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Volume XXXX

No. 1



The Phyllis



New Haven Botanical Garden of Healing
“Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence”



**“An International Society of Eastern Stars
(PHA) in Pursuit of the Study Therein”**

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**Brother Joseph A. Walkes, Jr.
Founded the Phyllis Chapter in 1983**

Magazine Subscription

The Phyllis magazine is the official publication of The Phyllis Chapter. The subscription rate for one year is \$15.00 for non-members and members of the Phylaxis Society. Any article appearing in this publication expresses the opinion of the writer, and does not become the official pronouncement of The Phyllis Chapter. All rights reserved. All Communications concerning the magazine should be addressed to the Editor. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronically or mechanically, or stored in any retrieval system, without the written permission from the publisher. Articles in The Phyllis magazine are received from many sources and sometimes reflect opposing views. The views and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of The Phyllis Chapter, The Phyllis staff. Any inquiries concerning membership must be addressed to the Executive Secretary.



Guidelines for Submitting Articles to the Phyllis Magazine

Audience: The Phyllis magazine is intended for a diverse audience that includes members of The Phyllis Chapter, The Phylaxis Society, members of the Prince Hall Family, and those with a strong enthusiasm for the history of African American women, and the Prince Hall adopted rites.

Submissions: The Phyllis magazine welcomes submissions from members of The Phyllis Chapter, the Phylaxis Society, other members of the Prince Hall Masonic Family, and interested individuals who study and research Masonry. Submissions should reflect sound scholarship, including pertinent references. Contributors should be willing to work with the editor to arrive at a mutually acceptable final manuscript that is appropriate to the intended audience and reflects the intention of The Phyllis Chapter to study, enlighten, and further the cultural interest of the Order of the Eastern Star (PHA).

Phyllis Chapter Officers and Committee Members

Elected Officers

President – Flora J. Simon, FPC - Arkansas
First Vice President – Sibyl Moses, FPC – At Large (Illinois)
Second Vice President – Marlene Pratt, FPC – North Carolina
Treasurer – Barbara J. Callier, FPC - Idaho
Financial Secretary – Eileen Jackson, MPC - Louisiana
Executive Secretary – Barbara Jones, FPC - Missouri
Recording Secretary, Catrice R. Vandross, FPC – District of Columbia

Past Presidents (Living)

Alfreda D. Brumfield, FPC (LA) - Freddie Cooper, FPC (UT) - Flora J. Simon, FPC (AR)

Appointed Officers

Phyllis Magazine Editor – Tikishia Smiley, FPC (NC)
Phyllis Magazine Emeritus – Jeannette Walkes, FPC (KS)
Chaplain – Mary R. McGhee, MPC (NC)
Vice President of Directors – Gwendolyn Dureseau, FPC (AR)
Vice President of Regions – Florence Shepard, FPC (NC)
Vice President of Auxiliaries – Peggy McCree, FPC (MO)

Directors

Special Affairs – Martha Banton, FPC (MO)
Prince Hall Art Project – Yvonne Haigler, MPC (PA)
History and Historical Site Projects – Sibyl Moses, FPC (IL)

Region I – Eunice J. Dingle, MPC (DC)

- ♦ CT, DE, DC, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV, W Europe

Region II – Betty Bell, MPC (KY)

- ♦ AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN, KY, Bahamas, West Indies

Region III – Patricia Jones, MPC (AR)

- ♦ AZ, AR, CA, CO, HI, LA, NV, NM, OK, TX

Region IV – Cynthia McKeown, MPC (MO)

- ♦ AK, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, MA, NE, OR, ND, SD, WA, WI, WY, Canada, Far East

Committees

(The first name will be the chairperson; the second is vice-chair; the President is an ex-official member of all Committees.)

Audit: Eula Bell, (TX); Lena M. Celestine, (NM); Daphne Roberts (PA); Eunice Dingle, (DC); Lydia Lewis, (MO)

Budget and Finance: Peggy McCree, (MO); Barbara Callier, (ID); Linda C. Hunter, (AR); La June Crews, (MS); Eileen Jackson, (LA)

Constitution and Bylaws: Estella Johnson, (CA); Constance Bowie, (TX); Emily Kent-Street, (TX); Tikishia C. Smiley, (NC); Rocheryl Ware, (MS)

Special Affairs: Vera Crowder, (MO); Faye Jones, (NC); Rosalie Stevenson, (NM); Della Horace (AR); Charletta Williams, (KY); Jan Blackwell Robinson, (MD)

Awards and Certificates: Sibyl Moses (IL); Jeannette Walkes, (KS); B. J. Callier, (ID); Florence Shepard, (NC); Flora Simon, (AR)

History: Jeannette Walkes, (KS); Freddie Cooper, (UT); Barbara Jones, (MO); Eileen Jackson, (LA); Venecia Bessellieu, (DC); Aisha Lawful, (NJ); Shirley Hamilton Carter, (NC)

Historical Sites: Sibyl Moses, (IL); Naomi Hunter, (MO); Audrey Hopkins, (NJ/NC); Janice Justice, (NJ); Marlene Pratt, (NC); Terryl D. Williams, (MO)

Prince Hall Art: Marva Montgomery, (PA); Yvonne Haigler, (PA); Barbara Lattimore, (MO); Phyllis Outten, (MD); Mary Miller, (TX)

Magazine Review: Tikishia Smiley; (NC) Freddie Cooper, (UT); Darneasha C. Pickett, (TN)

Newsletter: Patricia Jones, (AR); Flora Simon, Pres. (AR)

Local Coordinator: Terryl D. Williams, St. Louis, MO. (Barbara A. Jones Aux.)

National Coordinator: Peggy McCree, Rock Hill, MO. (Harris-McCree Aux.)

