimination. Membership grew considerably in the 1950s under the leadership of Howard Townsend and Alexander Gibbons, Jr. There was a brief period of relative inactivity in the late 1950s, when the NAACP came under the scrutiny of federal and state investigators for "Un-American Activities", but the group regained strength with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. In 1967 membership exceeded 500. Numerous Albany Branch members participated in the 1963 March on Washington, and a Youth Chapter of the Albany NAACP was established in 1966.

In the late 1960s, members became active in an effort to improve public education in the Albany School District. They participated in the planning for a new elementary school that was built in Arbor Hill and were vocal participants in the negotiations for building a new Albany High School. These negotiations determined the school configuration that still exists in Albany today. These various initiatives would improve minority access to all levels of public education in Albany. Once the new high school was built in the late 1960s, the NAACP put pressure on the Board of Education to hire more African Americans, add minority perspectives to the curriculum, provide improved guidance programs, and eliminate corporal punishment.

In 1968, the branch established a Legal Defense Fund to "help provide good legal assistance to many people who encountered difficulties in the criminal justice system." This was the beginning of the Albany chapter's ongoing commitment to giving legal aid. The NAACP posted money for bail and directed people to lawyers who were committed to aiding the underprivileged. The chapter's Legal Redress Committee received and reviewed complaints and requests for aid from the community, taking action when they deemed it necessary. From 1974 to 1977 this committee lobbied to change an Albany County law that charged a 2% fee on all bail posted. This bill died in committee and was never passed.

From the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the Albany NAACP became involved in community improvement projects and the fight against poverty. Members were advocates of urban renewal and the creation of low-income housing. One of their great achievements during this time period was forcing

"the state to build more housing for low-income people displaced by the construction of the Empire State Plaza" in Albany. In 1968 the branch presented the Mayor of Albany, Erastus Corning, III, with a list of 67 demands for the improvement of housing, public services, education, police, government, and other services in the Capital District. Corning's immediate rejection of these demands spurred widespread concern for community improvement in the Capital District.

The chapter's legal activities continued through the 1970s and 1980s, adding affirmative action, racial ceilings in jobs, and anti-apartheid activities to their agenda. They continued to fight for equal access to housing and expose racially-focused police brutality. The group monitored local companies' hiring practices, and took up the cause of citizens who were denied access to housing or employment because of their race. The lack of African-American officers in the Albany Police Department was a particular focus. Members became especially involved with the defense in two nationally visible causes in the 1980s: the Jesse Davis police brutality case, where a mentally ill African-American man was shot and killed by Albany policemen; and in the 1981 protests against the Springboks, South Africa's then all-white rugby team, who were invited to play in Albany by long-term mayor Erastus Corning III. Several court cases emerged from Albany Police actions in dealing with the demonstrations against apartheid.

In the 1980s, the Albany NAACP worked alongside other local civil rights groups-the Capital District Coalition against Apartheid and Racism, the New York State Coalition for Criminal Justice, and the Urban League-to protest continued prison construction in New York State and to educate community members about their legal rights and privileges. With the aid of these other groups, the chapter published an "Arrest Pamphlet" that explained citizen rights when arrested and spelled out what police were allowed to do. They also organized events for the community, such as a "Bail Workshop" (October 9, 1981) and a symposium on Constitutional rights (February, 1983). Branch leaders initiated a dialog between the African American community and the Albany Police Department.

The NAACP in the 1980s and 1990s continued with the activities it began in the preceding decades. It continued the fight for affirmative action, and monitored hiring practices in government and private industry. Education remained a priority. The branch raised money for scholarships that were awarded annually, and organized activities such as the ACT-SO (Academic, Cultural, Technologic, and Scientific Olympics) talent contest, which was part of the NAACP's nationwide ACT-SO competition.

The Albany branch of the NAACP remains active today, continuing its ongoing campaign to increase opportunities for and combat racial discrimination against African Americans. The branch is currently located at 93 Livingston Avenue in Albany, NY. It has been housed in a number of previous locations, one of these at 331 South Pearl Street in Albany, where the branch moved in 1966. Around 1969 the office moved to 12 Delaware and Hudson Plaza. It was subsequently located on Sheridan Avenue (early to mid-1970s) and Columbia Place (late 1970s).

