“To Bury Our Dead Members”: Tennessee’s African American Fraternal and Benevolent Lodges
What are fraternal and benevolent lodges?

- Known by terms such as benevolent societies, mutual aid societies, voluntary associations, and fraternal organizations.
- Place for socialization
- Allowed for men and women to exercise leadership roles
- Some provided members with sickness and burial benefits
- Probably thousands of these groups existed in the United States from Reconstruction through the mid 20th century.
“Distinctive” African American Lodges

- Colored Benevolent Society/Benevolent Society
- Daughters/Sons/Sisters of Zion
- Independent Order of Immaculates
- Independent Pole Bearers Association
- Mosaic Templars
- Social Benevolent Society
- Working People’s Labor and Art Association
Benevolent Cemetery, Goodlettsville, Davidson County, Tennessee

Benevolent Society/Colored Benevolent Society

BENEVOLENT CEMETERY
LODGE #16
EST. 1862
Benevolent Order No. 210
Port Royal, Tennessee
Colored Relief Society

From the Bolivar Bulletin, September 26, 1878.
Freedmen’s Bank record for the Sisters of Zion of Ft. Pickering (Memphis, Tennessee).
Zion Christian Cemetery
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF)

1891 SANBORN MAP

Meeting place of the GUOOF in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee
Improved & Benevolent Order of Elks (IBOEW)

Tennessee Valley Elks #1152 Lodge, Knoxville, Tennessee
Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria

- Benevolent group originally formed in New York City in 1847
- Ritual centered around the story of the Good Samaritan from the New Testament and their emblem was a dove
- There were lodges in Nashville and Knoxville.
- The Knoxville lodge had their own hall, located on the corner of Gay & Cumberland Streets.
From the Nashville Globe, July 10, 1908.
From the *Memphis Daily Appeal*, May 24, 1873.
Number Nine Hall Cemetery
Shelby County
Knights and Daughters of Tabor

TWENTIETH ANNUAL SESSION

International Order of Twelve Knights of Tabor

HOLD MEETING IN THIS CITY. LARGE DELEGATION PRESENT.

BOYD HALL CROWDED TO ITS UTMOST CAPACITY.—FULLY FIVE HUNDRED DELEGATES AND VISITORS IN NASHVILLE—RECEPTION COMMITTEE ARRANGE THINGS TO PERFECTION.

Clipping from the Nashville Globe, September 6, 1907.
Knights of Pythias of North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa

Map showing the location of the Pythian Temple in Nashville. 1914 Sanborn Insurance Map, Sheet 10
Masons and Prince Hall Masons

Warfield Lodge
Clarksville, Tennessee
Mosaic Templars of America

Franklin, Tenn., Nov. 29, 1927

OFFICE OF
MRS. FANNIE B. CALHOUN
Secretary State Department
MOSAIC TEMPLARS OF AMERICA
Jurisdiction of Tennessee

Received of Faithful Workers Delight Temple Chamber Palace No. 6397

Located at Moscow, Tennessee

The sum of One and 70/100 Dollars

For Temple Tax Miss Lula Milh, A.B.

State Department, M. T. of A.

No. 737
m.o. 8/15/03

By Fannie B. Calhoun, Secretary.
Tombstone of Lucinda Boyd, member of the Mosaic Templars. Located at Mt. Ararat Cemetery, Nashville, Tennessee.
“The design is to render aid to the indigent, helpless and sick of the colored race, more especially to the members of the order; and I can say from personal knowledge that it is doing much good in securing aid to the sick members – medicines and medical attention.” -- Memphis Daily Appeal, August 14, 1875
Sons of Ham Cemetery, Goodlettsville, Tennessee

Sons of Ham Cemetery, Goodlettsville, Tennessee
Sons of Ham Cemetery
Goodlettsville, Tennessee

[Images of a cemetery]
TRUSTEES
NASHVILLE ORDER
SONS OF RELIEF NO. 1.
R.P. CARTER, R.A. MAYBERRY.
J.R. ANDERSON, B. LOVELL.
J. P. CRAWFORD.
1914.
From the Memphis Public Ledger, May 16, 1882

United Brothers of Friendship and the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten
McMinnville Notes.

The W. P. L. A. A. held its annual convention here in Clark Chapel beginning Thursday and closing Sunday night. The delegation was heartily welcomed and royally entertained in the homes of the citizens. All the services were largely attended. On Saturday night an exhibit was made at the church, where beautiful and artistic needlework done by the ladies of the different lodges was shown.

The annual sermon was preached on Saturday afternoon at 3 o’clock by the chaplain of the order, to a large congregation, a very impressive and able address being delivered.

On Sunday evening, in connection with a song service beautifully rendered by the choir, five minute addresses were made by Drs. J. B. Singleton, of Nashville, and S. P. Livingston, of this place; Mr. Jas. Bumpass, L. L. D., of Nashville; Prof. Hawkins, of Waiden University, and Mr. Frank Mercer, of Nashville, formerly of this place. The speakers were introduced by the honorable Father Caldwell, of Nashville, President of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee. The delegates returned to their homes on Monday morning. Prof. Hawkins remaining over in the interest of Walden University.

Much interest is manifested in the...
Conclusions

Image from the Benevolent Cemetery, Antioch, Tennessee.