



The Urbana Free Library

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Women's Literary Club Records

Collection 151

Champaign County Historical Archives

Finding Aid Compiled by: Bradley Kane

Creator/Corporate name: Women's Literary Club Records

Inclusive Dates: 1918-2001

Physical Description: 1 Box, 1.1 linear feet

Provenance:

Women's Literary Club Records were donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives.

Access:

The records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Historical Note:

The Women's Literary Club was founded on November 3rd, 1909, when fourteen women from the Champaign area gathered at the house of Lora Dexter (the Club's first President) with the stated goal of forming a literary society. It was agreed that the Club would meet once per month with a different member acting as hostess each time, and a 5 cent penalty would be imposed for non-attendance. This last requirement was soon dropped due to lack of need. By years end the Club had fifty active members, and this was declared to be the maximum number of active members the club would have at any one time.

Each meeting of the Literary Club was referred to as a program, and the chief activity of each of these programs was members discussing their thoughts on the books (usually two or three of them) that the club members had been assigned to read at the conclusion of the last program. While the subject of these books were initially chosen on a month to month basis by the early 1920s all the programs of a given year would focus on a single theme. This theme could be an important issue of the day, such as the Women's rights movement, or the history and culture of an individual nation, such as Japan or Russia. Club members would donate money to the Urbana Free Library to enable them to purchase the required reading material for these different programs and afterwards these books would become part of the library's permanent collection. Other activities that occurred during programs were member readings of poems and essays they composed themselves, singing of songs chosen by the hostess of that month, and brief lectures given by guest speakers, usually related to the theme of the program.

The Women's Literary Club joined both the State and District Federation of Women's Clubs in 1910 but voted to leave the State Federation in 1920 and the District Federation in 1933 because both these organizations were explicitly focused on service projects, which was deemed to be outside the purview of the Literary Club. Nevertheless, the Club was active in various charity works during its existence, such



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as donating food and clothing to school children during the Great Depression as well as donating to international aid organizations such as the Armenian Relief Fund during World War I.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains record books, treasurer's books, membership books, annual calendars, and file folders.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged based on use and format on the series and folder level. The series are arranged and ordered based on the context and importance to the organization. At the item level, the records are organized chronologically.

Name Terms:

Women's Literary Club

Subject Terms:

Book clubs
Charitable organizations

Container list:

Box 1

Series 1: Organizational Records

Folder 1: Constitution and By-laws

Folder 2: "Club history," by Lora Dexter, 1934, with note added in May 1940.

Folder 3: "Our club presidents," by May E. Armstrong, November 8, 1930 and updated in 1934

Folder 4: "Highlights from our club programs, 1909-1947," by Mildred Tuthill

Folder 5: "Women's Literary Club, Memory Day Paper," by Mrs. Little, 1956.

Folder 6: "Our Club History," by Mrs. Elmer Roberts for the 50th anniversary, presented October 2, 1959.

Folder 7: "I remember," by Margaret Puterbaugh, 1959

Folder 8: "A golden anniversary in the literary club," by Mrs. Roger F. Little, November 1, 1963.

Folder 9: "Traditional Ladies" by Julia B. Little, November 17, 1972.

Folder 10: "Local Ladies-then and now," by Anne L. Locklin. 1972.

Series 2: Operating Records

Membership book, 1918-1929

Record book 1, September 1921-April 1930

Record book 2, October 1930- April 1940

Record book 3, October 1940-April 1950

Record book 4, October 1950-March 1962

Record book 5, April 1962-April 1971

Record book 6, April 1971-April 1990

Record book 7, September 1990-March 2000



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Treasurer book 1, 1967/68-1982/83

Treasurer book 2, 1983/85-1999/2000

Series 3: Annual Calendars and Play Booklets

Folder 11: Annual Calendars 1-16, 1909-1925

Folder 12: Annual Calendars 17-30, 1925-1940

Folder 13: Annual Calendars 31-45, 1940-1955

Folder 14: Annual Calendars 46-60, 1955-1970

Folder 15: Annual Calendars 60-75, 1970-1985

Folder 16: Annual Calendars 82, 84-90, 1991-2000

Folder 17: Play Booklets, 1936-1942

Series 4: Miscellaneous

Folder 18: "Woman's Library Club celebrates 90 years." News-Gazette clipping, November 16, 1999.

Folder 19: Miscellaneous