Nomination Committee: Appointed in 2022 for 2023 election



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October 17, 2021

Greetings Members of the Phyllis Chapter:

From the adjournment of our 2020 Phyllis Chapter Annual Conference in Raleigh, NC, it has been unusual affairs for our Phyllis officers and members. No planning was definite until it finally came to fruition. The COVID-19 Pandemic sent us onto a new path as we learned about it and strived to remain ahead of the consequences of sickness and death. COVID struck hard and fast, and none of us were immune from its effects on human lives.

Through it all, the Phyllis Chapter managed to move forward with its mission and accomplished the task of presenting its first Annual Virtual Conference. The theme was “Embracing Change and Transformation.” Appreciation also goes to our 1st VP Dr. Sibyl Moses that coordinated the workshops, and to the elected and appointed officers that met frequently to help plan a historical and educational event. I give special thanks to our 2nd VP Marlene Pratt for her expertise of hosting our webinar annual session. There were one hundred sixty-seven participants.

Several months after the conference, the sudden death of Barbara Jean “BJ” Callier, VP of the Council of Auxiliaries, brought sadness to this entire Phyllis Chapter. BJ loved this organization. She was concerned with what she could do to make everything run smoothly. Always willing to give service without expecting any financial or status reward. BJ’s devotion to her mother, our treasurer, was gratifying. All these attributes prepared her for those heavenly wings. Past President Freddie Cooper represented the Phyllis Chapter at the funeral in Idaho. Peggy McCree is the newly appointed VP of Auxiliaries.

As we prepare for the 39th National Conference in March 2022, the theme will be “*Historical Moments to Embrace*”.

THE PHYLLIS CHAPTER WORKSHOP SCHEDULE, APRIL 9, 2022

THEME: “HISTORIAL MOMENTS TO EMBRACE”

Time	Presenter	<i>“Historical Moments To Embrace”</i>	Comment(s)
8:00-9:00 MST 9:00-10:00 CST 10:00-11:00 EST	President Flora J. Simon Executive Staff Flora J. Simon Marlene Pratt Sibyl E. Moses	President’s Greetings and Report Opening Memorial Ceremony Introduction of New Auxiliaries Webinar Directives Workshop Overview Introduction of Keynote Speaker	
9:15-10:10 MST 10:15-11:10 CST 11:15-12:10 EST	Ida Jones, Ph.D.	“The Significance of Documenting Historic Sites and Monuments of African American Women and African American Women’s Organiza- tions”	Presenter #1: Keynote Address Q and A
11:15-11:45 CST 12:15-12:45 EST	Terryl Williams	“Masonic Historic Sites Project (OES-PHA): Update for Jurisdiction of Missouri”	Presenter #2: Q and A
11:45-12:15 CST 12:45-1:15 EST	Darneasha Pickett	“Exploring the Contributions of Black Women to the Legacy of Prince Hall Freemasonry”	Presenter #3 Q and A
12:15-12:45 CST 1:15-1:45 EST	L U N C H Jessye Norman Kathleen Battle	L U N C H “Spirituals in Concert” at Carnegie Hall https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRDEJ-bMp-4 (Video)	Lunch-Time Music
12:45-1:15 CST 1:45-2:15 EST	Venecia Bessel- lieu Catrice Vandross	“The Legendary Yearwoods – Historic Masonic Family in the Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia	Presenter #4 Q and A
1:15-1:45 CST 2:15-2:45 EST	Maria Taylor- Perry	“History of the Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star in North Carolina, 1872-1910”	Presenter #5 Q and A
1:45-2:05 CST 2:45-3:05 EST	Jacquelin Kohl- hasch	“The Importance of Becoming a Volunteer Om- budsman for Long Term Care Facilities”	Presenter #6 Q and A
2:05-2:20 CST 3:05-3:20 EST	Ice Breaker	CeLillianne Green (Video) “She Rose”	Poetry/Jazz Historical Black Women
2:20-2:50 CST 3:20-3:50 EST	Sharon Franklin	“The Biography of Past Grand Matron Carrie T. Herron, Jurisdiction of Tennes- see” (Video presentation)	Presenter #7
2:50-3:20 CST 3:50-4:20 EST	Sibyl E. Moses	“My Quest To Discover the Life of a Fraternal Leader Extraordinaire, Past Grand Worthy Matron Bertha M. Bragg (1913-1989), Jurisdic- tion of the District of Columbia”	Presenter #8 Q and A
3:20-3:30 CST 4:20-4:30 EST	Ice Breaker	Jus Amanaa Batts (Video) “I Am My Sister”	Poetry Sisterhood
3:30-4:00 CST 4:30-5:00 EST	Patricia Jones	“J.E. Peake & Memorial Star Day: A Special Day in the Jurisdiction of Arkansas”	Presenter #9 Q and A
4:00-4:30 CST 5:00-5:30 EST	Flora J. Simon	President’s Comments Closing Ceremony	
		“Historical Moments To Embrace” Thank You and Remain Safe	

New Auxiliaries and Members

Charlie Mae Reed Auxiliary of Memphis Tennessee

Tennessee Melissa Partee Bledsoe, Jaqualine Brown-Arrayadondo, Erica N. Davis, LaSharance D. Jeffries, Erika N. Johnson, Lacreisha Kennedy, Shanda Parker Johnson, Coral Harris-Thomas, Monica Helton, Peggy L. Perry and Sophia D. Wilson

Willie Gillespie Auxiliary of Henning Tennessee

Darneasha C. Pickett, Cassandra Osborne, Eva N. Drain (Life), Demetra Pickett, Bessie Simms (Life), Robbie Pillow, Elizabeth Cross, June Jones (Life), Martha Smith (Life), Thelma Batson and LaTashja R. Mosby (Life)

