

FREEMASONS. ST. JAMES LODGE NO. 47 (BATON ROUGE, LA.). RECORDS.

(Mss 2860)

Inventory

Compiled by

Susan Deborah Cook

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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(revised 2004 by Abigail L. Dixon)

**FREEMASONS. ST. JAMES LODGE
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ca. 1790-1966, undated

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Summary

Size.	6.5 linear feet.
Geographic Locations.	Baton Rouge and New Orleans, La.
Inclusive dates.	Ca. 1790-1966.
Bulk dates.	1844-1934.
Languages.	English, French, Spanish.
Summary.	Minutes of meetings, correspondence, financial papers, and printed items belonging to St. James Lodge No. 47, F. & A.M., Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Private papers relating to the Mexican-American and Civil Wars and documents pertaining to the Louisiana Historical Society.
Source.	Placed on deposit March 23, 1994.
Copyright.	Physical rights are retained by the LSU Libraries. Copyright of the original materials is retained by the creators, or their descendants, of the materials in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Citation.	Freemasons. St. James Lodge No. 47 (Baton Rouge, La.) Records, Mss. 2860, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
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Biographical/Historical Note¹

St. James Lodge No. 47 is part of the body of Masons under the Louisiana Grand Lodge. It was formed in 1844, superseding the earlier Baton Rouge Lodges of Washington No. 17 and L'Etoile Flamboyante No. 10 who surrendered their charters in 1834 and 1849 respectively. It sent its petition for a charter to the Grand Lodge of Louisiana on May 25, 1844. The first meeting of the Lodge was held in the sugar house of James McCalop. The Lodge then rented rooms before settling at a house at the corner of Church and Waters Street until 1856, when they moved to the building of W.F. Tunnard at Main and Church (Fourth) Street. In 1907, the Lodge moved to its present building on Third and Convention Streets.

The Freemasons are a part of several related secret societies, many of which rented rooms in St. James' building and were attended by members of St. James. The Chapters of Washington Nos. 5 and 57 have been connected with St. James in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; De Soto Lodge No. 7 (Order of Odd Fellows) was closely allied with St. James at its beginnings. Other appendant bodies are the Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of Rainbow (for girls) and the White Shrine and Order of DeMolay (for boys). At Louisiana State University, Acacia Fraternity was established by the Lodge in the 1950s.

The Lodge operates in the rituals of the York Rite under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana (located in New Orleans). St. James is led by the Worshipful Master and a committee that includes the offices of secretary, treasurer, tyler, and chaplain. A large part of lodge business is taken up with membership procedures—candidates for masonry progress through the three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft Mason, and Master Mason. Traditions commonly observed by St. James Lodge are the feasts of the patron saints of Masonry (St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist) and the honoring of the President and mason George Washington during February of each year. The Lodge has also been a part of Baton Rouge parades, such as inaugurations, and of cornerstone layings. Masonic lodges place great emphasis upon charitable works, and St. James has been involved in the relief of distressed masons and their families, other lodges, and in disasters both within the United States and abroad.

Membership of the Lodge has grown from thirty members in 1844 to the peak of seven hundred and thirty-one in 1958. There is a history of family membership that spans in some cases as many as four generations. Several members of the Lodge have been eminent in both Masonic and public life in the areas of government, education, and business. Among those are James Harrison Dakin, the architect of the Old State Capitol who petitioned to join in 1848, J.R. Dufroq, the first Mayor of

¹A more comprehensive history of St. James Lodge is to be found in Naresh Sharma, *History of St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M.* (Baton Rouge, St. James Lodge, 1994).

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Baton Rouge (1850-1854), and Col. Thomas Duckett Boyd, president of Louisiana State University. Brethren of St. James who became Members of Congress include Col. E.W. Robertson and Charles Cecil Bird, Jr. St. James member Preston W. Farrar (d. 1850) served several terms as Speaker of the House of Representatives. George A. Pike, master of the Lodge seven times, founded the Baton Rouge newspaper *The Comet*, consolidating it with *The Gazette*; he went on to become the first editor of *The Advocate*.

