Collection 1
The Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey
Records, 1904-2015 (Bulk 1920-2007)

By Kerry Dubyk
January 2017

Summary Information
Creator: The Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey
Title: The Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey Records, 1904-2015 (Bulk 1920-2007)
Dates: 1904-2015 (bulk 1920-2007)
Quantity: 13 Manuscript Boxes; 6 Flat Boxes
Abstract: The records were generated and accumulated by The Young Women’s Christian
Association of Trenton, New Jersey from 1904-2015. The Association was founded in 1904 with the
mission of supporting the empowerment of girls and women and the elimination of racism. The
records cover the operational activity of the Association including administrative activities,
programming, and promotional materials of the various branches, properties, and functions of the
Association.

Collection number: 1
Accession Number: 2016.17
Language: English
Repository: Trentonian Collection, Trenton Free Public Library

Administrative History
The Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey (YWCA of Trenton) was founded
in 1904 and was incorporated on February 14, 1905 with the mission of supporting the empowerment
of girls and women and the elimination of racism. The YWCA of Trenton is a local branch of the
YWCA, which is an international organization that seeks to empower women, families, and
communities by promoting peace and social justice in many areas including women’s rights, civil rights, income equality, violence prevention, and health care.

The YWCA of Trenton was an outgrowth of the Bible Reader’s Aid, a club dedicated to supplying recreational activities to young women of the city. The main branch of the Association was established in 1908 at 138 and 140 East Hanover Street. This original building was later razed and rebuilt in 1924 to serve as the headquarters of the Association.

The early functions of the YWCA of Trenton included activities, events, luncheons, and classes in domestic science, religious education, physical training, English, millinery, and general sewing. During World War I, the Association offered Red Cross classes in First Aid and Home Nursing, community recreation in the gymnasium, and collaborated volunteer nurses during a 1918 influenza outbreak. Starting in 1925, the organization created the city’s first public cafeteria that served the community daily and hosted club and committee meetings. Also in the 1920s, the Association purchased a farm in New Hope, PA to serve as a camp site used for recreation and activities, although this location was later sold. The Association participated in the annual summer Silver Bay Conference until it was discontinued in 1928.

Dunham Residence Hall at 127 Academy Street, named after Mrs. Edward W. Dunham, opened in the 1920s as a secure home away from home for single women in the community. The hall had 68 rooms for residents of one-night or many years. In later years, the hall offered 90 beds to provide transitional and permanent housing to low-income and homeless women.

The Montgomery Street Branch was donated to the Association in 1925, which served the African-American Community of the city. The branch opened its doors to African-American servicemen during World War II. The branch closed in 1950 with the complete racial integration of the YWCA.

After the Great Depression and into the 1930s, the Association held programs and meetings for women across industries, lowered room rents in Dunham Residence Hall, and provided gymnasium and swimming classes. During World War II, the Association served a free light supper for servicemen, instituted special events for servicemen, sent junior hostesses for dances at Fort Dix, and opened up space in Dunham Residence Hall for wartime emergencies, such as temporary housing for whole families. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Association worked towards progress for interracial fellowship, with the Interracial Day Camp in 1944, integration of the YWCA in 1950, and neighborhood meetings in the 1950s.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Association continued work on social action and progression in the organization. In 1964, Dunham Residence Hall became home to 67 freshman women from Trenton State College due to the overflow of limited dormitory space. During the Trenton riots of 1968 there was very limited damage to the YWCA premises at the Hanover and Academy Street buildings.

The Hamilton Township Branch opened in 1969 to provide programs, such as sewing, dance, and a girl’s teen club, for suburban women and their families. The After School Enrichment Program and Summer Enrichment Program began in 1971 offering tutoring, education games, and writing programs. In 1974, the Association created a Child Development Center in the Hanover Street Building, which provided all-day care for pre-school children. The Hamilton Center rebranded as the YWCA’s Young Wonder Preschool in 2006, with a similar program created in Trenton at East
Hanover Street. Although it had been closed for almost two decades, the YWCA Health and Fitness center re-opened in 2007.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Association continued to support its mission by offering programming for children and families, as well as annual events such as “In Celebration of Women,” “New Face of Fitness” programming, “Week Without Violence” campaign, and the “Stand Against Racism” movement. The Association received award certificates from the city of Trenton in 2000 for community service achievements and in 2012 for the New Jersey Women’s Hall of Fame.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Collection consists of records pertaining to the activities and functions of the Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey. The records were created or acquired by the Association from 1904 to 2015 (bulk 1920-2007). Materials found in the collection include business records, photographs, newspapers clippings, blueprints, and artifacts. Business records include annual meeting programs and reports, committee meeting reports, the organization’s constitution, member lists, correspondence, programs and ephemera from events, financial records, incorporation documents, articles and booklets on the history of the Association, personnel records, and promotional materials. Materials also include loose photographs and newspaper clippings, as well as photo albums and newspaper clipping scrapbooks.