Music City Auxiliary of Nashville Tennessee

Crystal E. Banks, Angela Blakey, Jazzman L. Bowles, Nicole Brown, Nivanka Brown Harris, Syanthe Davis, Tracey Hart, Katrina Hudson, Erica M. Hughes, Vivian Gail Jackson, Portia Johnson, Marcia P. Jordan, Pamela Kyle, Catrena Lawrence, Angela Lovell, Lena Miqui, Lisa Myrick, Corell A. Ogles, Jasmine Peterson, Marquita N. Ray, Jennifer Ross Frierson, Alisha M. Senter, Melissa Stewart, Martina Stone, Ardree Studdard, and Rena Thompson

Fellowship Certificate

Peggy McCree

Life Member Certificates

LaTashja Mosby
Tanisha L. Watson
Robbie R. Pillow
Dr. Tonja D. Carrera

A Deeper Look: The History of the Order of the Eastern Star Among Colored People

By: Sister Darneasha C. Pickett, MPC (L)

Willie Gillespie Auxiliary (President) TN



It was once said that “Sister Brown, in giving this history to the Eastern Star world, has no doubt, added more to our universal understanding and unification than any other one agency, and it will redound to her honor and glorification in years to come.”¹ Should this work be the start of a paradigm? An exemplar is someone whose actions serve as a model for others. Should Mrs. Sue Joe Brown be considered an exemplar? Mrs. Brown attempted to fill historical voids which led to the birth of this work. The influence of this authoritative piece should serve as inspiration for works to follow.

Through its decades of publication and dissemination, *The History of the Order of the Eastern Star Among Colored People* has faced several critiques.

It has been charged with having many inaccuracies that through modern

research have been revisited. It is important to note that Brown mentions:

I herewith submit other data gathered from various sources from the several jurisdictions, and otherwise, as a result of which there will be found in this little volume a list of the jurisdictions for the most part annual meetings, tabulated statistics showing the number of chapters and number of members of each jurisdiction.”² She continues “I attempted to gather all the information possible with reference to the origin and history of the O.E.S among colored people in America and elsewhere. I have found that there was a published record of the Order among white Americans from the year 1857 when Robt. Morris its founder published his first ritual down to 1912. I have also found that there is a published record of Free Masonry among colored men of North America from the institution of the first lodge under Prince Hall in 1775, down to 1903 but find no mention whatever of the O.E.S or any other department of female Masonry among our women. I, therefore, began research among those that I thought might be able to furnish me with such information, and having failed to find a compiled record or history of the Order, I proceeded to send out questionnaires seeking such information from the thirty- four Grand

Chapters in the United States and Canada reputed to be regular; and also made several attempts to ascertain whether there was a Grand Chapter on the continent of Africa, and the following communication will disclose our findings (1925).

Brown's work remains the greatest effort to produce a work that captures the various jurisdictional histories and statistics. This alone requires the reader to contextualize the methodology of this work. Even in subjectivity, this generation of researchers would be mistaken to omit this esteemed piece from their literary collection. Brown's interest to study the Non-European experience of the Order of the Eastern Star was of importance and she found that it had been neglected.

Susie M. Wilson married Samuel Joseph Brown on December 31, 1902, at the home of her parents, Mr. Jacob and Mariah of Buxton.⁴ After their union she was thereafter referred to as Mrs. Samuel Joseph Brown, or in short Mrs. S. Joe Brown. It was customary during the early twentieth century to be identified as the companion of her husband. Brown's dedication to black thought led her to assume the position as president of the Intellectual Improvement club which was hosted at her home in 1912.⁵ Furthermore, she served as an organizer of the State Federation of Colored Women's clubs among a record number of other involvements of communal concern to African Americans.⁶ The individual identity of Mrs. Brown should be valued and should be mentioned for her contributions. She had the

ability to organize and inspire impactful movements in the black community through various fraternal involvements.

Brown continues this work by sharing her travels and various communications. She highlights a very distinct time in the history of the Order by documenting the Widows and Orphans' homes of the period throughout the United States through photographs. She details the location of each home; Masonic temples are included for the viewing pleasure of the reader. As Brown has proclaimed, women are home builders and contributed to the upkeep and establishment of homes where there was a need for a brick and mortar shelter of protection. It has been proven throughout history that women have the ability to nurture an infant concept into an adult structure.

In reading this work from cover to cover this writer found a recommendation written by Mrs. Sue M. Brown to be most interesting. During the biennial conference, she recommended that:

In the interest of uniformity, the Grand Matrons and Patrons here present pledge themselves that they will recommend to their respective Grand Chapters, that hereafter no degree be conferred in our O.E.S Chapters except the five degrees of the Order of Eastern Star, this of course having no reference to regularly organized and duly constituted palaces of the Queen of the South Courts of the Royal and Exalted Degree of Amaranth working under Chapters or warrants of Grand bodies of these degrees" She continues

“In view of the fact that the Macoy ritual which is being used by most of the Grand Chapters of our people throughout the United States and Canada, is an exposed work, the sale of which is not confined to members of the Order, I recommend that this International Conference appoint a committee to compile a ritual for our Order to be copyrighted and published under the supervision of this Conference and to be sold only to those known to be members of the order.⁷

This writer believes that the idea of composing a ritual dedicated to the Order of the Eastern Star is not a far stretched idea. Some may say the recommendation was somewhat radical in that it further created a distinction of the presence of colored women fraternalizing amongst one another.