Scope and Content Note

Papers document the life of the Lodge through minutes of meetings, membership files, financial records, and correspondence between St. James and other Lodges and related societies (such as Knights Templar and Odd Fellowships) throughout the United States and in Mexico and Canada. General correspondence reflects the charitable concerns of the Lodge and its business with its members and other societies and businesses that rent lodge rooms. Miscellaneous manuscript and printed items document special aspects of lodge life and include funeral notices, rosters, programs, newspaper clippings, speeches, and poetry. Private papers left with St. James provide information on the history of the Mexican-American War and of Baton Rouge during the Civil War. There are also papers that document the Louisiana Historical Society in the 1860s and the career of Amos Adams in his wider service to Louisiana masonry as Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, and District Deputy Grand Master.

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List of Groups, Series, and Subseries

Group 1. Freemasons. Baton Rouge, La. St. James Lodge No. 47, F. & A.M.

- 1845 **Correspondence**, 1844-1966, undated (box 1, oversize folder 1)
- Subseries 1. Grand Lodge of Louisiana**, 1844-1936, undated (box 1, oversize folder 1)
- Subseries 2. Masonic Lodges**, 1845-1947, undated (box 1)
- Subseries 3. Louisiana Relief Lodge No. 1**, 1853-1933 (box 1)
- Subseries 4. District Deputy Grand Masters**, 1875-1891 (box 1)
- Subseries 5. General**, 1844-1966, undated (box 1)
-
- 1845 **Financial Papers**, 1841-1957, undated (box 2, oversize folders 2-3)
-
- 1845 **Administrative Papers**, 1844-1936, undated (boxes 2-3, oversize folders 4-5)
-
- 1845 **Manuscript Volumes**, 1819-1942, undated (boxes 3-5, oversize volumes 1-4)
- Subseries 1. Minutes of Lodge meetings and By-Laws**, 1844-1929 (boxes 3-4, oversize volumes 1-2)
- Subseries 2. Account and Cash books**, 1819-1942 (boxes 4-5)
- Subseries 3. Membership books**, 1844-1922, undated (box 5, oversize volumes 3-4)
-
- 1845 **Printed Items and Writings**, ca. 1790-1955, undated (boxes 6-7)
- Subseries 1. St. James Lodge**, 1860-1955, undated (box 6)
- Subseries 2. Masonic Lodges**, 1819-1945, undated (boxes 6-7)
- Subseries 3. Speeches, poetry, historical notes, and miscellaneous items**, ca.1790-1944, undated (box 7)

Group 2. Pike, Overton, and Adams Papers, 1810-1934, undated (boxes 7-8 , oversize folders 1 and 6)

- 1845 **Papers of George A. Pike**, 1859-1863 (box 7)
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- 1845 **Papers of Captain Alfred A. Overton**, 1810-1847, undated (box 7-8; oversize folder 6)
-
- 1845 **Papers of Amos Adams**, 1849-1934, undated (box 8, oversize folder 1)

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Groups, Series, and Subseries Descriptions

Group 1. Freemasons. Baton Rouge, La. St. James Lodge No. 47, F. & A.M.

1845 **Correspondence**, 1844-1966, undated

Subseries 1. Correspondence with the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, 1844-1936, undated

Correspondence from the Grand Lodge consists chiefly of printed circulars (1850-1925) reporting communications from its own and other lodges as well as its decisions and decrees on subjects such as Masonic rites or points of order and copies of special meetings and addresses. Personal correspondence between St. James and the Grand Lodge covers acknowledgements of receipt of dues and annual reports, the granting of dispensations and answers to questions of procedures in masonry. The latter includes matters of the physical qualifications for membership (January 18, 1956), the installation of George Pike as Grand Senior Warden (March 15, 1865) and the upkeep of lodges during the Civil War (1863). Also of note is the correspondence during the yellow fever outbreak of 1878.

