



For Our Own Good:

The History and Culture of African American
CIVIC AND SOCIAL GROUPS
in Central Virginia

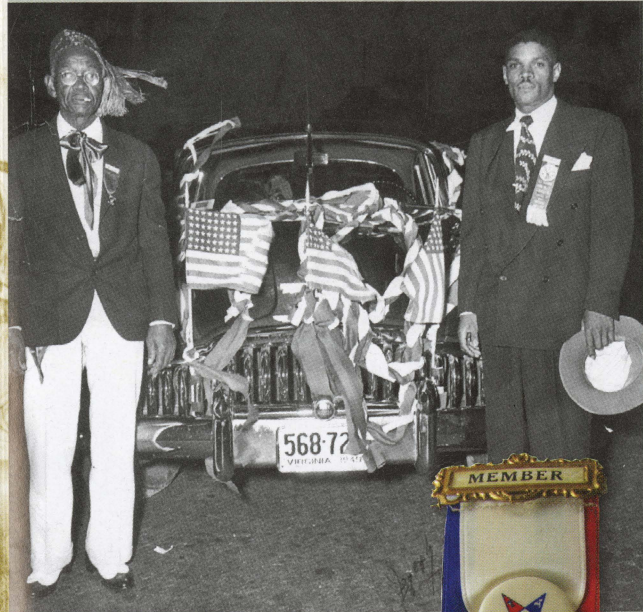
JUNE 21, 2008 – JUNE 5, 2009

Legacy

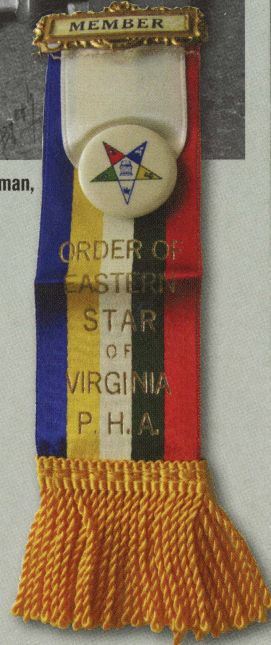
Museum of African American History

403 Monroe Street, Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

Brick carried by Omega Psi Phi pledged David Harris, 1947
Courtesy of Dr. David Harris



Lynchburger Callie Harris (left) and unidentified man, Shriners Parade, San Francisco, 1949
Courtesy of Iris Thorpe



Badge, Order of Eastern Star, Peaks View Chapter #226, Bedford County
Courtesy of Beulah Payne



Delta Sigma Theta elephant
Courtesy of Phyllistine Mosley

The Lynchburg Beauticians Club entertains World War II soldiers
Courtesy of Sallie Harvey

African American civic and social groups are as old as the United States itself. Since the 18th century, groups of like-minded people have come together to shape their own identities and to protect others like themselves from want and isolation.



Masonic apron
Courtesy of Carolyn Brown



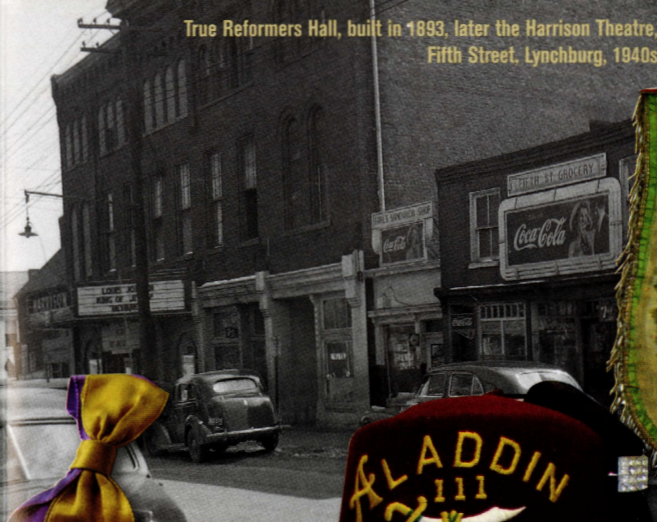
Alpha Phi Alpha paddle
Courtesy of Ceasor Johnson



Tap-dancing class, Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Monroe Street, Lynchburg, 1950s
Gift of Carolyn Bell



African American civic and social organizations supported black businesses, and black businesses supported them. Almost without exception, Central Virginia lodges and clubs closely aligned themselves with the area's churches. They kept and encouraged good moral conduct based on American and Christian ideals.
Grand Marshalls Mrs. M.C. Allen (Wilhelmina) and Mr. C.W. Seay, Links Cotillion, Sportsman's Club, Lynchburg, 1959
Courtesy of Carolyn Brown



True Reformers Hall, built in 1893, later the Harrison Theatre, Fifth Street, Lynchburg, 1940s