While this writer believes that *The History of the Order of the Eastern Star Among Colored People* is an important work. It is not beyond critiques. This work is not a fluent history of how the Order of the Eastern Star spread throughout the United States. Rather, this is a compiled report that the International Conference voted to publish as its official history. The International Conference was formed because some Grand Chapters wanted to have a closer fraternal relationship, establish ritualistic uniformity and perform charity to others.⁸ While it is suggested to be a history of the Order of the Eastern Star one could agree that it is a publication of the current happenings of the Order of the

Eastern Star during the period. Later in the book there is a Grand Worthy Matron's Directory that supplies the names and addresses of thirty- seven jurisdictions. It does however give historical context to the establishment of the Supreme Grand Chapter in Boston, Massachusetts in 1907. The Supreme Grand Chapter is said to have been established to strengthen the bond of fraternalism amongst the Grand Chapters and to conform to some sort of ritualistic uniformity. In 1908, in Chicago, Illinois the name of the body was changed from Supreme Grand Chapter to Interstate Conference of Grand Chapters. The body was later known as the International Conference which met at the same time as the International Conference of Knights Templars. As the body began to age monies were collected from each jurisdiction as a representation fee. The representation fee was two cents. This was a worthy investment to active members. As this body evolved there were deep discussions regarding the place of the Royal and Exalted Degree of the Amaranth. Its growth was encouraged as an appendant body to the Order of the Eastern Star. It was believed that the Royal and Exalted Degree of the Amaranth was intended to be to the “Order of the Eastern Star that the Royal Arch Chapters bears to the Blue Lodge.”⁹ The prior speculative comparison was made by Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., in a letter enclosed to Mr. J. C. Scott. Decades after this discussion there are some jurisdictions that require a person to have received the Royal and Exalted Degree of the Amaranth to be considered a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. There are others who practice

the contrary. Either way, this writer believes that the discussion held should be revisited in the future.

As time continues to pass the relevance of this work increases. Any person hoping to study the history of the Order of the Eastern Star should have sat with this work. Furthermore, it could be said that the title *The History of the Order of the Eastern Star Among Colored People* could be misleading in that this book will detail the history of the Order of the Eastern Star and the events that led to its institution among colored people. As the reader begins to explore this work it should be apparent that Mrs. Sue M. Brown put the best effort forward to capture the proceedings of the Order of the Eastern Star. There is no question that Sue M. Brown's work remains in an arena of its own.

This work has stood the test of time. It was originally published in 1925 and in 2021 it remains a topic of discussion. Others can argue whether the name of the book deludes the importance of this work, but this writer's perspective is that one should continue to pass this work down through generations of scholars to come. The vision that Mrs. Brown had for the order is impeccable and to this day it is clear. Readers of this work should take up the pledge of publishing their research. This writer believes that Mrs. Sue M. Brown would be honored if this work inspired sisters to write and publish what they have. Although, Brown had transitioned long before this writer entered into this world, today it is believed that her faint voice is saying "Go, History of the Eastern Star"

BON VOYAGE.

Go, "History of the Eastern Star,"
Where e'er its wandering children are; Recall
to those who hailed its birth.
Their toilsome struggle 'mid the dearth
Of cheering words, or sunny ways;
And tell to those of later days
How great the triumph it has met--
Lest they forget--lest they forget.

Go gladly forth, and may thy pages
Suffice to keep for future ages
The record of the care and strength
Which nursed and fostered, till at length
The Order of the Eastern Star
Is known and loved the world afar.
With naught set down in malice vile,
E'en unkind facts wear friendship's smile,
For, though our order had its battle,
It's grown above war's din and rattle,
And charity's broad mantle red Is cast about
those days, instead.
To those who labored, loved, and--fought,
The guerdon was not dearly bought,

For our great order moves to-day
Untrammelled in its upward way.
To those who helped with heart and hand
To make this true; that knightly band;
Those women brave; we ask the fame
Too often grudged each early name.
No easy task for woman lone
To stand as target; many a stone
Was hurled 'gainst such whose word and deed
Helped in our order's hour of need.
They're now forgotten, yet that honor
Gave birth to all its present power.

Now, in these days of proud progress,
Forget not those of storm and stress,
Encourage the same zeal and. truth
Which marked our order in its youth,
And let the future years reveal
The same desire for its best weal;
Then shall its record grow and blaze With the
refulgence of its rays,
Till earth, illumined, near and far
Reflects the light of Bethlehem's star!

--Addie C. Strong Engle

ELECTA

F C B D M O H P R A Y E R P Q O T X
O M A N S S O L D I E R S I A R F R
R C L U G W R A A Y X G K Y R O A E
G W N S A F H B J L S U X M E M M C
I L N C U S T O M S J Q E O F A I A
V C H A R I T A B L E P N T U N L N
E I H O S P I T A L I T Y H S J Y T
N S T R E N G T H E N E D E A E Z F
E R H C I Z M A N S I O N R L I O H
S C P V T Y E V A N G E L I S T F O
S J Y P H I L A N T H R O P I C Y W
X L S E O C C H A L I C E D Q L Q D

Chalice
Charitable
Customs
Evangelist
Family
Forgiveness

Hospitality
Mansion
Mother
Philanthropic
Prayer
Recant

Refusal
Roman
Strengthened
Soldiers

New Haven Botanical Garden of Healing

"Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence"



STOP
GUN



V
I
O
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N
C
E

The Healing Power of Love and Determination

Tikishia C. Smiley
Minor-Perkins Auxiliary



Marlene Pratt speaks at the opening of the garden in June 2021, with Senator Richard Blumenthal and New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker by Matthew Garrett (The Trace)

After losing her son in a shooting, Marlene Pratt planted a garden for healing that she hopes will inspire gun reform around the world. According to thetrace.org, “The New Haven Botanical Garden of Healing Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence was created by the mothers of victims of gun violence as a special place to remember their loved ones”. The beautiful space is located on Valley Street in New Haven, CT and designed to raise public awareness of the magnitude of the problem of gun violence as well as invest in the future of the community. .

Pratt was home in North Carolina in May of 1998 when she received a phone call informing her that her son was hospitalized with a gunshot wound. He had moved back to New Haven, the city of his birth, a year earlier. Pratt fell to her knees to pray. A half hour later the phone rang again. Gary Kyshon Miller, 20 years old, had died.

With no leads forthcoming, she got in her car and drove to Connecticut. She distributed posters pleading for help identifying the gunman. A brave woman came forward to report that someone she knew had asked her to be an alibi and that lead to an arrest.