Subseries 2. Correspondence with other Lodges, 1845-1947, undated

St. James Lodge corresponded with lodges from the States of Louisiana, New York, North and South Carolina, Illinois, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, Virginia, New Jersey, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, Georgia, Maryland, Kansas, and Oklahoma, and from Canada, Ecuador, and Mexico. The most frequent correspondents are the Louisiana Lodges of St. Albans No. 28, Olive No. 52, Plains No. 135, and Milford No. 117. Topics covered are invitations extended to St. James to attend Masonic celebrations and replies to similar invitations from St. James; requests and thanks concerning favors extended to members of other lodges such as the conferral of degrees or the organization of funerals; queries of the committees appointed to investigate the characters of former St. James members seeking affiliation with their lodges. There are also circulars concerning lodge business or requests for financial aid. Of note is the correspondence (1872) concerning jewels taken from a lodge by troops during the Civil War and eventually passed onto St. James by the Grand Lodge of Iowa for return to their rightful owners and correspondence beginning December 23, 1851 concerning the formation of a lodge at Franklinton and at Livingston (undated).

Subseries 3. Correspondence with the Louisiana Relief Lodge, No. 1, New Orleans, 1853-1933.

Included are circulars, notes of thanks for donations, and queries concerning charitable cases.

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Subseries 4. Correspondence with District Deputy Grand Masters, 1875-1891.

Letters concern visitations, instruction, and dispensations granted to St. James.

Subseries 5. General Correspondence, 1844-1966, undated

This includes requests for assistance from masons and their families, correspondence between the lodge and individual members, correspondence between the lodge and businesses and societies that made use its rooms. General correspondence relates to miscellaneous business such as the purchase of an organ for the lodge (1864).

1845 **Financial Papers**, 1841-1957, undated

The bulk of the material includes receipts and vouchers of St. James' expenditures, payments received, and taxes, arranged by date or by given groups. Periodical and yearly reports of the secretary and treasurer and the reports of committees appointed to examine the accounts of these officers are indicated—full documents are contained in Series II, Administrative Files. Also included are lists of subscriptions to particular events or causes, loans agreements and the dues owed by members. Of note is the receipt for Captain Overton's board (April 9, 1847), subscription list for a new Masonic building (1850) and comments of a financial review (1879) relating to the yellow fever outbreak.

1845 **Administrative Papers**, 1844-1936, undated

Summary: Minutes of lodge meetings, committee reports, trials, membership files.²

The material includes rough minutes of stated and special lodge meetings, reports of committees on subjects such as membership, disputes between members, building plans, financial reports of secretary, treasurer, and committees examining their records, and letters submitted to committees. Also included are reports of the representative of St. James present at other lodge meetings, such as those of the Grand Lodge. Of note are the reports of 1846-1847 on the establishment of a Masonic school and those of 1850 concerning the purchase of grounds for a new Lodge building, reports of 1870 concerning the lodge jewels left with St. James, and a copy of the Grand Master's visit (undated).

²See also Freemasons. Baton Rouge, La. St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M., *Roster*, (Baton Rouge, 1950).

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Committee reports and correspondence (1844-1858) discuss the formation of a Masonic temple (1860); Lefever (1866); James C. Strafford (1871); W.H. Stroube (1888-1889).

Material on lodge membership covers petitions for membership and affiliation (if petitioner is already a mason) and for progression in degrees or for life membership, applications to demit from St. James and recommendations from other lodges (some of these are to be found in the demits from these lodges). Demits from other lodges submitted by petitioners filed separately at end of series. Of note is the petition of James Harrison Dakin, dated January 5, 1848.