The majority of the material contained in the Collection pertains to the administrative functions, operational activities, and programming of the main branch of the YWCA of Trenton, which was located at 140 East Hanover Street. However, there are records and materials pertaining to additional properties operated by the YWCA of Trenton and other local branches of the YWCA. Records and materials specific to these properties have been separated into their own folders by subject.

The Collection contains programs and ephemera related to events held by or in association with the YWCA of Trenton in Series I. Photographs of YWCA staff and members, as well as activities and events of the Association are in Series II. The Collection also contains two items from the Young Men’s Christian Association. Two folders already existing in Trentoniana’s vertical files containing mostly promotional materials were also added to the collection.

**Provenance Note**

The items from the Young Women’s Christian Association of Trenton, New Jersey were obtained by Trentoniana in March 2016 as a donation from Bruce Lindsay, who rescued the documents before they were discarded.

**Note on Arrangement**

Since the records were going to be discarded, they arrived at the repository in poor condition and most of the original order was lost. Whenever possible, original order was maintained, such as documents in a single folder being kept together. The folders are arranged alphabetically by subject, and then
chronologically. All documents within folders are arranged chronologically unless otherwise noted.

**Processing Notes**

Where no original order existed, an order was imposed. Metal clips and staples were removed from most materials. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Fragile documents and photographs were placed in archival sheet protectors. Documents within envelopes were removed, but housed in an acid-free folder with the original envelope.

Photographs were removed from picture frames and damaged photo album covers. Some photo album covers were removed due to poor condition. The newspaper clipping scrapbooks in Series III are in fragile condition and contain loose clippings. Oversized items were placed in flat boxes.

**Series Description**

**Series I: Business Records, 1904-2008**
3 Manuscript Boxes; 2 Folders of Oversized Items in Flat Box (#18)

Series I includes annual meeting programs and reports of the YWCA of Trenton, committee meeting reports, 1904-1905 meeting minutes notebook, Board of Directors member lists, candidacy ballots from 1929-1948, Nominating Committee ballots from 1991 and 1992, and undated copy of an Ewing Township Street Index.

The series includes correspondence including three letters from 1916 and 1921 between Howard L. Hughes, a Librarian in Trenton, from the YWCA of Trenton Secretary regarding putting YWCA on the mailing list for the reading list published by the library, correspondence from 1926 and 1927 related to the purchase of the YWCA camp at New Hope by George Ely of the Horses, New Hope, a letter from 1940 about financial coordination, a 1973 letter pertaining to the After School Enrichment Program at St. Mark’s Methodist Church, and a 2010 goodbye letter from Gladys Brown, who was leaving employment at the Association.

Also includes are documents related to Dunham Residence Hall at 127 Academy Street in Trenton, including programs, a guidebook, and a 1986 newspaper article about the retired director of the residence hall.

There are programs and ephemera for various events held by the Association from 1921 to 2012 such as spring dances, concerts, and the Week Without Violence campaign. Materials include a program and ephemera from a 1921 YMCA father and son dance, 1931 Golden Jubilee Banquet, 1932 music festival, and 1947 luncheon series. Materials also include certificates from the city of Trenton awarded to the YWCA of Trenton in 2000 for community service achievements and in 2012 for the New Jersey Women’s Hall of Fame. The series also contains correspondence, invitations, and programs related to an annual event of the YWCA of Trenton, “In Celebration of Women.”

