



**Bethlehem Area Public Library
Local History Collections**

Records of the Current Events Club, 1897-2006

Creator:	Current Events Club (Bethlehem, Pa.)
Title:	Records of the Current Events Club, 1897-2006
Inclusive Dates:	1897-2006
Extent:	2.1 linear feet, 530 photographs, 141 slides
Abstract:	The Records of the Current Events Club of Bethlehem, Pa. represent the social consciousness and intellectual awareness of a women's club aiming to share knowledge on such topics as literature, art, science, religion, and politics. Consequently, the Club's records offer a profound insight into the political issues, social concerns, and reactions of a select group of women consisting of the wives of highly influential business men and academics living and working in Bethlehem, Pa.
Access to Materials:	The collection is open to researchers in the Bethlehem Room.
Copyright:	The Current Events Club of Bethlehem retains copyright for all materials.
Preferred Citation:	[Item], Records of the Current Events Club, 1897-2006. The Bethlehem Area Public Library Local History Collections.

Historical Note:

Founded at the turn of the century, the Current Events Club was the first women's club in Bethlehem, Pa. Reflecting the industrial and intellectual boom of the late nineteenth caused by the growing production of steel, the development of the railroads and the founding of Lehigh University, the Club represented the influence, wealth and intelligence of its highly select members. In part a response to the lack of a reliable newspaper, women from Fountain Hill, considered one of Pennsylvania's wealthiest neighborhoods at that time, gathered to discuss national and world news. Mrs. W. Benjamin Frazier, wife of a Lehigh professor and Mrs. J. Forsythe Meigs, wife of a Bethlehem Iron Works manager, are credited with initiating the weekly meetings in 1896. During those first meetings, the charter members (16 in total) met every Wednesday morning for two hours. The first half of the meeting was spent reading a calendar of news events while the latter half was devoted to a discussion led by a member on a topic in politics, history, literature, art science, or religion. Standards were quickly enforced to ensure that presentations were of high quality and engaged the other members. Each member was required to present papers and perfect attendance at meetings was encouraged. In addition to weekly (and sometimes bi-weekly) meetings, members would also engage in field trips (to local museums, historical sites) and annual luncheons (often lavishly celebrated at the home of a member).

The original members of the Current Events Club were influential in building and shaping the Bethlehem of today. Active in social welfare, members such as Mrs. Chandler (Margaret Sayre) and Mrs. Cleaver (Elizabeth Sayre) were instrumental in founding a hospital to serve the needs of the growing city population. Mrs. Cleaver was also involved in starting the city's public library.

Additionally, early members assisted in establishing social organizations like the Wiley House, the Sayre Child Center, and the Bethlehem Boys Club. Many of the early Club members were part of a group known as the Associated Charities later to become the Community Chest, precursor to the United Way.

In the 1970's, Current Events Club meetings were moved to the newly founded Kemerer Museum where they continue to be held today.

Collection Scope and Contents:

The Records of the Current Events Club of Bethlehem, Pa. represent the social consciousness and intellectual awareness of a women's club aiming to share knowledge on such topics as literature, art, science, religion, and politics. Responding to a need for critical information about national and global news and encouraging an appreciation for the humanities, the Current Events Club requires members to present and engage in studies covering the topics mentioned above. Consequently, the Club's records offer a profound insight into the political issues, social concerns, and reactions of a select group of women consisting of the wives of highly influential business men and academics living and working in Bethlehem, Pa.

Beginning with the first recorded minutes in 1897, the records offer a comprehensive look at the Club's activities, the lives of its members and a history of the Lehigh Valley from the point of view of this select group of women. Minutes of weekly meetings provide summaries of topics presented by Club members, ranging from religious views on divorce to the writings of Rudyard Kipling and, eventually, the development of genetics. Weekly presentations are as diverse as they are fascinating and reflect broad interests and concerns.

Several albums containing photographs and program calendars, visually tell the story of the Current Events Club by drawing attention to its members and providing a clear picture of Club meetings, field trips and social events.

The records of the Current Events Club are organized in two series: Administrative Files (1897-2002) and Albums (1952-1998). The **Administrative Files** series consists primarily of the meeting minutes of the Current Events Club between 1897 and 1996 (note that there are no minutes for 1911-1915, 1943-1945, 1964-1966). Meeting minutes contain detailed descriptions of papers given by members, attendance records and relevant notes. Also included are two folders of correspondence, two versions of researched histories of the Club and a few drafts of papers and skits. The **Albums** series consists of four albums containing photographs and programs for various Club meetings. The original four albums were made of harmful materials (acidic, metallic albums) and have been reconstituted in order to preserve the photographs contained within them. Photocopies of the original albums and careful labeling assist the researcher in visualizing the original albums. A subseries of slide negatives consist of photographs taken between 1961 and 1981 at the annual Spring luncheon. A detailed list is included.

