Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.) Records

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Washington, D.C.
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Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm77030296

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms014039

Prepared by Michael McEldery and David Mathisen
Revised by Pang H. Xiong

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2014
Revised 2016 August

Collection Summary

Title: Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D. C.) Records
Span Dates: 1873-1991
ID No.: MSS30296
Creator: Literary Society of Washington, D. C.
Extent: 2,150 items
Extent: 19 containers
Extent: 7.4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm77030296
Summary: Correspondence, minutes of meetings, papers presented at society meetings, poems, financial records, clippings, and printed matter relating to literary and intellectual affairs as well as to the organization and administration of the society.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Atwood, Albert W. (Albert William), 1879-1975.
Bell, Alexander Graham, 1847-1922.
Berryman, Clifford Kennedy, 1869-1949.
Bowerman, George Franklin, 1868-1960.
Chapin, Katherine Garrison, 1890-1977.
Dennett, Tyler, 1883-1949.
Gallaudet, Edward Miner, 1837-1917.
Goff, Frederick Richmond, 1916-1982.
Grosvenor, Gilbert Hovey, 1875-1966.
Hill, David Jayne, 1850-1932.
Landon, Margaret, 1903-1993.
Leland, Waldo Gifford, 1879-1966.
McBlair, Julia Ten Eyck.
Mearns, David C. (David Chambers), 1899-1981.
Merriam, John C. (John Campbell), 1869-1945.
Moore, Charles, 1855-1942.
Nicolay, Helen, 1866-1954.
Noyes, Theodore W. (Theodore Williams), 1858-1946.
O'Brien, Robert Lincoln, 1865-1955.
Safford, William Edwin, 1859-1926.
Spofford, Ainsworth Rand, 1825-1908.
Spofford, Florence P. (Florence Partridge), 1862-
White, Henry, 1850-1927.
Woodward, Robert Simpson, 1849-1924.
Yard, Robert Sterling, 1861-1945.

Organizations
Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.)

Subjects
Literature--Societies, etc.
Literature.

Places
Washington (D.C.)--Intellectual life.
Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Provenance

The records of the Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.) were given to the Library of Congress by the society from 1947 to 1991.

Processing History

The records of the Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.) were arranged and described in 1977, 1987, and 2016. The finding aid was revised in 2013 and 2016.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Literary Society of Washington, D. C. is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The records of the Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.) are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Literary Society of Washington (Washington, D.C.) Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

Founded in 1874 to promote intellectual and literary discussions, the Literary Society of Washington, D.C., has numbered Washington's cultural and civic leaders among its members. The society's records span the years 1873-1991 and consist of correspondence, minutes of meetings, papers read by members at regular literary meetings, and miscellaneous material. Included are photocopies and typewritten transcripts. The collection is organized into seven series: Minutes of Meetings , Correspondence , Speeches and Writings File , Miscellany , Addition I , Addition II, and Addition III .

The Speeches and Writings File mainly contains papers presented at society meetings. Though the bulk of the papers, or essays, are dated from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, a representative sample remains from the earlier years of the society. Undated essays by Edward Miner Gallaudet, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, and others are included in the author listing, while writings by society members not identified as papers delivered at scheduled literary meetings are contained in the same series under the headings "Poems" and "Writings."

Research material pertinent to a historical analysis of the society is contained in the Minutes of Meetings series. Minutes were kept both for regular literary meetings and executive committee meetings and contain abstracts of papers read at the meetings, discussions entertained in response to the essays, and standard business and procedural matters affecting the operations and development of the society.

The Correspondence supplements the minutes in documenting the administration of the society. The material in this series is largely of a routine nature and is concerned with topics such as the sponsoring of new members, resignations and appointments of society members, cancellation notices of attendance, and speaker arrangements. Prominent members of the society represented in this series include Albert W. Atwood, Alexander Graham Bell, Clifford Kennedy Berryman, George Franklin Bowerman, Katherine Garrison Chapin, Tyler Dennett, Edward Miner Gallaudet, Frederick Richmond Goff, Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor, David Jayne Hill, Margaret Landon, Waldo Gifford Leland, Julia Ten Eyck McBlair, David C. Mearns, John C. Merriam, Charles Moore, Helen Nicolay, Theodore W. Noyes, Robert Lincoln O'Brien, William Edwin Safford, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Florence P. Spofford, Henry White, Robert Simpson Woodward, and Robert Sterling Yard.

Addition I, Addition II, and Addition III consist almost entirely of papers read at the society, with Addition I also including a few minutes of meetings and memorials.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- Minutes of Meetings, 1875-1967
- Correspondence, 1873-1965
- Speeches and Writings File, 1881-1976
- Miscellany, 1873-1970
- Addition I, 1967-1981
- Addition II, 1981-1986
- Addition III, 1984-1991

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-4	**Minutes of Meetings, 1875-1967** Minutes of society meetings and executive committee meetings and reports and abstracts of papers read at society meetings. Arranged in two sets and chronologically therein.
BOX 4-6	**Correspondence, 1873-1965** Letters received and copies of letters sent and miscellaneous attachments. Arranged chronologically by year and alphabetically therein.
BOX 6-11	**Speeches and Writings File, 1881-1976** Handwritten and typewritten drafts, typescripts, handwritten copies, carbon copies, photocopies, printed copies, and notes of papers read by society members. Also contains miscellaneous and unidentified writings as well as eulogies to society members. Arranged alphabetically by name of author.
BOX 12-14	**Miscellany, 1873-1970** Memoranda, reports, listings of officers and members of the society, writings, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 15-16	**Addition I, 1967-1981** One volume of minutes of meetings, memorials on the death of members, and essays read at meetings of the society. Arranged by type of material and by author.
BOX 17	**Addition II, 1981-1986** Essays and one memorial read at meetings of the society. Arranged by author.
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BOX 1	Vol. 2, 1889-1905
BOX 1	Vol. 3, 1905-1916
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BOX 2	Vol. 5, 1922-1926
BOX 2	Set II
BOX 2	Jan. 1874-1882
BOX 2	Feb. 1882-May 1905
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BOX 3	Jan. 1935-Dec. 1956
	(5 folders)
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BOX 4-6	**Correspondence, 1873-1965**
	Letters received and copies of letters sent and miscellaneous attachments.
	Arranged chronologically by year and alphabetically therein.
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	Handwritten and typewritten drafts, typescripts, handwritten copies, carbon copies, photocopies, printed copies, and notes of papers read by society members. Also contains miscellaneous and unidentified writings as well as eulogies to society members.
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