In 2014, Pratt moved back to New Haven and took a job as a high school science teacher. Driving home from work one day, she saw yellow police tape along the road. She slowed to ask a girl on the sidewalk what happened and was stunned by the indifference with which the girl explained that it was just another person shot and killed. “This is the mentality we have in New Haven?” says Pratt. “Just another person. I had to process that. Is that how people felt when my son died?”

Pratt found a space to reflect in the Marsh Botanical Garden, an eight-acre plot of land owned by Yale University. There, she met Eric Larson, a Yale employee who managed the garden. When Larson heard the story of her son, he directed her to the Urban Resources Initiative, a local nonprofit affiliated with the Yale School of the Environment where Pratt was offered the opportunity to plant a tree in Gary’s honor. “A tree?” Pratt recalls thinking. “I don’t want something small. I want something for every mother that has lost a child in this city — a place that is beautiful, where they can grieve.”

The follow are excepts from the from the Yale Greenspace Logs journal entries

During 2017: The Victims of Gun Violence group had their first planning meetings today to create a memorial garden in New Haven. Officer Jillian Knox, head of Victim Services Unit hosted the meeting in a conference room at the New Haven Police Department. Marlene Pratt has been hard at work for the past couple of months sketching her garden idea, contacting various city agencies, and spreading the word to loved ones of victims of gun violence in New Haven. Mothers and spouses of homicide victims gathered around a large table to discuss the mission of the garden project and what they envision for the space.

During 2018: Marlene and the URI inter knocked on doors and flyers distributed round the neighborhood surrounding the Valley St. future memorial to victims of gun violence site. We invited community members to join us and let them know about the memorial. The Victims of Gun Violence group met with community members, a New Haven parks department representative, and Svigals and Partners to discuss plans for the upcoming Victims of Gun Violence Memorial. Community input was gathered and the hopes of people for the site were synthesized to make the project a community effort.

During 2019: The team met with group leader Marlene to plan for the group's first workday. Maintenance will be the first order of business this summer: raking, weeding, and mulching. After two years of hard work and planning, the mothers and their many collaborators broke ground on the Botanical Garden of Healing Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence. The mood was hopeful. "We can look at butterflies and say that's my child over there," said group leader Marlene Pratt during the ceremony. Construction on the site begins this summer.

During 2020: Victims of Gun Violence kicked off our maintenance for this year by clearing up broken branches from the tropical storm, weeding and mulching 5 trees, and clearing Japanese knotweed.

fire department volunteered a truck to help water the trees. We thought we would have to bucket water from the river when they received a call, but they returned shortly. Someone was only burning oil off of a grill behind their house. We watered the 5 trees with 25 gallons each and headed home. A group of students from the Yale School of the Environment volunteered with us to help remove invasive species, including knotweed, privet, burning bush, and garlic mustard, from along the West River and the wooded area near the Botanical Garden.

During 2021: In anticipation of the dedication ceremony next Saturday, we planted several shrubs along the magnitude pathway on the west side of the park, and the moms planted red, yellow, and purple flowers in the triangle by the circular seating area.

With the help of a team of volunteers from M.A.L.E.S. (Men Achieving Leadership, Excellence, and Success), we weeded and mulched an entire planting bed this Saturday.

During 2022: All the mothers were able to make it to this workday for the Botanical Garden of Healing, which was great! Together, they made decisions for the entire park, like where the new sign should go and which logos they should use. Come join us next Saturday at 9:00 to see what decisions were made, and help us attack weeds!

Say "hurrah!" with us as we kick off the first day of workdays for the Botanical Garden of Healing! Today, we waged war: the War on Weeds! Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, and Mugwort were the enemies, but the moms declared a semi-victory today against them. I say "semi" victory because more help is needed! Come out and wage war with us on those pesky weeds every Saturday at 9am on 105 Valley Street!

Donate today: <https://uri.yale.edu/get-involved/donate>

References are available upon request

AUXILIARY PRESIDENTS



Peggy McCree, FPC
Vice President of Auxiliaries



Etoile L. Abraham
Ruby V. Forsha Auxiliary



Betty J. Bell
Blue Grass Auxiliary
Chartered March 5, 1999 in
Tuskegee, Alabama



Eula W. Bell
Grand Worthy Matron
Norris Wright Cuney Grand Chapter
Texas and Its' Jurisdiction
Beatrice Coleman Auxiliary



Melissa P. Bledsoe, MPC
Chartered President
Charlie Mae Reed Auxiliary



Lena Celestine
Lila D Dotson



Verdell Comeaux
Ruby E. Williams Auxiliary
New Orleans, Louisiana

AUXILIARY PRESIDENTS



PGWM Janice Justice
Oziel Grand Chapter, NJ
LR Palmer Berry Auxiliary



Kelley Kellis (L)
The Great Lakes Auxiliary



Deidre Ledbetter
Brumfield Auxiliary



Peggy McCree
Harris McCree Auxiliary



Marva Montgomery
Montgomery Auxiliary



Darneasha C. Pickett, MPC (L)
Willie Gillespie Auxiliary (TN)



Sandra Lewis-Lane
Catherine B. Strong Auxiliary



Tikishia C. Smiley, FPC (L)
Minor Perkins Auxiliary
North Carolina



Rocheryl Ware, Ph.D., (L)
F. R. Carter Phyllis Auxiliary

Sister L. R. Palmer Berry

Past Grand Worthy Matron

*The 1st Grand Worthy Matron of Oziel Grand Chapter
Order of the Eastern Star-Prince Hall Affiliation
for the Jurisdiction of New Jersey, Inc.*

By Joanne Motley Cain, PDDGM

Part II

It comes as no surprise that she was also deeply involved in organizations outside of the Masonic umbrella. These state and local organizations provided more than a social outlet for women. Their focus and commitment stemmed from deep rooted concern for the betterment of their communities and the plight of the African American during that time. As a member Lizzie Palmer was often entrusted with positions of leadership and responsibilities within these organizations.

