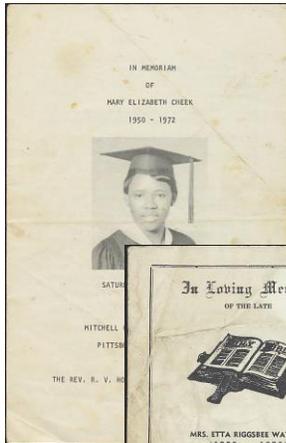


## African-American Funeral Program Collection



The Chatham County African-American Funeral Programs collection documents the lives and deaths of several generations of Chatham County residents. The collection was established with the donation of nearly 800 programs to the Chatham County Historical Association by Ms. Annie Ruth Burnette in 2011. Major contributions to the collection subsequently have been made by Ollie Crutchfield Burnette, Bertha Dowdy, Phyllis Fearington, Arzalia Nettles Taylor, and Delphine Goldston Womack.

In just a few pages, each program tells the story of a valued community member. There are tributes to housewives, nurses, military members, college professors, truck drivers, coaches, businessmen, and children. There are lodge members, Boy Scouts, Sunday-School teachers, choir members, athletes, and car club members. Revealed in the programs are interesting nicknames and touching personal anecdotes.

The programs are in the collection of the Chatham County Historical Association, and are made available online by UNC's Digital Heritage Program. The Chatham County African-American Funeral Program Collection documents the lives and deaths of several generations of black Chatham County residents. Covering funerals held between 1957 and 2018, the programs typically contain an obituary, a list of surviving relatives, and the order of service. Many also contain a photograph of the deceased.

**Quick Link to the African-American Funeral Program Collection**

• [Search or Browse the collection](#)

Because these obituaries and funeral programs were written by and about African Americans, they provide an authentic eyewitness account of the black experience in Chatham County. The funeral programs are particularly valuable to family researchers because, traditionally, few African-American obituaries have been published in mainstream newspapers.

The programs are an excellent source of genealogical information, usually including birth and death dates, maiden names, names of relatives, past residences, and place of burial. Collectively, the obituaries provide a rich source of local history about African Americans in Chatham County, highlighting religious, occupational and educational affiliations, as well as personal traits that loved-ones noted about the deceased.

An Internet connection is all one needs to search the Chatham County African-American Funeral Program Collection. It can be searched by name, date, location, church, or any other word that appears in the program, such as a relative's name. A majority of the programs are from funerals held in Chatham County, NC, and the surrounding area, with a few outliers from more distant locations. The programs are available at <http://www.digitalnc.org/exhibits/chatham-county-funeral-programs/>

Need help searching the programs? Volunteers are available at the Chatham Community Library on Thursdays from 9-11 and 1-3 in the local history area to help with questions about local history and family research. The funeral programs can be accessed from the library and the volunteers will be happy to help.

*To make an appointment to meet with a volunteer call the library at 919-545-8086.*

The Chatham County African-American Funeral Program Collection is just one of the ways that CCHA works to preserve the stories of Chatham's communities. We are delighted that collaboration with UNC's Digital Heritage Program has allowed us to make access to these programs--which represent a part of our community whose stories may not have been told elsewhere--so widely available.



## How You Can Help

Contribute funeral programs of African-American Chatham County residents to the collection, or encourage others who may have collected programs to do so. Don't let these important documents be lost.

- Contributors should know that the programs will become a permanent part of the CCHA collection and cannot be returned, but contributed programs will be added to the digital collection.
- If you have programs to donate, you may drop them off at the Chatham Historical Museum (in the historic Chatham County Courthouse in the traffic circle in Pittsboro) when it is open (11-4 on Wed, Thurs, and Fri); or drop them off at the Chatham Community Library main desk (care of Evie Evans); or mail the programs to Funeral Programs, CCHA at PO Box 93, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Please include your name and contact information with the programs.
- If you have questions about the African-American Funeral Program Collection, please contact us at [CemeterySurvey@chathamhistory.org](mailto:CemeterySurvey@chathamhistory.org).