Financial records include treasurer’s reports from 1941 and 1942, a 1962 donation request letter, and 1991 audit notes. The series contains documentation pertaining to the Hamilton Center Branch of the YWCA at 3570 Nottingham Way in Hamilton Square, New Jersey, which was established in 1969. Materials include programming planning, committee meeting notes, programs, and correspondence related to its founding.
There are also typewritten articles, some undated, about the history, philosophy, and impact of the YWCA of Trenton, survey booklets pertaining to the history of the YWCA of Trenton on various anniversaries, and survey booklets of the 100th anniversary of the Association. This includes a certificate of incorporation of the YWCA of Trenton from 1905, copies of incorporation documents, and an undated copy of the YWCA constitution.

The series also includes documents from the Montgomery Street Branch, a segregated branch of the YWCA of Trenton serving the African-American community from 1925 until it was integrated in 1950. This includes a 1962 typewritten history of the Montgomery Street Branch and a 1984 event pamphlet entitled “I Remember… the Montgomery Street Branch.” The series also includes personnel files including an employee termination notice form and program evaluation forms.

The bulk of the promotional materials include programs detailing programming offered by the YWCA of Trenton. It includes general information brochures, newsletters, posters, membership handouts, and various ephemera. It also includes annual and quarterly programs detailing programming offered by the Association such as classes, physical fitness programs, children’s programming, and recreational activities. These materials are arranged by document size and then chronologically by decade.

There is one item from the Young Men’s Christian Association: an undated, typewritten list of YMCA Presidents and Board of Directors from the 1800s.

**Series II: Photographs, 1924-2013**

7 Manuscript Boxes; 3 Folders of Oversized Items in Flat Box (#18)

Series II contains loose photographs and photo albums created by or documenting the people and activities of the YWCA of Trenton. The series is arranged by subject and then chronologically within folders.

The photographs document the board of directors and staff members of the association. The series contains photographs of programming activities such as children’s programming, fitness programs, theater and dance programming, and young women’s programming. There are also photos of unidentified people and events.

The photographs document many different events held by or participated in by the Association, the majority being from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. Events include the annual “In Celebration of Women” (ICOW) event, New Jersey Women’s Hall of Fame, and “Week Without Violence.”

There are photographs of buildings or locations of the YWCA including the Hanover Street Building, which was the headquarters of the Association, the Hamilton Center branch, the Montgomery Street Branch, and the YWCA Camp (Ely Farm).

The series also include Silver Bay Conference Albums from 1924 and 1926. Loose photographs of the conference are with the original photo album cover contained in a separate folder. The Silver Bay Conference was an annual conference attended by the YWCA in the 1910s and 1920s. The series also contain pages from “YWCA Trenton Photos of Special Events” Photo Album, 1994. The cover of this photo album was discarded due to poor condition.
Series III: Newspaper Clippings 1922-2014
2 Manuscript Boxes; 1 Folder of Oversized Items in Flat Box (#18); 3 Flat Boxes

Series III contains loose newspaper clippings and newspaper clipping scrapbooks of the activities and functions of the Association. They document the programming, events, staff, news, and activities of the Association from 1922 to 2014.

Loose newspaper clippings are arranged in folders by decade. The pages of the YWCA 1997-1998 Newspaper Clipping Album were separated into three folders and the album cover was discarded due to poor condition. Five newspaper clipping scrapbooks are also included. These scrapbooks are in fragile and worn condition, containing loose clippings. A few pages were reconstructed, but these have not been further processed, so these should be handled with care.

Series IV: Building and Renovation Documents and Blueprints, 1924-2001
1 Manuscript Box; 1 Flat Box

Series IV includes construction and renovation documents and blueprints of YWCA property. The bulk of the materials relate to the main branch of the Association at 140 East Hanover Street in Trenton, such as locker room and pool renovations. The series also contains renovation blueprints and related documents from the Dunham Resident Hall located at 127 Academy Street in Trenton, and a summer camp at Rivermere, PA. The series contains one item from the YMCA, a “typical dormitory” floor plan.

Series V: Artifacts, 1925-2002
1 Flat Box; 3 Folders of Oversized Items in Flat Box (#18)

Series V contains a gavel used by former Association President Mrs. Edward W. Dunham from 1925, a trowel used at the cornerstone ceremony, a “Children’s Future of Trenton” gold pin, a YWCA ink press, a 1992 YWCA VHS video tape, an unidentified film reel, an undated prayer plaque, and two audio records.