She was a chartered member of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Reading Circle of Des Moines, Iowa serving this organization in the capacity of President, Secretary, Treasurer, and was an editor of the H.B.S. Oracle (City News, 1897, 1899, 1900c, 1907, 1911a; H.B.S. Reading Circle, 1901). When Mrs. Margaret Washington, the wife of Booker T. Washington spoke before a packed crowd at the St. Paul Church in Des Moines in 1904, Sister Palmer presented her with a bouquet of American beauty roses on behalf of the Reading Circle (Mrs. Washington and the Club Women, 1904).

As a member of The Iowa State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs she served as a Chairperson of the Education Committee for several years (State Officers of the Iowa Federation of Afro-American Women, 1906). At the 1902 Conference of the Iowa State Federation, she discussed the topic "What Can Organized Womanhood Do for the Uplifting of the Race" (Convention Opens, 1902). During the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Colored Women's Club meeting in 1904, her topic discussion covered "How does the Vardaman and Parks Remarks effect our Race?" (Program Issued, 1904). Relocating to the East coast with her second husband did not impede her bonding with new collective circles. Lizzie was a part of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, serving as the Jersey City Branch President and as a State Lecturer on the State level (Brown, 1919). She was a member of the Afro American Women's Industrial League and served as its Secretary for several years (Brown, 1915a, 1915b; Clearing House for Charitable Organizations, 1915). In an article from the



Jersey Journal Newspaper, Brown (1915a) notes the League assembled in a clubhouse that doubled as a safehouse and location where the needy received assistance. Notably, one of the Club's project centered around paying off the mortgage on the property (Brown, 1915a).

The Berry family were active members of the Lafayette Presbyterian Church, which is still part of Jersey City, NJ community (Brown, 1915b). Lizzie was involved in the Willing Worker Board where she was the secretary (Brown, 1915a) and the first editor of a monthly paper "The Freeman" published by the Board (Brown, 1918a). She served as a dedicated Sunday School teacher (Brown, 1917; 1918b), held the office of President of the Altar Guild (Brown, 1915b) and secretary for the Dorcas Missionary Society (Brown, 1915a).

Fraternally, Iowa's native daughter was one of New Jersey's precious gems. Sister L. R. Palmer Berry served as the first Grand Worthy Matron of Oziel Grand Chapter, for the Jurisdiction of NJ, taking office on June 24, 1913 in Jersey City, NJ and subsequently elected to serve for three more Administrative terms from June 1914 to June 1917. (Oziel Grand Chapter [OGC], 2014).

An account from OGC Centennial History Book (2104, p. 22) summarized prior to Sister Palmer Berry taking office there were existing in the State of New Jersey two Grand Chapters of the Order of the Eastern Star, in North Jersey there was an Electa Grand Chapter, and in South Jersey, a Crystal Grand Chapter. One of these Grand Chapters was under the jurisdiction of the State of New York

and we are not sure how the other Grand Chapter evolved (OGC, 2014, p. 22). Entry notes indicated in 1911 the Grand Lodge of NJ chose to "consider the Order of the Eastern Star within the state, as an auxiliary body" (OGC, 2014, p. 22). Further noted in the text, a committee was appointed by Most Worshipful Grand Master Timothy Riley to "adjust the differences between the two Grand Chapters and to affect a union of these bodies" (OGC, 2014, p.22). The passage concludes that after lengthy discussions to achieve the optimal method to accomplish this task, the committee moved to "abolish the two Grand Chapters and establish one Grand Chapter in the State to be known as Oziel Grand Chapter" (OGC, 2014, p. 22). The origin of the name Oziel Grand Chapter was not found in any of the research findings. Perhaps it was at the suggestion of Sister Palmer Berry who was formally a member of Princess Oziel Chapter No. 9, in Iowa (V. Lundgren, personal communication, March 21, 2018).

Undertaking this new challenge, she probably drew from her past experiences as a leader. Sister Palmer Berry led the newly established Grand Chapter in an upward trajectory. She and her Grand Worthy Patrons, Brother William J. Douglass, who served with her from 1913-1915 and Reverend Brother J.P. Love, her Grand Worthy Patron from 1915-1917 (OGC, 2014, p.23) laid the foundation for the subordinate chapters of the State to grow and prosper during their tenures. During her terms as the head of this Grand House, many recommendations were brought forth and goals were accomplished for the Good of the Order.

Highlights from the Grand Sessions:

Grand Session June 1914 held at Fitzgerald Auditorium in Atlantic City, NJ

- Convene the first Grand Session in Atlantic City, NJ for the newly recognized Body of the Appendant Order in the Masonic Jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey. (pp.24-25)
- Recommendation to confer the Amaranth Degree in the Jurisdiction. (p.25)
- The first nine Chapters of Oziel Grand Chapter received their warrants: Rebecca Chapter No. 1 (Plainfield); Queen Esther Chapter No. 2 (Jersey City); Atlantic Chapter No. 3 (Atlantic City); Adah Chapter No. 5 (Asbury Park); Ruth Chapter No. 6 (Cape May); Bethsaida Chapter No. 7 (Morristown); Aaron Chapter No. 8 (Princeton) and Electa Chapter No. 9 (Madison). (OGC, 2014, p.24)

Grand Session June 1915 conducted at the Masonic Temple in Plainfield, NJ

- The establishment of the Administrative Council in all Chapters was ordered.
- Monthly School of Instructions were to be held in all Chapters of the Jurisdiction.
- To distinguish members from clandestine chapters, the membership cards issued by the Grand Chapter were to be imprinted with the seal and attested by the Grand Secretary.
- To unify the work of the Grand Chapter, the Amaranth Degree was to be conferred in all chapters instead of organizing a state Amaranth Court.
- Bethel Chapter No. 10 (Montclair) was added as a subordinate Chapter.
- Six additional Chapters were organized in the State and received their warrants: Adah Chapter No. 11 (Asbury Park); St. John Chapter No. 12 (Orange); Trinity Chapter No. 14 (Newark); Ionic Chapter No. 15 (Bridgeton) and Fidelity Chapter No. 16 (Paterson) (OGC, 2014, p.25).

