

Collection #
M 0478
BV 2308–2329a
CT 0788–0795

INDIANAPOLIS WOMAN'S CLUB RECORDS, 1875–2007

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 24 manuscript boxes, 23 bound volumes, 8 audiotapes, 3 boxes of visual material, 39 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1875–2007

PROVENANCE: Indianapolis Woman's Club, Indianapolis, IN, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2001; Mrs. Joseph Thompson, Carmel, IN, 3 Feb. 1998, Elizabeth Creveling, Indianapolis, IN, 3 Mar. 1998; 8 Oct. 1999; 28 Feb. 2000; Nancy B. Adams, Indianapolis, IN, 29 June 2000, 25 June 2001; Alice B. Roth, July 18, 2002; Bonita Carter, July 9, 2002; IWC, February 20, 2003.;IWC,June,6 2003; IWC, January 2005:February 2008/

RESTRICTIONS: None.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None.

RELATED HOLDINGS: Indianapolis Propylaeum Records (M 0699); Merrill-Graydon Family Papers (M 0609); Varney-Porter Family Papers (M 0639); Caroline Dunn Papers (M 0667); Margaret Booth Jameson Papers (SC 1910).

ACCESSION NUMBER: Accession numbers include: 1987.0367, 1987.0427, 1990.0132, 1991.0021, 1991.0266, 1991.0649, 1992.0488, 1993.0465, 1996.0076, 1997.0515, 1997.0525, 1997.0629, 1998.0227, 1998.0313; 1999.0592; 2000.0321; 2000.0368; 2000.0792; 2001.0824; 2001.0882; 2001.0894; 2002.0623; 2002.0653; 2003.0207; 2003.0425; 2005.0131; 2007.0032; 2008.0202.

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Woman's Club is the oldest club of its type in Indiana. It was founded 18 February 1875 in the home of Martha Nicholson McKay at 156 Ash Street (which is now Carrollton Avenue). The founding members are generally thought to be Eliza T. Clarke, Katherine L. Dorsey, Laura Giddings Julian, Belle Thorpe Manlove, H. Kate Martin, Martha Nicholson McKay, Henrietta Athon Morrison, Elizabeth Nicholson, Jane F. Nicholson, Sarah R. Perrine, Nancy G. Roberts, and May Wright Sewall. There has been some discussion as to which of these founders attended that first meeting, as the minutes do not list all those present. The constitution of the club was finalized 25 February of the same year.

The purpose of the club, as set forth in the constitution, is to "form an organized center for the mental and social culture of its members and for the improvement of domestic life. To this end the association encourages a liberal interchange of thought by papers and discussion upon all subjects pertaining to its objects." The club's members prepare and present papers on topics of their choosing. Earlier in the club's history an Executive Committee assigned topics to them. By an unwritten but well-known rule of the club no discussions of religious or political topics would be permitted, as the founding members represented a great variety of religious and political opinions. To avoid dissension, this rule is still in force.

The club selects its members from candidates proposed by other members. A candidate's name goes through two committees and only if it is passed by both is the candidate even notified that she was being considered for membership. This rigorous selection procedure and the mood of the club keep the membership small; only about one hundred individuals are active members at any one time. In addition to the regular members, there are corresponding members around the country who do not count as active members, and privileged members who are excused from the literary duties required of the rest of the membership.

Many of the founding members, as well as those who followed them, participated in public causes. Club members' activities included the charitable work of the Society of Friends and participation in the woman's suffrage movement. Some of the club's founders had been members of the unsuccessful Indianapolis Woman's Suffrage League, which folded in 1873. Some of the club members held a reception for Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, which most of the organization attended. Although the club as an organization did not directly concern itself with such issues, many of its members did. An anecdote told about Martha Nicholson McKay expresses the founders' opinions very well. Mrs. McKay described to a rabbi the club, which had just been formed. The rabbi shook his head, saying, "Sarah's place is in her tent." Mrs. McKay retorted, "Oh yes, we know. We just want her to have a window in it."

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Indianapolis Woman's Club records cover the years 1875 through 2007 and include meeting minutes, officers' reports, printed yearbooks, programs, announcements, and anniversary materials. The collection is divided into 13 series: Constitution and Minutes; Officers, Membership and Committee Records; Other Committees; Anniversary Materials, Club Activities, Propylaeum; Memorials; Programs and Yearbooks; Registers; Papers; Photographs; Printed Material; Oral History Tapes and Transcripts; and Other Clubs and Affiliations.