Miscellaneous papers include membership and officer rosters, visitors' book (1849-1865), inventories, building plans, insurance certificates, and leases and returns of Washington R.A.C. No. 5 to the Grand Lodge (undated).

1845 **Manuscript Volumes, 1819-1942, undated**

Summary: Minutes, cash books, membership books, by-laws, history of lodge, funeral records.

Subseries 1. Minutes of Lodge Meetings and By-laws, 1844-1929.

13 volumes containing minutes and rough minutes of stated and special meetings of the lodge. There are two manuscript copies of the account of St James' beginnings, including the minutes of the first meetings. Also included are the lodge's by-laws (1855-1878).

Subseries 2. Account and Cash Books, 1819-1942.

16 volumes consist of secretary's cash books, secretary's and treasurer's accounts of Lodge. A complete set of nine cash books (1901-1942). The funeral records include accounts of funeral expenses and funeral notices. Also included is the poor box record and accounts of Washington Lodge No. 17 (1819-1821).

Subseries 3. Membership books, 1844-1922, undated

10 volumes list members' details and contain their accounts with the lodge for dues, degree fees, etc. Some contain other lodge accounts. Volume dated 1869-1870 has an inventory of the lodge library, pp. 75 ff. Visitors' books date from 1859-1922; the volume dated 1859-1869 has rough minutes, 1855-1860.

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1845 **Printed Items and Writings**, ca. 1790-1955, undated

Subseries 1. St. James Lodge, 1860-1955, undated

Items related to St. James include funeral notices, obituaries, rosters, programs, and newspaper articles of events such as centenary celebrations of St. James, 1947.

Subseries 2. Masonic Lodges, 1819-1945, undated

Items from other Masonic lodges include by-laws, orations, and obituaries.

Subseries 3. Speeches, poetry, historical notes, and miscellaneous items, ca.1790-1944, undated

Includes speeches and poetry relating to St. James and to masonry in general, and a draft of St. James' centennial history (1944). Miscellaneous items consist of advertisements, circulars, and newspaper clippings. Four issues of *The Masonic Review* (December 1849 — February 1851) are catalogued separately from this collection.

Group 2. Pike, Overton, and Adams Papers, 1810-1934, undated

I. Papers of George A. Pike, 1859-1863.

Summary: Civil War papers, 1859-1863; papers of the Louisiana Historical Society, 1859-1861.

The Civil War papers were apparently gathered by lodge member, George Pike, in his capacity as editor of the *Gazette* and *Comet* in Baton Rouge. There are copies of orders posted by the Provost Marshall and the U.S. Army and a pass for George Pike, dated June 25, 1862. Correspondence between the mayor of Baton Rouge and Commander Farragut debates the question of authority over the arsenal outside the city limits. Personal narratives consist of a report sent of the events taking place after the evacuation of Columbus and an article on the Battle of Baton Rouge, August 5, 1862.

Papers of the Louisiana Historical Society consist of printed and manuscript papers pertaining to the formation and early activities of the society, many of whose founding members were also members of St. James, notably Amos Adams and George Pike. Also included are the

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proceedings and correspondence concerning donations of artifacts to the society.³

1845

Papers of Captain Alfred A. Overton, 1810-1847, undated

Papers pertain to the Mexican-American War of 1847. Capt. Overton was in command of the Panola Boys Company in the Second Infantry Regiment of Mississippi. The company was stationed in New Orleans in January 1847. Material includes copies of military orders, volunteer lists, receipts for army expenses, and the resignation of Capt. Overton, May 15, 1847. Masonic material consists of a certificate of recommendation from Madison Lodge No. 27, Georgia (February 21, 1845), and a demit from Panola Lodge No. 66 (December 30, 1846). Personal correspondence, includes a letter to be delivered by Capt. Overton, notes of introduction (copies in English and Spanish), and documents pertaining to a private court case. Miscellanea include Spanish poetry, partly translated into English (undated).