Grand Session of June 1916 assembled at the Masonic Temple in Cape May, NJ

- The Incorporation papers were turned over to Oziel Grand Chapter during this Grand Session.
- Recommendation brought forth to have the District Deputies be appointed at the will and wish of the Grand Worthy Patron and they would be under his sole control.
- The Conferring of Degrees was to be done by the individual Chapter to the best of their ability.
- The Landmarks and Laws of the Order were to be observed by all members in the Jurisdiction. (OGC, 2014, p. 26)

Grand Session of June 1917 convened in Morristown, NJ

- Two Chapters added to the body of the Grand Chapter.
- Chapters receiving warrants: Adah Chapter No. 16 (Asbury Park); Ivy Leaf No. 18 (Pleasantville). (OGC, 2014, p. 26)

Following her tenure as Grand Worthy Matron, Sister Palmer Berry was appointed as Grand Lecturer for Oziel Grand Chapter during the Administrative years of 1921 to 1923 (OGC, 2014, p.160) and was a member of the International Conference of the Order of the Eastern Star in which Lizzie held the office of the Interstate Grand Secretary/Correspondent for years spanning from 1920 to 1924 (More than 10,000 gather in Cincinnati. Iowa Prominent in National Masonic Meet, 1920; Mrs. S Joe Brown Re-Elected WM of the OES, 1924).

Sister Lizzie Roy Palmer Berry, Past Grand Worthy Matron of Oziel Grand Chapter, died on May 10, 1930 in Chicago and she was laid to rest in Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington, Iowa next to her mother and stepfather (Aspen Grove Cemetery, n.d.; B.C, n.d; V. Lundgren, personal communication, March 21, 2018). Her Journey had come full circle; Iowa's hometown girl returned home to her roots.

Sister Palmer Berry epitomized the portrait of a leader. By all accounts, she was an intellectual, teacher, avid traveler, and a great conversationalist (Church Festivities, 1897; City News, 1898b, 1904, 1911b; Brown, 1918b). Her strong organizational and communication skills made her a pivotal asset to every organization that she was associated with. Sister Palmer Berry embraced change and did not backdown from a challenge. Taking the reins of a newly reorganized Grand Chapter in 1913, she overcame the many challenges associated with mending and unifying a Jurisdiction that had previously operated as two separate entities. Her strengths and experiences translated into harmonious and fruitful Administrations. Her life journey was an account of an extraordinary woman.

Article Collaborators

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I would like to acknowledge and thank Sister Victoria A. Lundgren, PM, Past Grand Secretary of Electa Grand Chapter of Iowa for her input. Sister Lundgren on March 21, 2018 provided insight into the life of our first Grand Worthy Matron. By introducing us to the "Iowa State Bystander" newspaper, the story of Sister Lizzie Palmer Berry came to life through her family narratives, following her travels, and tracing her leadership skills.

The Iowa State Bystander was published every Friday from 1894-2015 and was targeted toward an African American audience and founded in Des Moines. It was the official newspaper of "The Afro-American Protective Association of Iowa" which was one of the many civil rights groups operating in the country and "The Most Worshipful United Grand Lodge of Iowa Ancient Free & Accepted Masons" (Morris, n.d.).



Fifty-eight (58) references are provided and will be made available upon request.

JE Peake & Memorial Star Day

A Special Day in the Arkansas Jurisdiction

By Patricia S. Jones, MPC (Life)

In the Arkansas Jurisdiction the Order of the Eastern Star (OES), Royal Grand Chapter commands each Chapter to participate in a celebration of Peake Memorial Star Day each year. J.E. Peake was the third Grand Patron (GP) to serve the OES Royal Grand Chapter. His tenure ran 18 years from 1888 until 1906 when he died at 54 years old. During some of the time while he was Grand Patron, J.E. Peake served as Deputy Grand Master of the Arkansas Jurisdiction. He was also Past Worshipful Master of Excelsior Lodge No.13, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Excelsior Lodge #13 remains active today.

In addition to serving the Prince Hall family, J.E. Peake was an educator for many years – serving as Principal of Sloan School, the first school for Negro children in Clark County, Arkansas. Peake worked as Teacher then Principal of the School until his death. When Sloan School burned in 1926 it was rebuilt with the help of a Rosenwald grant. The Rosenwald School was built in 1928 on land that the Peake family sold to the school district. J.E. Peake had expressed in his will that should his children desire to part with the home place; it should be a school site for his race. The family sold the land with the stipulation that the



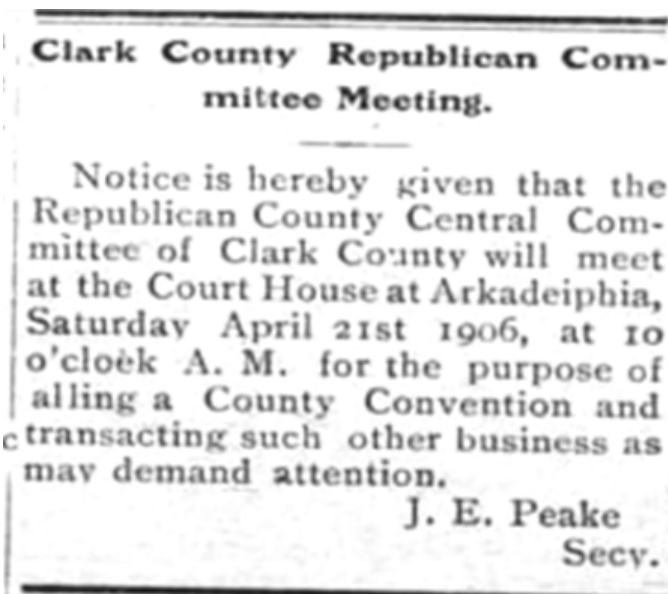
Peake name remain on the property. First an elementary, then a high school, the last class graduated from Peake High School in 1969.

