

Information Sheet

R **African American Heroines of Jericho. Guiding Star Court No. 15**
970 **(Joplin, Mo.).**
 Records, 1916-1959.
 Thirty folders.

**THIS COLLECTION IS IN OFF-SITE STORAGE. AT LEAST TWO DAYS' ADVANCE
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These are the records of the African American organization of the Heroines of Jericho at Joplin in Jasper County, Missouri. The records consist of minutes of meetings, membership records, attendance rolls, miscellaneous papers, financial records, and communications to and from the Grand Court of Missouri.

The Heroines of Jericho is a degree conferred on Royal Arch Masons, their wives, mothers, widows, sisters, and daughters. The name derives from the Book of Joshua, and the woman, Rahab, known as the Heroine of Jericho. When a male receives the degree, he is known as a "Knight" of Jericho; when received by a female, she is called a "Heroine" of Jericho. Work toward the degree shares the Masonic purpose of promoting friendship and charity, relieving suffering, and promoting moral, social, spiritual, and intellectual self-improvement. Knights and Heroines also contributed to sickness and burial plans, and paid per capita taxes to the state organization and for the support of the Masonic Home.

The African American Heroines of Jericho's Masonic association derives through the Prince Hall Affiliation, a separate and parallel organization for black Masons dating in North America to the late eighteenth century. It was the only Masonic avenue open to African American men and women, and Prince Hall lodges frequently became focal points of black communities. The state organization, or "Grand Court," was organized in St. Louis, Missouri, on 25 May 1874. As of 1997, Missouri counted 2,549 Prince Hall Masons in sixty-four lodges, with Heroines of Jericho courts in St. Louis, Kansas City, Columbia, Jefferson City, Hayti, and perhaps other locations in Missouri. The Masonic Home for African American Masons was in Hannibal, Missouri.

The earliest historical details of Guiding Star Court No. 15 at Joplin are not known, but it was composed entirely of African American women. The earliest item in the collection (in Folder 29) is a receipt for a payment to the Grand Court of Missouri dated 1916, but the remainder of the collection does not begin until 1922 (in Folder 1). The records are most complete from the 1930s through the mid-1950s.

The records consist of minutes of meetings, membership records, rolls of officers, correspondence, miscellaneous papers, annual reports to the Grand Court, and papers and proclamations from the state organization. Folder 1 contains a record book listing members and their beneficiaries, compiled by court secretary Catherine McCarty in 1922. Two women, M. O. Davis and Dysie Ford, are noted as having joined on 10 June 1901, possibly the founding date of the

Joplin court of the Heroines. The court may have become inactive and reorganized in 1922, possible evidence of which is the revision of the bylaws of Guiding Star Court No. 15 on 7 February 1922 (also in the record book in Folder 1). The listing of members and beneficiaries was updated on 1 March 1928 to include a total of thirty-eight members. Membership had dropped to about twenty members in 1933. It remained stable through the remainder of the 1930s, but had decreased by half by the end of World War Two. There are ten members listed on the rolls through 1955, the last year for which an annual report to the Grand Court of Missouri exists. Among the presiding officers of the court, known as the "Most Ancient Matron" or "M.A.M.," were Melissa F. Cuther, Maude O. Davis, Letha Lowe, Bessie Ross, and Polly Waite. Mrs. Cuther also served as an officer of the Grand Court, and seems to have had a wide acquaintance among Missouri Heroines.

Folders 2-6 contain minutes of meetings (incomplete) from 1934-1956. Business matters taken up at meetings generally included admittance, reinstatement, and suspension of members, selection and installation of officers, rental of the hall (from Joplin's Myrtle Lodge, A.F. & A.M.), reports on sick members, and planning for special events such as annual Palm Sunday ceremonies.

The correspondence and miscellaneous files in folders 7-17 pertain mostly to membership matters, dues, and benefit plans. Membership application cards in Folder 11 contain useful biographical information of prospective members, including home addresses and the names of spouses and beneficiaries. These cards, along with the guest cards in Folder 10, indicate the African American membership pool in Joplin from which the Heroines were drawn.

Financial records in folders 18-24 also pertain mostly to collection of dues and special taxes. The treasurer's records of receipts and expenditures from 1930 through 1950 are in folders 20-21. There are also receipts for hall rental, refreshments, and flowers, bank statements, and other fiscal records. Folder 23 includes records of payments for the Masonic Home in Hannibal.

Folders 25-30 include reports submitted to the Grand Court of Missouri, such as burial reports and the annual returns showing membership and taxes paid to the state organization. There are also proceedings of the annual meetings of the Grand Court, 1933-1952, and proclamations issued by the Grand Court to subordinate courts, 1935-1957.

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1 December 2003

Justin Massingale

Purchase

Shelf List

These are the records of the African American organization of the Heroines of Jericho at Joplin in Jasper County, Missouri. The records consist of minutes of meetings, membership records, attendance rolls, miscellaneous papers, financial records, and communications to and from the Grand Court of Missouri.