Organization of the Records of the Current Events Club

- 1) Series: Administrative Files (1897-2006)
- 2) Series: Albums (1952-1998)
 - a. Subseries: Slide Negatives (1961-1981)

Index Terms

The Records of the Current Events Club are indexed under the following terms in the Bethlehem Area Public Library Catalog.

Names:

Current Events Club (Bethlehem, Pa.)

Subjects:

- [Bethlehem \(Pa.\) Social conditions.](#)
- [Bethlehem \(Pa.\) Social life and customs.](#)
- [Clubs United States.](#)
- [Women Pennsylvania.](#)
- [Women Social and moral questions](#)
- [Women Social conditions](#)
- [Women Social life United States 1890-1900.](#)
- [Women Societies and clubs](#)

Container List: An Inventory of the Records of the Current Events Club, 1897-2006

Container

Title

Box 1

Series: Administrative Files (1897-2006)

Consists primarily of the meeting minutes of the Current Events Club between 1897 and 1996 (note that there are no minutes for 1911-1915, 1943-1945, 1964-1966). Meeting minutes contain detailed descriptions of papers given by members, attendance records and relevant notes. Also included are two folders of correspondence, two versions of researched histories of the Club and a few drafts of papers and skits.

Correspondence

Box 1, Folder 1
Box 1, Folder 2

Official 1997, 2000-2001, n.d.
Personal (letters of resignation, thank you notes, greetings) 1992, 1994-1995, 2002, n.d.

History of the Club

Box 1, Folder 3
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 5
Box 1, Folder 6

Louise Thomas' notes and histories 1960-1962
Nancy Strohmeier's histories 1986-1987
By-laws statement 1998

Membership information

Minutes, Attendance, Notes

Box 1, Folder 7
Box 1, Folder 8
Box 1, Folder 9
Box 1, Folder 10
Box 1, Folder 11
Box 1, Folder 12
Box 1, Folder 13
Box 1, Folder 14
Box 1, Folder 15
Box 1, Folder 16
Box 1, Folder 17
Box 1, Folder 18
Box 1, Folder 19

January 1897-October 1899 minute book
November 1899-April 1903 minute book
October 1903-May 1907 minute book
November 1907-March 1910 minute book
January 1916-March 1924 minute book
1924-1925
1925-1926
1926-1927
1927-1928
1928-1929
1929-1930
1930-1931
1931-1932

Box 1, Folder 20	1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 21	1933-1934
Box 1, Folder 22	1934-1935
Box 1, Folder 23	1935-1936
Box 1, Folder 24	1936-1937
Box 1, Folder 25	1937-1938
Box 1, Folder 26	1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 27	1939-1940
Box 1, Folder 28	1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 29	1941-1942
Box 1, Folder 30	1946-1947
Box 1, Folder 31	1947-1948
Box 1, Folder 32	1948-1949
Box 1, Folder 33	1949-1950
Box 1, Folder 34	1950-1951, 1951-1952
Box 1, Folder 35	1952-1953
Box 1, Folder 36	1953-1954
Box 1, Folder 37	1954-1955
Box 1, Folder 38	1955-1956
Box 1, Folder 39	1956-1957
Box 1, Folder 40	1957-1958
Box 1, Folder 41	1958-1959
Box 1, Folder 42	1959-1960
Box 1, Folder 43	1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 44	1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 45	1962-1963
Box 1, Folder 46	1967-1968
Box 1, Folder 47	1968-1969
Box 1, Folder 48	1969-1970
Box 1, Folder 49	1970-1971
Box 1, Folder 50	1971-1972
Box 1, Folder 51	1972-1973
Box 1, Folder 52	1973-1974
Box 1, Folder 53	1974-1975
Box 1, Folder 54	1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 55	1976-1977
Box 1, Folder 56	1977-1978
Box 1, Folder 57	1978-1979
Box 1, Folder 58	1979-1980
Box 1, Folder 59	1980-1981
Box 1, Folder 60	1981-1982
Box 1, Folder 61	1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 62	1983-1984
Box 1, Folder 63	1984-1985
Box 1, Folder 64	1985-1986
Box 1, Folder 65	1986-1987
Box 1, Folder 66	1987-1988
Box 1, Folder 67	1988-1989
Box 1, Folder 68	1989-1990
Box 1, Folder 69	1990-1991
Box 1, Folder 70	1991-1992
Box 1, Folder 71	1992-1993
Box 1, Folder 72	1993-1994
Box 1, Folder 73	1994-1995
Box 1, Folder 74	1995-1996
Box 1, Folder 75	Programs and papers c. 1996 - 2006

