

Papers of the NAACP

Part 29, Series A: Field Staff Files

Part 29, Series B: Branch Newsletters, Annual
Branch Activities Reports and Selected
Branch Department Subject Files

Part 30, Series A: Subject Files

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By the 1960s, the NAACP's network of local branches was one of the most deeply rooted and assertive political networks in America. The Association's spectacular growth after the Second World War was temporarily challenged by repressive measures in the South as white southerners mounted a backlash against the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. But even in the South, the NAACP withstood vigilante attacks, economic reprisals, and official state efforts to destroy the branches. By the late 1960s, Association branches throughout the country were building membership, filing anti-discrimination suits, and flexing political muscle.

Backlash gathers momentum

While the Association was thriving, a new range of challenges was gathering force. The late sixties saw the beginning of a nationwide backlash against the civil rights movement. Presidential candidacies of governors from Alabama and California inspired a conservative shift in American politics. Militant Black Nationalism emerged in many urban communities. And cultural divisions sharpened between generations and genders, races and ethnic groups.

NAACP Branch Department Files are among the best records of this changing political landscape

Few sources document the changes that swept through America during the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as the NAACP Branch Dept. Files. The NAACP had long cultivated an assiduous style of administration with the highest standards for regular reporting, dating at least to the administrations of three distinguished African American writers—James Weldon Johnson (1920–1930), Walter F. White (1930–1954), and Roy Wilkins (1954–1977). As a result, the records compiled by the NAACP Branch Dept. are some of the most consistently valuable sources in existence on political

change in America. The NAACP was an agent of this political change, and its branch network recorded both association-sponsored initiatives and many other facets of the U.S. political landscape.

Series A reveals NAACP challenges and initiatives

Part 29: Branch Department Files, 1965–1972, Series A: Field Staff Files contains the regular reports and correspondence of the NAACP's professional field staff. Put into place after World War II to be effective communicators and organizers and to provide local branch leaders with technical assistance and training, by the late 1960s, the field staff was operating as a highly effective network, providing regular communication from the local level to the national office.

Among the topics covered are

- backlash against the movement;
- relations with new civil rights and black power organizations;
- relations with organized labor and religiously-based groups;
- federal Great Society programs;
- Nixon revenue sharing policies;
- segregation and discrimination in schools, public facilities, housing, and the workplace;
- voting rights in the South;
- African American political strength;
- poverty and economic distress;

- urban renewal politics;
- police brutality;
- racial discrimination;
- acts of vigilante violence; and
- urban race riots.

Field staff report on the status of African Americans

Part 29, Series A provides researchers with a wealth of information about the American political culture in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The files include both careful regular reports and spontaneous correspondence to the NAACP national office from every part of the United States.

Series B offers invaluable insight into the NAACP as an organization

Series B: Branch Newsletters, Annual Branch Activities Reports and Selected Branch Department Subject Files includes a mix of valuable materials generated at both the local level and within the national office.

Newsletters document evolving NAACP image in American society

Branch newsletters for 1966–1977 offer a wide sampling of local activities by NAACP branches in every region of the United States. Newsletters report on branch accomplishments and document the evolution of the NAACP's image in American society.

(Over, please)

Annual Branch Activities Reports gauge level of local activism

Annual Branch Activities Reports, 1966–1972, provide a systematic record of NAACP branch work. All branches were asked to respond on a standard questionnaire form regarding their work for the previous year in public education; housing; economic development; youth work; labor and industry; legal redress; political activism; direct action events; publicity; and membership. Their reports often include local news clippings and other enclosures.

Branch Department Subject Files provide rare, primary reference

Branch Department Subject Files were kept for reference in advising branches. They document such leading issues as NAACP efforts to deal with serious

urban problems stemming from southern migration, employment discrimination, urban riots, poor housing, and struggling school systems. They provide information on the process of African American political empowerment. And they offer biographical data on several of the era's civil rights leaders.

After surveying the subject file, UPA editors have selected the following:

- Black Muslims;
- Bd. of Dirs. Comm. on Branches;
- Community Action Project;
- Dahmer, Vernon, murder;
- Evers, Charles;
- Fall State Conference Schedule;
- Ghetto leaders;
- Interdepartmental Communications — Housing, Legal Dept., Program Dept., and Washington Bureau

- International Union of United Auto Workers;
- Kaplan, Kivie;
- Leadership Conferences;
- Lewis, Alfred Baker;
- Marches and Rallies;
- Mass., Boston, positive program for;
- Pamphlets and Manuals;
- Racial Disturbances;
- Riots;
- Sit-Down Demonstrations;
- Situations;
- Special Field Worker Reports;
- Tennessee, Memphis, Garbage Workers' Strike;
- Texas, Complaint against National Guard;
- Voter Registration and Education;
- Women's Auxiliary.

Part 30: General Office Files, 1966–1972, Series A: Subject Files

Part 30 depicts the NAACP national office wrestling with a broad range of challenges—urban race riots, the cresting of a militant Black Power movement, the emergence of a conservative Republican presidency, and the tensions caused by the Vietnam War. Scholars will gain sharp insight into efforts to maintain the momentum of Great Society social programs in housing and urban redevelopment, Nixon Administration “revenue sharing” proposals that devolved money and authority to states and localities, and questions of welfare reform, housing discrimination, and fair employment.

Insight into a volatile period

Many key political episodes of the period—such as opposition to Nixon Supreme Court nominees Haynesworth, Carswell, and Rehnquist; the 1972 Democratic National Convention; the emergence of the Congressional Black Caucus; and debates with Jewish organizations about Affirmative Action—are richly documented.

Scholars will gain insight into the network of civil rights and liberal activist groups that made the political network of the center-left of American politics.

Valuable primary source

Subject files include:

- Anti-Crime Committee of NAACP;
- Agnew;
- Bell, Griffin;
- Commission on Civil Rights;
- Congressional Black Caucus;
- Democratic National Committee;
- EEOC;
- Food Stamps;
- Headstart Program;
- Health, Education & Welfare Dept.;
- Johnson, Lyndon B.;
- Justice Dept.;

- Nixon, Richard M.;
- Republican National Committee;
- State Dept.;
- Supreme Court;
- White House Conferences;
- Philip Randolph Institute;
- African American Institute;
- American Committee on Africa;
- Black Panthers;
- Comm. on Black-Jewish Relations;
- Congress on Racial Equality;
- Leadership Conf. on Civil Rights;
- National Urban Coalition;

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