#### ALBANY BRANCH PRESIDENTS

1935-1936	Dr. William F. Brown
1937	Dr. Joseph P. Robinson
1938	Mr. John Kell

1938-1941	Mrs. John (Ellen) Kell
1942	Mr. Alexander Gibbons, Sr.
1943-1946	Mr. James Bowkes
1947	Mr. Joseph Cannon
1948-1953	Mr. Harry Vodery
1954	Mr. Howard Townsend
1955	Mr. Alexander Gibbons, Jr.
1956-1958	Mr. Peter Pryor
1959-1960	The Rev. Louis Brewer
1961	Mr. Charles Bethea
1962	Mrs. Myrtice Goree
1963-1964	Mr. Austin Crawford
1965	Mr. Reginald Brwon
1966-1968	Dr. Joseph Cohen
1969-1978	Dr. Harry L Hamilton
1979	Mr. Archie Goodbee, Jr.
1980	Ms. Sherrie L Fowlkes
1981-1982	Ms. Clara Satterfield
1983-1986	Dr. E.J. Josey
1986	Ms Anne Pope

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## Scope and Contents

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These records document the activities and interests of the Albany Branch of the NAACP from 1966-1988. The records consist of meeting agendas, minutes, correspondence, annual reports, newspaper clippings, and membership rosters that document events and activities organized by the branch. The bulk of the records cover the years 1975-1986. The collection consists of two series: Series 1: Subject Files (1966-1987), and Series 2: Newspaper Clippings (1966-1987).

The records in the collection are files preserved by Harry L. Hamilton, president of the organization from 1969-1978. The records reflect the activities of the committees on which he served and the offices he held. Harry Hamilton was President from 1968-1978, and Vice President from 1966-1968. He was a member of the Executive Board from 1966-1990. He served as Treasurer from 1984-1990, and was Chair of the Legal Redress Committee from 1978 to 1984. From 1970-1990 he was Chair of the NAACP Scholarship Fund Board of Trustees. He also served on other committees for short periods of time, but the Education Committee, with which he was involved in the 1970s, is the only committee for which he kept separate files. There is relatively little specific coverage of the activities of other Albany NAACP committees. These committees' activities are therefore limited to what Harry Hamilton dealt with as President, Treasurer, or Member of the Executive Board. Hamilton left the Capital District in 1990, and the records for the branch cease with his departure from the Board. It is unclear whether these are the only extant files for the branch during this time period. The records were organized into subject files, which consisted mainly of the records of the Executive Board, the Legal Redress Committee, and the Education Committee. Board members served on other committees (Membership, Housing, Fundraising/Budget, Political Action, Program, and Communications) that are not specifically represented in the subject files, although some records of all committee activities may be found in the existing subject files. Issues that were of interest to more than one committee may be documented in more than one place, most often in both the committee files and in the Executive Board files when the issue was brought up before the Board.

All loose newspaper clippings in the collection were photocopied for preservation purposes. Several of the current folder titles were created by the archivist from several series of loose papers found in the collection.

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## Arrangement of the Collection

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The collection is organized into the following series:

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

### Revision Description

Encoded in EAD by Benjamin M. VanTol 2012

### Processing Information

Processed in 2000 by Amalia K. Gossen.

### Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

### Copyright

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

### Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by Harry L. Hamilton, President of the Albany NAACP, 1969-1978, in 1990.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- African Americans and Civil Rights Organizations
- Social Activists and Public Advocates



- Ethnic Groups
- Albany, New York
- People--Societies and clubs
- People in nonprofit organizations
- Albany (N.Y.)
- Newsletters
- Administrative records
- Membership
- Minutes
- Programs (documents)
- Financial Records
- Photographs
- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP), ALBANY, NEW YORK BRANCH RECORDS, 1966-1988

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## Collection Inventory

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### Subject Files, 1966-1988

Date [inclusive]: 1966-1988

Physical Description: 2.8 cubic ft.

#### Arrangement

Arranged Alphabetically.