Series 1–4 include typescripts and original copies of meeting and committee minutes and officers reports. The minutes contain announcements made to the main body of club members, records of the motions of various committees and reports of the committees when they were made, usually annually. The minutes also contain lists and brief summaries of papers presented to the club at its meetings, numbers of attendees, and the names of notable guests. The records are complete up to 2007. The club met the first and third Fridays of each month from October to June, so there are no records for the months when the club did not meet. The minutes are handwritten in bound volumes until 1941.

Officers and committee reports include papers of the president, vice president, recording and corresponding secretaries, Room Committee, Membership Committee, Executive Committee, and various special committees. Reports of officers and committees were generally made annually and detail the activities of that officer or committee for the year. For example, the reports of the Room Committee contain lists of the decorations purchased for various club functions and their costs; inventories of the club's china, silver, tables and table linen, and other such items; and the procedures followed in setting up for and cleaning up after club functions. These reports contain several gaps, the longest being a period from about 1903 to about 1914 from which all reports are missing. The records of the treasurer and the corresponding and recording secretaries contain approximately the same gaps. Of particular note is the Recording Secretary's Membership Book, 1884–2001, in Series 2, containing the signatures of new members from 1884 to the present. By special arrangement, the membership book is still used by the club once a year to record the signatures of new members.

Series 5 consists of material relating to the celebration of the club's anniversaries. It includes invitations, announcements, and other general information about the club's activities. There are newspaper articles covering the club's celebrations. The invitations and announcements are for club functions and the private parties of club members, and serve as excellent examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century social customs.

Photographs relating to anniversaries and other celebrations include group portraits, images of table settings and decorations, and scenes from special events.

Series 6 contains memorials for a number of club members. The memorials were written shortly after the members' deaths and were read before the body of the club. These

memorials constitute an excellent source of biographical information on many of Indianapolis' most prominent women.

Series 7 includes yearbooks and programs. The yearbooks cover the club season from October to June. These are printed items, some of which include annotations in ink and pencil. Most annotations appear to be corrections to the programs, and may have been written in only one copy of the yearbook. The programs give lists of papers presented at the clubs meetings.

Series 8 contains registers of officers of the club for the periods 1875–1909 and 1924–28.

Series 9 consists of original copies and photocopies of papers presented by club members between 1879 and 2001. The topics are varied. They include historical sketches, personal narratives, and social commentary.

Series 10 includes photographs. There is a portrait of a woman and child (possibly Grace Julian Clarke and her mother) and scenes from the last club meeting at the Propylaeum in 1923.

Series 11 contains printed material including newspaper clippings dating from 1921–1977.

Series 12 contains oral history tapes and transcripts. These include interviews conducted by club members in 1992.

Series 13 consists of notices, correspondence, and printed material from other clubs and organizations.

Artifacts in various series include ribbons, two place cards, three bookmarks, a World War I service flag, and a wooden ballot box. Also included are three pieces of Belleck china (two cups and one plate) and four teaspoons.

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Memorials C–D: Mary Josephine Cain, 1956; Nora Taggart Chambers, n.d.; Julia Coleman (Mrs. Christopher Coleman), 1953; Riah Cox (Mrs. Harvey Cox), n.d.; Elizabeth Steele Creveling, 2001; Madeline Cuning, 2003; Margaret Speed Daniels (Mrs. Wylie Daniels), n.d.; Virginia Johnston Daniels (Mrs. Edward Daniels), 1941; Mary Davis Deal (Mrs. Samuel Deal), 1941; Frances Gladling Deau, 1975; Mary Jewell Fargo Duck, 2005; Jennie Bard Dugdale, 1941; Caroline Dunn, 1994

Memorials E–F: Joann Nash Eakin, n.d.; Laura Bowman Elder (Mrs. William L. Elder), c.1942; Mrs. Charles P. Emerson, 1943; Edna Mallott Evans, n.d.; Mary Parrot Failey, 1970; Lucia Ray Ferguson (Mrs. George Archer Ferguson), 1963; Vesle Fenstermaker, 1995; Elizabeth MacKenzie Fletcher (Mrs. Horace Hines Fletcher), 1941; Emily Fletcher, 1927; Louise Bower Foltz, 1940; Mary Layman Forsyth, 1945; Marion Barnard Fotheringham, 1958; Anne Frazer, 1958