Odd Fellows apron, Sons of Zion Lodge
Courtesy of Carolyn Brown

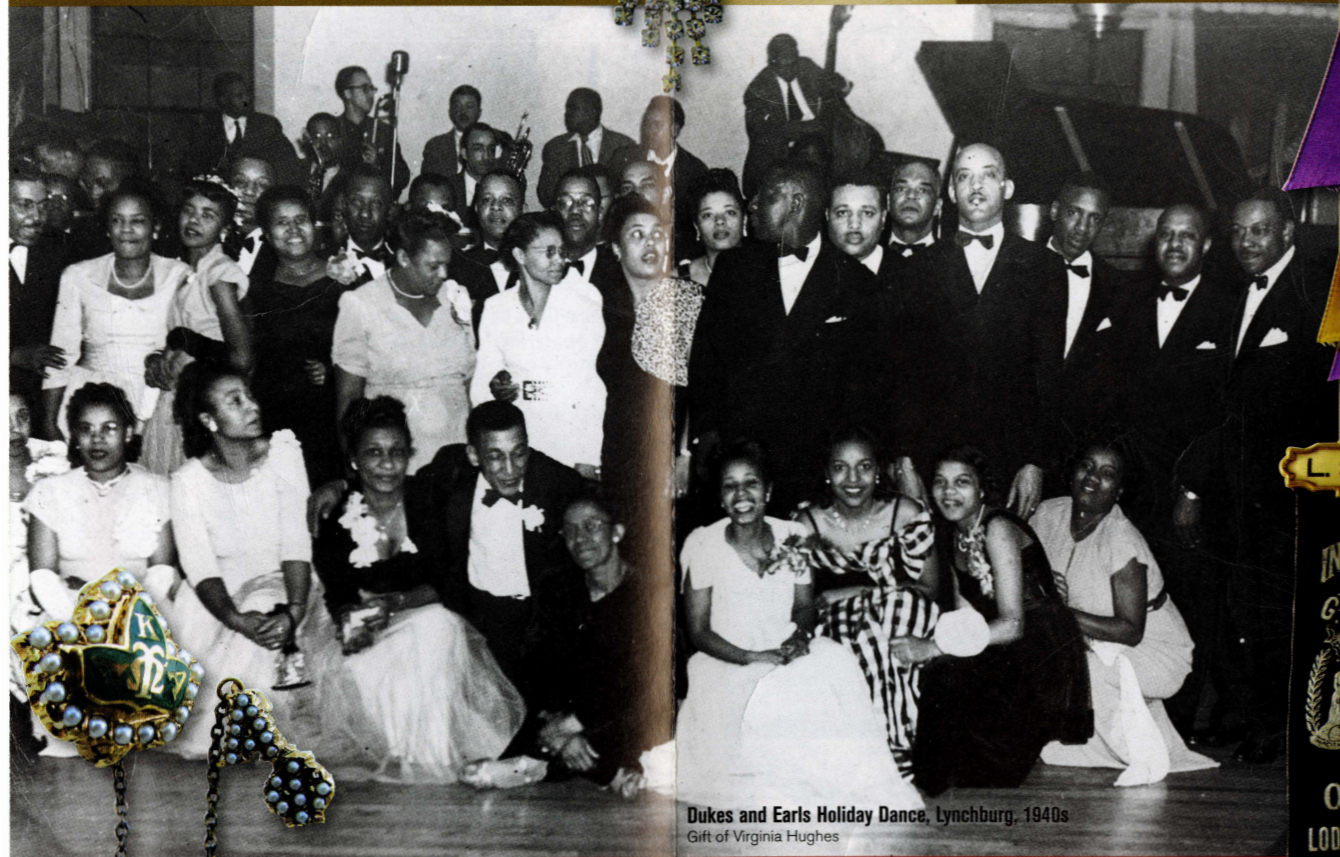
Mutual aid societies were the first organizations to be formed in African American communities. Often they were associated with religious organizations such as prayer groups or churches. Society members took care of people when they were ill or disabled.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

HELPING HAND CLUB MOTTO



Links pin
Courtesy of Alice Mabry



Dukes and Earls Holiday Dance, Lynchburg, 1940s
Gift of Virginia Hughes



Revelers Club ribbon
Gift of Amanda Williams



Masonic headgear
Courtesy of Howard Anderson



Flower Show Judging by Charlie Elliott, Campbell County Extension Agent (middle), 1960s
Courtesy of Charlie Elliott



Zeta Phi Beta medallion
Courtesy of Alice Mabry

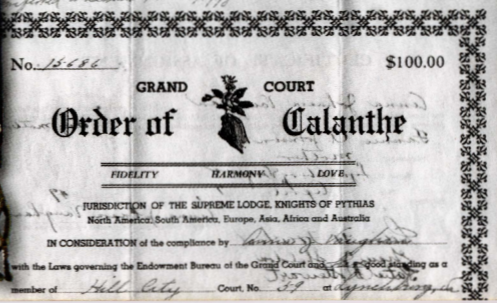


Sigma Gamma Rho charm
Courtesy of Cynthia Hall



Odd Fellows funeral badge, Lodge 1478
Courtesy of Carolyn Brown

Insurance policy for Anna J. Vaughan, Order of Calanthe, Knights of Pythias, Lynchburg, 1940
Gift of Thelma Jennings



Alpha Kappa Alpha pin
Courtesy of Edwina Beverley and Carolyn Brown

"Friendship is essential to the soul."

OMEGA PSI PHI MOTTO

When "separate but equal" barred blacks from access to entertainment and social opportunities in the larger culture, African American men established social networks for themselves and their families.

Further Reading

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AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIC AND SOCIAL GROUPS HAVE ALWAYS REFLECTED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR MEMBERS.

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Pearls ribbon

Courtesy of
Joan Spencer

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Legacy

Museum of African American History

403 Monroe Street

P.O. Box 308, Lynchburg, Virginia 24505

MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesday–Saturday: Noon–4 p.m.

Sunday: 2–4 p.m.

Other times by appointment

Closed on major holidays

Wheelchair accessible

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Kappa Alpha

Psi paddle

Courtesy of
Howard Butler



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