#### Scope and Contents

Of particular interest in the Subject Files are the records of the Legal Redress Committee and the Education Committee. The Legal Redress Committee files are a valuable resource for researchers investigating African Americans and criminal justice in Albany in the 1970s and 1980s. These files contain considerable correspondence from prisoners in correctional facilities throughout New York State, and letters from individuals who felt they had received unfair treatment at the hands of the justice system or at their work because of their race. Researchers will also find documentation of incidents of discrimination in Albany schools and businesses. Also in these files are newspaper clippings from the Times Union and the Knickerbocker News documenting press coverage of incidents and legal cases involving African Americans. The files also include fundraising records for the branch's Legal Fund, established in 1967 to help individuals who could not afford to post bail, and records of the Legal Redress Committee's outreach efforts to educate community members about the arrest process and citizens' legal rights when arrested. Related to the Legal Redress Committee Files are the following folders: Arrest Pamphlet (1979-1985), Bail Bill (1974-1977), and Bail Workshop (1980-1981). The Education Committee files document key events in the history of Albany's public school system in the 1960s and 1970s, along with the NAACP's involvement in these events. There are newspaper clippings, meeting minutes and agenda, and related materials, along with Harry Hamilton's notes, on these happenings, which include the creation of Arbor Hill Elementary School and the new Albany High School (at 700 Washington Avenue), and the transition from three to two Albany middle schools. The Executive Board Committee files (1977-1987) contain extensive information about the activities of the NAACP; they consist of meeting minutes and agenda, newspaper clippings, NAACP newsletters, correspondence, administrative records, and Harry Hamilton's notes on all of the above. Those interested in the Branch's history may wish to consult the History file (1976-1985). While not extensive, it contains material related to Harry Hamilton's research on the history of the Branch that he did while writing the brief history of the organization that was included

in the 1985 Freedom Fund program. It includes several letters from past presidents of the Albany branch reflecting upon their tenures as President.

<b>Title/Description</b>	<b>Instances</b>	
ACT-SO/Talent Search <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> ca. 1981	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Administrative Materials <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1981	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2
Affirmative Action <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1985	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
Apartheid <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> Undated	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
Albany African Clarkson Society - Constitution <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1828	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Anniversary Programs <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1989-1990	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6
Arrest Pamphlet <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1985	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 7
Bail Bill <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1974-1977	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 8
Bail Workshop, 1980-1981 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980-1981	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 9
Criminal Justice Organizations, 1980 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 10
Demands (67) Presented by the Albany Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to the City of Albany, NY <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1968	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 11
Education Committee, 1972 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1972	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 12
Education Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1973-1974	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 13
Education Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1974-1978	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 14
Education Committee - Public Schools		

<u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1966-1973	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 15
Election, 1981-1983 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981-1983	Box 1 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 16
Election <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1910-1920	Oversized 1	
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1977	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1977	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1977-1978	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1980	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981-1982	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983-1984	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 7
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1984-1985	Box 2 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 8
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1984-1986	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Executive Board <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1987	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2
Fundraising <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
History <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1976-1985	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
M. L. King, Jr. Telethon <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1974-1978	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6
Legal Redress Committee		

<u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1976-1980	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 7
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1978-1981	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 8
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1980	Box 3 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 9
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981-1982	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981-1983	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982-1983	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6
Legal Redress Committee <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983-1985	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 7
Legal Redress Committee - Andrews, Charles <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982-1983	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 8
Legal Redress Committee - Cases <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1973-1975	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 9
Legal Redress Committee - Cases <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1981	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 10
Legal Fund Reports go back to 1968 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1968-1976	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 11
Legal Redress Committee - Davis, Jesse <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1984-1985	Box 4 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 12
Legal Redress Committee - Essien, Bassey <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983-1984	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Legal Redress Committee - Inactive Cases <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1973-1977	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2
Legal Redress Committee - Inactive Cases		

<u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1974-1977	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
Legal Redress Committee - Legal Fund <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1968-1975	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
Legal Redress Committee - Jackson, Rose <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980-1981	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Legal Redress Committee - Jones, John <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1977	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6
Legal Redress Committee - Thompson, Anthony <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1980	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 7
Legal Redress Committee - Tittle, James <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1979-1980	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 8
March for Jobs <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1978	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 9
March for Jobs <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 10
Member recruitment <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1974	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 11
"The NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund: Preliminary Observations on Conflict between Allies," by Stephen L. Wasby," <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1984	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 12
"Police Handguns and Deadly Force: A Special Report to the Governor of the State of New York, Hon. Hugh L. Carey," <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1976	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 13
"Police Handguns and Deadly Force: A Special Report to the Governor of the State of New York, Hon. Hugh L. Carey," - Appendices <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1976	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 14
Projects <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1975-1980	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 15
Prostitution <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983	Box 5 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 16
Rugby Protest <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1981-1983	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 1
Treasurer/Financial Records	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 2

Date [inclusive]: Undated

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Treasurer/Financial Records <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1982	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 3
Treasurer/Financial Records <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1983	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 4
Treasurer/Financial Records <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1984	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 5
Treasurer/Financial Records <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1985	Box 6 (1- Subject Files)	Folder 6

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