Container List

Series I: Business Records, 1904-2008
Box 1 Folder 1 Annual Meeting Programs and Reports, 1955, 1961-1962
Folder 2 Annual Meeting Programs and Reports, 1969, 1974-1979
Folder 3 Annual Meeting Programs and Reports, 1980, 1985, 1987
Folder 4 Board of Directors – Committee Meeting Reports, 1934, 1938, 1943, 1957, 1982, 1986
Folder 5 Board of Directors- Ewing Township Street Index, n.d.
Folder 6 Board of Directors – Member Lists, 1932-1948
Folder 7 Board of Directors – Member Lists, 1961-1962, 1984-1986 (not inclusive)
Folder 8 Board of Directors – Meeting Minutes, 1904-1905
Folder 9 Board of Directors – Nominating Committee Ballots, 1991
Folder 10 Board of Directors – Nominating Committee Ballots, 1992
Folder 11 Board of Directors- YMCA- Member Lists, n.d.
Folder 12 Correspondence, 1916, 1921
Folder 13 Correspondence, 1926-1927
Box 1 Folder 14 Correspondence, 1934-2010
Folder 15 Dunham Residence Hall Records, circa 1950s, 1986
Folder 16 Events - Awards, 2000, 2012
Folder 17 Events – General Programs and Ephemera, 1921-1935

Box 2 Folder 1 Events – General Programs and Ephemera, 1947-1979
Folder 2 Events – General Programs and Ephemera, 1983-2008
Folder 3 Events- ICOW- Correspondence, 2000-2005
Folder 4 Events- ICOW- Invitations, 1991, 2002
Folder 5 Events- ICOW- Programs, 1999, 2005-2007
Folder 6 Financial Records, 1941-1942
Folder 8 Hamilton Center Records, 1969, 1971
Folder 9 Hamilton Center Records, 1970-1974
Folder 10 History of YWCA- Articles, circa 1950s, 1988
Folder 12 History of YWCA- 100th Anniversary Survey Booklets, 2003-2004

Box 3 Folder 1 Incorporation Documents and Constitution- Incorporation Documents, 1905
Folder 2 Incorporation Documents and Constitution- Incorporation Documents, 1905, 1936, 2004
Folder 3 Incorporation Documents and Constitution- Constitution, n.d.
Folder 4 Montgomery Street Branch Materials, 1962, 1984
Folder 5 Personnel Records, n.d.
Folder 7 Promotional Materials- Programs, 1947-1968
Folder 8 Promotional Materials- Programs, 1969-1992

Oversized Items
Flat Box 18 Folder 5 Business Records – Awards, Health and Fitness Center Opening (from the NJ State Legislature), 2007
Folder 6 Business Records – Posters, n.d.

Series II: Photographs, 1924-2013
Box 4 Folder 1 Board of Directors and Staff, circa 1940s-1980s
Folder 2 Board of Directors and Staff, 1984-2015 (not inclusive)
Folder 3 Children’s Programming, 1971, 1980
Folder 4 Children’s Programming, circa 1980s-2004
Folder 5 Children’s Programming, circa 1990s
Folder 6 Children’s Programming – Day Camp, 1937, 1938, 1951
Folder 7 Dunham Residence Hall, 1957, circa 1980s-1990s
Folder 9 Events – Boiler Party, 1980
Folder 10 Events – Day of Commitment, 1994, 1996, 2005
Folder 11 Events – Ewing Board Meeting, 1980

Box 5 Folder 1 Events – Health Fair, 1994
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<td>Events – ICOW, 1994</td>
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<td>Events – Membership Lunch, 1982</td>
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<td>Events – Mercer Foundation Reception, 2004</td>
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<td>Events – National YWCA Week, 1989</td>
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<td>Events – Olympics, 1996</td>
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<td>Events – Retreat, 1995-1996</td>
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<td>Events – Talent Show, circa 1990s</td>
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<td>Folder 15</td>
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<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Events – Unidentified, circa 1980s</td>
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<td>Events – Unidentified, circa 1990s</td>
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<td>Events – Unidentified, circa 1980s-1990s</td>
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<td>Events – Video Shoot, 1994</td>
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<td>Events – Worlds AIDS Days, 1994</td>
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<th>Box 9</th>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Fitness Programs, circa 1950s-1970s</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Fitness Programs, circa 1980s, 1992, circa 1990s</td>
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      Folder 6  Hanover Street Building and Renovation, 1924, circa 1930s
      Folder 7  Hanover Street Building and Renovation, 1988, circa 1990s