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Memorials R–S: Frances Morrison Rabb, 1971; Anne Butler Recker (Mrs. Carlos Recker), n.d.; Helen Hare Richey, 1956; Carrie Francis Weed Robertson (Mrs. Alexander Milton Robertson), 1941; Virginia Spencer Robertson, 1942; Edith Donnelly Rogers, 1977; Jane Stafford Rogers (Mrs. A.J. "Jack" Rogers), 1944; Frances MacIntire Ross, n.d.; Clementine Tucker Ruddell, 1966; Frances May Morrison Ruddell (Mrs. Warren Tucker Ruddell), 2000; Marie Brun Ruddell (Mrs. James H. Ruddell), n.d. Alice Barlow Runnels, 1948; Genevieve Scoville, 1972; May Wright Sewall (Mrs. Theodore Lovett Sewall), 1942; Emma Shadinger (Mrs. Dr. Guy Howard Shadinger), n.d.; Mary Sherk, n.d.; May Louise Shipp, 1960; Margret Mendeville Shipp, 1961; Helen Brooksmith Sinclair, 1990; Ethel Haywood Bennett Sinclair (Mrs. Robert S. Sinclair), n.d.; Anna Hester Spann, 1958; Gettie McKinsey Spears (Mrs. Alexander Osborne Spears), 1953; Camilla Hutton Stanley, n.d.; Helen McKay Steele (Mrs. Brandt T. Steele), 1947; Allegra Stewart, 1994; Blanche Stillson, 1995; Mary Elizabeth Turner Streeter, 1997; Frances Doane Streightoff (Mrs. Frank Hatch Streightoff), n.d.

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Memorials W: Jeanette Harvey Wainwright, 1949; Franc Hale Wales (Mrs. Dr. Ernest DeWolfe Wales), 1962; Josephine Parrot Wallace, n.d.; Matilda Brink Walk (Mrs. Carl F. Walk), n.d.; Alice Bidwell Wesenberg (Mrs. Dr. Thor Wesenberg), n.d.; Hilda K. West, 1984; Sarah Rogers Whitcomb (Mrs. Larz Whitcomb), 1966; Margret Mallott White (Mrs. Paul H. White), 1958; Margaret Jameson Wildhack, 1999; Frances Winslow, n.d.

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Papers, B: Sharon T. Barnett, “Education Early in the 21st Century,” 2000, “A Sleeping Giant Wakes,” 2004. Sarah Cook Barney, “What Time Is It?”, 1998, “Show Me the Red, But Paint It Green,” 2004, “The boy Lacks Cleverness, Knowledge and Any Capacity for Settled Work,” 2006; Martha Berman, “Drinking the Stars,” 1988; “Pink Cactus,” 2001, “Millennial Musings,” 2000; Nancy Blackwell, “Cotton Tales,” 1994. Jeanette Wales Blanton, “Robert Morris,” n.d. Mary Voyles Blasingham, “State of the Art,” 2002. Natalie Boehm, “How Do You Respond When They Inquire: Do You Work?” n.d.; “The Stones of Time,” n.d. Delane Bovenizer, “Macy’s Day Parade,” n.d. “The Great Marble Abduction,” 2001

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Papers, L Jean Rogers Lowy “Does the Lobster Really Care?” 1963, “In the Small Corners of Time,” 1965, “With Lemon, Thank You,” 1969, “Until,” 1971, “Celery Stalks in the Mist,” 1975, “Far From the Peaceful Shore,” 1977, “A Time to Keep,” 1980, “A Loveliness in my Sight,” 1980

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Papers, M: Louise Morgan, “Avuncular Reminiscences,” 1965. Hetty A. Morrison, “My Summer in the Kitchen,” 1878. Ann Klock Moss, “Prerequisites,” 1994, “Music in the Air,” 2004, “An Impression,” 2006. Shirley Maloney Mueller, “Psychology and Investing,” 2002, “Emotion and Money,” 2005, “Pancreatic Cancer,” 2007.

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Papers, T: Isabelle L. Troyer, "Not Without Honor," 1961; "Kilroy was Here," 1973; "After Xmas—A Period Piece," n.d.; "Summer in the Kitchen," n.d.; "Novels Anonymous," 1956, "Josephus," 1959, "On Time," 1963, "Slipper and Fen," 1968. Box 20, Folder 3

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Papers, Z: Barbara Evans Zimmer, "Looking for Mr. Becker," 1982, "And What Do You Do Mr. Blackwood?" 1985, "Out of Synch," 1988, "Osso Buco," (a conversation with Alice Greene McKinney) 1990, "Out of Hafnia," 1992, "Selamat Whatever," 1996, "Who Was She Anyway?" (a conversation with Dorane Fredland) 1999.

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