1845

Papers of Amos Adams, 1849-1934, undated

Amos Adams, 1798-1859, joined St. James Lodge in 1844. He was Senior Warden in 1845, Master in 1846 and 1857, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Master of Louisiana Lodges in 1857 and 1858. His papers contain certificates for appointment as District Deputy Grand Master February 27, 1852, March 11, 1853 and March 13, 1854; a certificate to appoint Adams special Deputy and proxy to dedicate Tunica Lodge No. 63, September 17, 1852; a copy of Adams' issue of certificate of proxy to attend Woodville Lodge No. 23, February 22, 1855; a certificate to establish Lebanon Chapter, February 1, 1855; a certificate of good standing (1859) and certificates of degrees conferred on Adams. Correspondence consists of queries concerning proceedings and dispensations, replies to Adams' own queries. Includes correspondence to Grand Secretary James Risk and Grand Master G.M. Perkins (1858). Correspondence includes a letter (February 20, 1854) on admitting lodges under the authority of the new Grand Lodge; a letter on disabilities and eligibility for masonry (February 9, 1859) and a letter on the admittance of the last independent lodge into the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana (June 8, 1859). Personal correspondence includes information on President John Adams (September 2, 1855). There is also a copy of a complaint made against actions of Adams (undated). Correspondence also documents Adams' connections with the order of Knights Templar, including one (February 26, 1859) conferring the order of knighthood. Also present is a copy of correspondence concerning research on Adams (1934).

³Duplicate and concurrent materials may be found in Gayarre (Charles E.A.) Papers, Mss. 1282.

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Contents of Microfilm

A portion of these records were microfilmed in 2003. A partial re-housing of the records in 2004 led to the altering of the records' original box and folder numbers. See below for the former locations and new locations of the microfilmed materials.

Reel	Box/Volume
1845	Minutes and By-Laws Records Formerly in Box 6 Folder 1 Now in Box 3 Folder 38 Minutes and By-Laws Records Formerly in Box 6 Folders 5-7 Now in Box 3 Folders 42-44 Minutes and By-Laws Records Formerly in Box 6 Folder 9 Now in Box 4 Folder 2
2	Minutes and By-Laws Volumes 1-2
1845	Membership Books Volumes 3-4

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Index Terms

Adams, Amos, 1798-1859.	1. I; 2. I, II
Dakin, James H.	1. III
Farragut, David Glasgow, 1801-1870.	1. II; 2. I
Overton, Alfred A.	1. II; 2. II
Freemasons—St. Albans Lodge No. 28 (Jackson, La.).	1. I.2, III
Freemasons—Olive Lodge No. 52 (Clinton, La.).	1. I.2, III
Freemasons—Plains Lodge No. 135 (Baton Rouge, La.).	1. I.2, III
Freemasons. Grand Lodge of Louisiana.	1. I, II, III
Baton Rouge (La.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives.	2. I
Louisiana—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	2. I
Louisiana—History—Societies, etc.	2. I
Louisiana Historical Society.	2. I
Tennessee—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Personal narratives.	2. I
United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865.	2. I
Mexican War, 1846-1848.	2. II

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Container List

<u>Stack location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents</u>
<u>Group 1. Freemasons. Baton Rouge, La. St. James Lodge No. 47 F. & A.M.</u>			
<u>Series I. Correspondence</u>			
33:29	1	1-40	Subseries 1: Grand Lodge of Louisiana: circulars, receipts, points of order (1844-1936, undated).
OS:F		1	Grand Lodge of Louisiana (1851-1913).
33:29	1	41-59	Subseries 2: Masonic Lodges: lodge business, invitations, circulars (1845-1947, undated).
33:29	1	60-61	Subseries 3: Louisiana Relief Lodge No. 1: receipts, charity requests, queries concerning cases (1853-1933).
33:29	1	62	Subseries 4: District Deputy Grand Masters: visitations, instruction, dispensations (1875-1891).
33:29	1	63-82	Subseries 5: General correspondence: lodge members, requests for assistance, business with occupants of St. James Lodge rooms (1844-1966, undated).
<u>Series II. Financial Papers</u>			
33:29	2	1-44	St. James Lodge: receipts, subscriptions and financial reports, arranged by date and existing grouping (1841-1957, undated).
OS:F		2	Receipts, accounts (1844-1870).
OS:F		3	Receipts, accounts (1871-1882).
<u>Series III. Administrative Papers</u>			
33:29	2	45-70	Minutes, membership files, trials (1844-1860, undated).