Today, Peake High School alumni take great pride in their school and continue to award scholarships to graduating seniors from the area. While the building still stands, it is no longer an active school. In 2005, the Peake School Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. J.E. Peake was also Superintendent of Bethel Institute, now Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He was a landowner; and Peake also served as Secretary of the Republican Committee in Clark County.



A 1906 newspaper announcement of a Republican Committee Meeting is from J.E. Peake. There are several newspaper articles describing his attendance at Republican Conventions.

Today, Peake High School alumni take great pride in their school and continue to award scholarships to graduating seniors from the area. While the building still stands, it is no longer an active school. In 2005, the Peake School Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. J.E. Peake was also Superintendent of Bethel Institute, now Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He was a landowner; and Peake also served as Secretary of the Republican Committee in Clark County.



A 1906 newspaper announcement of a Republican Committee Meeting is from J.E. Peake. There are several newspaper articles describing his attendance at Republican Conventions. Today, North Peake Street is located near the school site, evidence that the community obviously thought very highly of J.E. Peake.

As for the Order of Eastern Star, PHA in Arkansas, our Royal Grand Chapter was founded in 1885. J.E. Peake became our third Grand Patron (GP) during the third year after our Grand Chapter was established and served 18 years, from 1888 – 1906. According to our timeline for Grand Worthy Matrons, GP Peake served with the first six Grand Worthy Matrons. He was in office the longest period with Grand Matron Cora Johnson.

No doubt during his time in office, GP Peake had a great influence on the development of the Grand OES Chapter in Arkansas. Some most notable achievements during this time are:

- In 1893, GP Peake recommended a **Home for Widows and Orphans**. This project started but disbanded in 1918 (after approximately 25 years).
- In 1894, **The Grand Worthy Matron began to travel each year to provide instruction to Chapters**. Prior to this, the Grand Matron only presided during the Annual Session. The OES membership in Arkansas grew after the Grand Worthy Matron began to travel.
- And, in 1899, the OES started a **Youth Fraternity** that exists to this day.

Arkansas Grand Worthy Matrons serving with Grand Patron JE Peake

Our 1st Grand Worthy Matron	GWM Maria Craigin	1885 – 1889
Our 2nd Grand Worthy Matron	GWM Alice Havis	1889 – 1893
Our 3rd Grand Worthy Matron	GWM M.J. Elliott	1893 – 1894
Our 4th Grand Worthy Ma- tron	GWM Cora Johnson	1894 – 1901
Our 5th Grand Worthy Matron	GWM F.F. White	1901 – 1906
Our 6th Grand Worthy Matron	GWM Parthenia A. Gipson	1906 – 1916

WELL-KNOWN NEGRO DEAD.—J. E. Peake Sr., a well-known negro educator, died at Texarkana and was buried at Arkadelphia a few days ago. He was the father of J. E. Peake Jr., who has a rural mail route out of Little Rock. He was 54 years of age, was a native of Arkadelphia, and had been engaged in teaching for more than 30 years. For several years he was secretary of the Republican Central Committee of Clark county and a member of the State Executive Committee.

When GP Peake died in 1906, the Arkansas Gazette newspaper ran a small announcement, “WELL-KNOWN NEGRO DEAD”. It notes in the article that he was the Secretary of the Clark County Republican Committee.

Two years after GP Peake died, in 1908, the OES erected a monument at the gravesite. The monument still stands in the Arkadelphia Cemetery (formerly known as Helms Cemetery). After more than 100 years, the monument remains quite impressive, standing about 12 feet tall, it appears to be made of marble.

An engraving beneath the date of death on the Peake Memorial, reads, “*He was a consistent Christian, a loving Husband, and a devoted Father.*” There is a smaller grave marker to the right of the memorial for GP Peake; that of his wife, Sister Abbie Peake. She was a member of the Eastern Star and served as Grand Conductress. Her date of death is July 14, 1925. An engraving on the right side of the Peake monument reads, “*Here lies one who without the honor or emoluments of public station did something for his fellow man.*” Emoluments are compensation or other rewards.

On the day the monument was unveiled in 1908, the OES, continued to honor GP Peake by instituting *Peake Memorial Day* to be celebrated annually on the second Sunday in October. For a time, the Arkansas jurisdiction also celebrated **Star Day** annually to memorialize deceased members of the OES.

In 1936, Star Day was blended with Peake Memorial Day to create **Peake Memorial Star Day**, as it is currently known.

Today, Peake Memorial Star Day is celebrated on any Sunday in October with programs in each OES district throughout the Arkansas Jurisdiction. Most members attend the program in their district. The Peake Memorial Star Day Program is usually held at a lodge or church and is open to the public. During the program, OES members commemorate GP Peake and honor members who have died during the past year. Usually there is an invited Guest Speaker who must be a PHA sister or brother. Non-members may serve in other positions on the program. OES Members dress in all white dresses with full regalia. And, because it is a memorial program, the tradition in Arkansas requires sisters to wear white prayer caps during all memorial programs.

J.E. Peake was an educator who also served the Arkansas Prince Hall Jurisdiction as Deputy Grand Master and Grand Patron of the OES. More than 100 years after his death, we continue to honor Grand Patron J.E. Peake as we applaud his dedication to service. By continuing our celebration of Peake Memorial Star Day we are Giving Honor for Whom Honor is due.



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I also thank Dr. Sibyl Moses, First Vice President of the Phyllis, for introducing me to the Library of Congress Digital Collection, called *Chronicling America*. This invaluable research tool provided numerous newspaper articles to support this project.

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