Box 1, Folder 76A	Papers & Skits, n. d.
Box 1 Folder 76B	Papers & Skits, n.d.
Box 1 Folder 77	1997-1998
Box 1 Folder 78	1998-1999
Box 1 Folder 79	1999-2000
Box 1, Folder 80	2000-2001
Box 1, Folder 81	2001-2002
Box 1, Folder 82	2002-2003
Box 1, Folder 83	2003-2004
Box 1, Folder 84	2004-2005
Box 1, Folder 85	2005-2006

Box 2

Series: Albums (1952-1998) (529 photographs)

Consists of four albums containing photographs and programs for various Club meetings. The original four albums were made of harmful materials (acidic, metallic albums) and have been reconstituted in order to preserve the photographs contained within them. Photocopies of the original albums and careful labeling assist the researcher in visualizing the original albums.

Box 2, Folder 1	1952-1987 Album (112 photographs) pg. 1-4 (11 photos) (includes a transcription of labels on the back of photographs and on album pages)
Box 2, Folder 2	pg. 5-8 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 3	pg. 9-12 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 4	pg. 13-16 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 5	pg. 17-19 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 6	pg. 20-22 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 7	pg. 23-25 (7 photos)
Box 2, Folder 8	pg. 26-30 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 9	loose clippings
Box 2, Folder 10-12	loose photographs (unidentified, unlabeled, found in album) (30 photos)
Box 2, Folder 13	negatives (of loose photographs)
Box 2, Folder 14	1987 to Album (23 photographs) pg. 1-3 (9 photos) (includes a transcription of labels on album pages)
Box 2, Folder 15	pg. 4-5 (7 photos)
Box 2, Folder 16	pg. 6-7 (7 photos)
Box 2, Folder 17	1988-1993 Album (205 photographs) pg. 1-5 (11 photos) (includes a transcription of labels on album pages)
Box 2, Folder 18	pg. 6-10 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 19	pg. 11-15 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 20	pg. 16-20 (6 photos)
Box 2, Folder 21	pg. 21-23 (7 photos)
Box 2, Folder 22	pg. 24-30 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 23	pg. 31-35 (9 photos)
Box 2, Folder 24	pg. 36-40 (9 photos)
Box 2, Folder 25	pg. 41-46 (12 photos)

Box 2, Folder 26	pg. 47-50 (6 photos)
Box 2, Folder 27	pg. 51-55 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 28	pg. 56-60 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 29	pg. 61-65 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 30	pg. 66-69 (6 photos)
Box 2, Folder 31	pg. 70-75 (6 photos)
Box 2, Folder 32	pg. 76-80 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 33	pg. 80-85 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 34	pg. 86-90 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 35	pg. 91-93 (5 photos)
Box 2, Folder 36	pg. 94-100 (13 photos)
Box 2, Folder 37	pg. 101-105 (9 photos)
Box 2, Folder 38	pg. 106-113 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 39	Strohmeier's history of the Club

1993-1997 Album (190 photographs)

Box 2, Folder 40	loose sheets in front
Box 2, Folder 41	pg. 1-10 (12 photos) (includes a transcription of labels on album pages)
Box 2, Folder 42	pg. 11-20 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 43	pg. 21-25 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 44	pg. 26-30 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 45	pg. 31-39 (5 photos)
Box 2, Folder 46	pg. 40-45 (8 photos)
Box 2, Folder 47	pg. 46-50 (9 photos)
Box 2, Folder 48	pg. 51-57 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 49	pg. 58-65 (8 photos)
Box 2, Folder 50	pg. 66-74 (14 photos)
Box 2, Folder 51	pg. 75-80 (11 photos)
Box 2, Folder 52	pg. 80-85 (10 photos)
Box 2, Folder 53	pg. 86-90 (15 photos)
Box 2, Folder 54	pg. 91-95 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 55	pg. 96-100 (14 photos)
Box 2, Folder 56	pg. 101-104 (8 photos)
Box 2, Folder 57	pg. 105-110 (12 photos)
Box 2, Folder 58	pg. 111-end (8 photos)

Subseries: Slide Negatives (1961-1981, bulk 1961-1974) (141 slides)

Consists of photographs taken between 1961 and 1981 at the annual Spring luncheon. A detailed list of members' names is included.

Box 2, Folder 59	Names of members on slides (#1-141) List of slides shown at Annual Meeting, May 8, 1980
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Box 3	141 Slides
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