Folders 1-6: Bylaws, membership, beneficiaries, and minutes of meetings, 1922-1956

- Folder 01: Record of Members and Beneficiaries; Bylaws, 1922-1939
- Folder 02: Minutes of meetings, 3 Apr 1934—7 Sep 1937
- Folder 03: Minutes of meetings, 6 Nov 1945—18 Jul 1946
- Folder 04: Minutes of meetings, 6 Jun 1946—16 Nov 1950
- Folder 05: Minutes of meetings, 21 Dec 1950—17 Apr 1952

Folder 06: Record book, Apr—Jun 1956

Folders 7-17: Correspondence and miscellaneous files, 1928-1957

Folder 07: Correspondence, 8 Sep 1928—20 Dec 1949

Folder 08: Correspondence, 2 Mar 1950—25 Dec 1950

Folder 09: Death notices and demits, 1939-1955

Folder 10: Guest cards, 1936-1938

Folder 11: Membership applications and health certificates, 1936-1956

Folder 12: Officers roll call, 1935-1958

Folder 13: Palm Sunday services, 1934-1955

Folder 14: Miscellaneous papers, 1933-1954

Folder 15: Miscellaneous papers, undated

Folder 16: Blank forms, undated

Folder 17: Envelopes

Folders 18-24: Financial records, 1926-1959

Folder 18: Reports of the Auditing Committee, 1926-1933

Folder 19: Emergency Fund book, 1931-1938

Folder 20: Record book (receipts and expenditures), 1 May 1930—15 Apr 1940

Folder 21: Record book (receipts and expenditures), 2 May 1939—20 Apr 1950

Folder 22: Receipts (hall rental, dues, etc.), 1934—ca. 1956

Folder 23: Masonic Home dues, 1948-1957

Folder 24: Miscellaneous financial papers (bank statements, bills, receipts), 1934-1959

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Folders 25-30: Grand Court of Missouri, 1916-1957

Folder 25: Annual Returns to the Grand Court of Missouri, 1933-1955

Folder 26: Burial Reports to Grand Court of Missouri Lodge, 1933-1955

Folder 27: Proclamations of the Grand Court of Missouri, 1935-1957

Folder 28: Proceedings of the Annual Sessions of the Grand Court of Missouri, 1932-1952

Folder 29: Receipts for various payments to Grand Court of Missouri, 1916-1954

Folder 30: Receipts from Grand Court for Burial Dues, 13 Apr 1933—27 Apr 1956

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Abbington, Sara J.

Abrams, Carrie C.

Adams, B. F.

Alexander, -- Rev.

Alexander, Rosa, Mrs.

Allen, Frank.

Allen, G.

Allen, Louise.

Allen, Paul.
Allen, Rose.
Allen, Willa Pollard.
Allnut, Minnie.
Anderson, A., Mrs.
Anderson, Grace.
Anderson, Harvey.
Anderson, Louise
Anderson, Rebecca.
Anthony, Mildred
Armstead, James.
Arnold, Lucille.
Auerdall, --, Mrs.
Austin, Gertrude C.
Austin, Ruthie.
Badeau, Gladys
Bailey, Comora E.
Bailey, Elizabeth.
Baker, Daysie.
Ball, Cora Bell.
Ballard, Inez.
Banks, Daisy
Banks, Hattie.
Banks, W. N.
Barber, F.
Barber, F., Mrs.
Barber, Freddie
Barnette, Floyd.
Barnette, George.
Barnette, Viola.
Bartlett, Amos S.
Bassett, Mildred.
Beane, Marcella.
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Beason, Hattie.
Beason, Marvin.
Beason, Roy, Jr.
Beason, Willie.
Bell, Marcia L.
Bell, Mattie.
Belton, John.
Berry, --, Miss.
Bills, Carl
Bills, Esther.
Bills, Lenora.
Bills, E. Sterling.
Bishop, Kelly.
Black, Nellie.
Blackburn, Hazel.
Bland, Anna.
**Bland, Bessie.