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<u>Stack location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders per box</u>	<u>Contents</u>
33: 31	3	1-37	Minutes, membership files, trials, demits from lodges, by-laws of St. James, miscellaneous (1861-1936, undated).
OS:F		4	Committee reports, returns to Grand Lodge (1844-1857).
OS:F		5	Miscellaneous: insurance documents, building plans, rosters, membership certificates, administrative papers of Washington R.A.C. No. 5 (1854-1910, undated).

Series IV. Manuscript Volumes

33:31	3	38-44	Subseries 1: Minutes and By-Laws: minutes (1857-1914).
33:31	4	1-5	Minutes (1918-1929), accounts of St. James' beginnings (1844), By-Laws of St. James (1855-1878).
33:34	Volumes 1-2		Minutes (1850-1898).
33:31	4	6-13	Subseries 2: Account and Cash Books: secretary's and treasurer's accounts (1844-1882), secretary's cash books (1901-1921).
33:32	5	1-8	Secretary's cash books (1920-1941), funeral record, poor box and accounts of Washington Lodge No. 17 (1819-1821).
33:32	5	9-16	Subseries 3: Membership books (1850-1870, undated), visitors' books (1859-1922).
33:34	Volumes 3-4		Membership books (1844-1918).

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<u>Stack location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders per box</u>	<u>Contents</u>
<u>Series V. Printed Items and Writings</u>			
33:32	6	1-2	Subseries 1: St. James' lodge: rosters, programs, funeral notices, and newspaper clippings (1860-1955, undated).
33:32	6	3-5	Subseries 2: Other Masonic lodges: by-laws, orations, funeral notices, and obituaries (1819-1903, undated).
33:32	7	1	Other Masonic lodges: by-laws, orations, funeral notices, and obituaries (1908-1945, undated).
33:32	7	2-5	Subseries 3: Speeches and poetry, historical notes, miscellaneous advertisements, circulars and newspaper clippings (ca.1790-1944, undated).

Group 2. Pike, Overton, and Adams Papers

Series I. Papers of George A. Pike

33:32	7	6-8	Civil War papers: orders and reports relating to Baton Rouge and evacuation of Columbus (1862-1863). Papers of the Louisiana Historical Society on its founding and early activities (1859-1861).
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Series II. Papers of Captain Alfred A. Overton

33:32	7	7-10	Papers relating to the Mexican-American War, personal correspondence and miscellanea (1810-1847, undated).
33:32	8	1	Papers relating to the Mexican-American War and personal correspondence (1847).
OS:F		6	Papers of Captain Alfred A. Overton (1845-1847).

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<u>Stack location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders per box</u>	<u>Contents</u>
<u>Series III. Papers of Amos Adams</u>			
33:32	8	2-5	Official and personal correspondence, certificates, letters relating to research on Adams (1849-1934, undated).
33:30	Folder 1		Papers of Amos Adams, certificates of good standing (1849-1859).

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Guide to Collection Microfilm

Reel 1	Box 3, folders 38, 42-44(ca. 1790-1966, undated) Box 4, folder 2
Reel 2	Vol. 1-2 Minutes (1850-1898)
Reel 3	Vol. 3-4 Membership Books (1844-1918)
Reel 4	Misc. shots

Omissions

Filmed only membership lists and meeting minutes.