

Finding aid for the James C. Craig collection Collection 183

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
January 1996
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator - Collector	Craig, James C, 1849-1902
Title	James C. Craig collection
Date [inclusive]	1880-1892, n.d.
Extent	0.21 Linear feet One box
Language	English
Abstract	<p>James C. Craig (1849-1902) was an African American barber and mason. The collection contains newspaper clippings from Grand Rapids and other newspapers apparently collected by Craig during the time he lived in Grand Rapids, 1871-1902. The clippings detail his active involvement and interest in African-American men's organizations, with most of the stories pertaining to conventions, meetings and events of those organizations. There are also articles about community events and politics, plus feature articles, mostly on racial topics.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

James C. Craig was born April 2, 1849 in Louisville, Kentucky. He was a slave until 1862, at which time he followed the 23rd Michigan Regiment through the southern states, coming to Flint, Michigan in 1864. He went to Battle Creek, Michigan in 1868; Quincy, Michigan in 1870 and Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1871, where he went into the barbering business with Daniel Scott. Later he opened a successful shop of his own at the southwest corner of Canal (now Monroe) and Crescent.

Craig was well known in Colored Masonry. He was one of the founders of North Star Lodge, De Mar chapter and Golden Rule commandry; and he held many offices in these organizations, serving as the first eminent commander of Golden Rule. He was also Vice-President at the Colored Citizens State Convention.

In 1874 Craig married Mary E. Buckner (the daughter of Eliza and John Buckner) of Battle Creek. They had three daughters, Lena Crispus, Grace Craig Sims, and Myrtle Craig. Mary Craig died in 1897. Craig died in Flint on December 3, 1902.

Scope and Contents note

Contains a letter written by Craig to the Detroit Times, in response to a request for brief biographical information. The collection contains newspaper articles glued into a day book. These clippings describe conventions, meetings, and events of the following African-American men's organizations: Colored Mason of the State of Michigan; Colored Knights; Guard Lodge of Colored Masons Templar; Davis Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons; and the Colored Republican Club. There are also articles about state and local politics, community social events and announcements, racial issues and celebrations, and the weather. There are also wedding and obituary notices.

The collection contains a few articles about Craig's barber shop and the Buckner family. The back pages of the book contain addresses and some financial data by Craig.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department January 1996

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Cornelia Phillips, accession number 00.000

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

See also the Bajema African American Clipping Files.

Collection 249 contains a photograph of Craig.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- personal papers

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Craig, James C, 1849-1902

Subject(s)

- African American freemasonry -- Michigan
- African Americans -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Correspondence 1885	1	1
Colored Knights Templar Broadside 1886	1	2
Clippings circa 1880s, no date	1	3
Masonic miscellany 1896-1917, no date	1	4
Craig obituary 1902	1	5
Paper cutouts no date	1	6
	Box	Volume
Scrapbook of African American Masonic Lodge clippings [Day book, 1865-1895] circa 1880s	1	1
Conditions Governing Use note		
Do not use this original scrapbook for photocopying. Use instead the photocopies housed with the Bajema African-American clippings.		