**Bland, Ellis.
Bland, George.
Bland, Heather Lowe.
Bland, Jean, Mrs.
Bland, Joseph.
Bland, ---. P., Mrs.
Bland, Preston.
Bolden, Eva G.
Boone, Mildred W.
Borker, Lillian.
Bosell, H. C.
Bowden, Hamilton.
**Bowden, Lydia.
Bowden, -- (Sister)
Boyer, Lee, Mrs.
Bradford, Hattie B.
Bradford, W. E., Mrs.
Bradshaw, Imer.
Bradshaw, Irma.
**Bradshaw, Lizzie.
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Brazil, Dorothy.
Brazil, James.
Brazil, Paris.
Brazil, Paul.
Breedlove, Josephene E.
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Bridges, Laura.
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Brookins, Geneva.
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**Brown, Bessie
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Brown, Don.
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Brown, J. Abraham
Brown, Lucy B.
Brown, Pearl.
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Bruton, --, Mrs.
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**Bryant, Emma
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Bryson, E. R.
Buckner, Alma W.
Buford, --, Mrs.
Bullock, Emily.
Bunch, E. C.
Bunn, Bessie.
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Burch, John E.
Burnett, Laura
Burnette, Bessie.
Burney, June.
Burton, Lucille.
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Butler, Catherine.
Butler, Valerie H.
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Calbroun, Charlene
Caldwell, Bessie.
Campbell, Josephine
Carifax, ---, Rev.
Carter, Anna J.
Carter, Elsie.
Carter, Kittie
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Caviness, Jessie.
Chambers, Alice E.
Chambers, Phillip.
Chapman, W. B.
Chappelle, E. E.
Cheatum, --
Childs, Herbert W.
Chisholm, Flora B.
Clairborn, Antoinette.
Clark, Alma A.
Clark, Julia A.
Clark, Martha V.
Clark, Naomi L.
Clay, Charles, Mrs.
Clay, Chhoe, Mrs.
Clay, Lulu.
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Clay, R. A., Mrs.
**Clem, Helen J.
Clem, Kitty S.
Cleveland, Emma.
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Cole, Uriah
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Collins, Donora.
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Collins, Marcella Campbell.

Collon, Clarence.

Cook, Anna.

Cooper, Rosetta E.

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Cox, Janie, Mrs.

Cox, Remona.

Craig, William E.

**Crawford, Peggy.

**Crawford, Susie E.

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**Crockett, Fannie.

Crosby, --, Mrs.

Crosby, Hester.

Crouch, Amanda.

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Crouch, Clero

Crow, Bee.

**Curtis, H. H.

Curtis, Joe.

Curtis, Joe, Mrs.

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**Cuther, Charles W.

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Dabney, Pearl M.

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Dale, Biddy.

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Danforth, M. L.

Daniel, Marquart.

Davenport, O. P.

Davie, Gladys.

Davis, Adel, Mrs.

Davis, Della.

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**Davis, Maude O.

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Dennis, Benjamin

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Ferrill, Annie Mae.
Fields, Jayne.
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Hubbard, --, Rev.
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Johnson, Joshua.
Johnson, Lucille Merriett

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Jones, --. (Mr. & Mrs.)
Jones, Ada.
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Jones, Lenora.
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Jordan, Roxie.
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Kelly, E. W. Bishop
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Kelson, Margaret Key.
Kenney, V. E.
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Kershaw, Ethel.
Key, Bernard G.
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Kincade, Leah Mae.
King, Eugene.
King, Gene W., Mrs.
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**Kittrell, Pearl.
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Kyle, Bea.
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**Lowe, Letha
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McDowell, Mary C.

McGain, Ray.
McGary, Elvira.
McGavock, Roy.
McGee, Alice E.
McGhee, Cleo.
McGlotha, --, Mrs.
McGluthen, Ama.
McGrue, W. M., Mrs.
McGuire, Wesley.
McKnight, T. W., Mr. & Mrs.
McLaughlin, A. Mrs.
McLaurin, Deliah.
McLemore, Dorothy.
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Oakley, Ellen.
Ollison, -- Mrs.
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Pipes, L. E., Mrs.
Pittman, Georgia M.
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Pride, Martha, Mrs.
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**Pullum, Henry.
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**Reedy, H. S.
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Runde, R. H.
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Shellman, Elnora.

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Shortridge, A. L.

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**Signer, Will.

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Slaughter, Dillie.

Small, --Mrs.

Small, Nellie.

Smith, Addie.

Smith, Allie.

Smith, Alva.

Smith, Amos.

Smith, David R.

Smith, Dorcas.

Smith, Dorothy.

Smith, Elbert.

Smith, Femie.

Smith, Gandi (Mr. & Mrs.)

Smith, J. T.

Smith, Luella.

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Snodgrass, Mable.

Solomon, Archie, Mrs.

Solomon, Dolores.

Spaine, Acklin.

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Stafford, Oscar, Mrs.

Steanot, Hayse.

Stennett, Susie.

Stephens, Joann.

Stephenson, Q. A.

Stephenson, Stella.

Stevens, Inez.

Steverson, Nevada K.

Stewart, -- Mrs.

Stinnett, Frank.

Stinnett, Mae.

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Stover, Mary J.

Strong, Emzie.
Swindell, Arnold
Swindell, Goldie, Mrs.
Taylor, Birdie M.
Taylor, Frankie.
Taylor, G. I.
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Temple, Amelia.
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Thigpan, -- Dr.
Thigpan, Gertrude W.
Thixton, Geniva.
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