Box 10 Folder 1  Hanover Street Building and Renovation, 1985-2003 (not inclusive)
      Folder 2  Hanover Street Building and Renovation, 2014
      Folder 3  Montgomery Street Branch, circa 1940s
      Folder 5  Theater and Dance Programming, 1931-circa 1970s
      Folder 6  Young Women’s Programming, circa 1920s-1950s, 1952, 1957
      Folder 7  YWCA Camp (Ely Farm), circa 1950s
      Folder 8  Silver Bay Conference Album, 1924
      Folder 9  Silver Bay Conference Album, 1926
      Folder 10 “YWCA Trenton Photos of Special Events” Photo Album, pages 1-36, 1994
      Folder 11 “YWCA Trenton Photos of Special Events” Photo Album, pages 37-60, 1994
      Folder 12 Negatives, circa 1980s, 1990s

Oversized Items
Flat Box 18  Folder 1  Photographs – Events – Silver Bay Conference, 1926
             Folder 2  Photographs – Theater and Dance Programming, 1926, circa 1920s
             Folder 3  Photographs – Hanover Street Building, 1926, circa 1940s

Series III: Newspaper Clippings 1922-2014
Box 11 Folder 1  Newspaper Clippings, 1922-1930
      Folder 2  Newspaper Clippings, 1923
      Folder 3  Newspaper Clippings, 1925
      Folder 4  Newspaper Clippings, 1948-1949
      Folder 5  Newspaper Clippings, 1950-1959
      Folder 6  Newspaper Clippings, 1960-1969
      Folder 7  Newspaper Clippings, 1970-1979
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      Folder 9  Newspaper Clippings, 1980-1989
      Folder 10 Newspaper Clippings, 1986-1987
      Folder 11 Newspaper Clippings, 1990-1999
      Folder 12 Newspaper Clippings, 2000-2014
      Folder 13 Newspaper Clippings, n.d.
      Folder 14 Newspaper Clippings – “Clippings 1920s, 1922
      Folder 15 Newspaper Clippings – Health Club-Pool, 1963-1951
      Folder 16 Newspaper Clippings – Old Timers Party [Scrapbook Pages], 1929-1937
      Folder 17 Newspaper Clippings – Performing Arts Clippings, n.d.

Box 12 Folder 1  YWCA 1997-1998 Newspaper Clipping Album (1 of 3)*
      Folder 2  YWCA 1997-1998 Newspaper Clipping Album (2 of 3)*
      Folder 3  YWCA 1997-1998 Newspaper Clipping Album (3 of 3)*

Oversized Items
Flat Box 18  Folder 4  Newspaper Clippings, 2006, 2008

Flat Box 14 Contains 1 Newspaper Clipping Scrapbooks: red album, 1960-1970

Flat Box 15 Contains 2 Scrapbooks: 1940s Scrapbook (photos and ephemera), 1946-1949; 1980s Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook, 1979-1986

Series IV: Building and Renovation Documents and Blueprints, 1924-2001

Box 12 Folder 1 Dunham Residence Hall Floor Plan, circa 1990s [See Flat Box 17, Folder 1 for the related blueprints, which were found in the same envelope.]

Folder 2 140 East Hanover Street - General Construction Specifications, 1923
Folder 3 Installation of New Boiler Documents, 1954
Folder 4 Locker Room Renovation Documents, 1949 [See Flat Box 17, Folders 7 and 8 for the blueprints.]
Folder 5 Pool Renovation Documents, 1953, n.d. Locker Room Renovation Documents, 1949 [See Box Flat Box 17, Folder 9 for the related blueprints.]
Folder 6 Renovation Documents, 1961-1986, n.d. (not inclusive)
Folder 7 Renovation Documents, 2001 [?] [See Flat Box 17, Folder 4 for the related blueprints, which were found in the same folder.]

Flat Box 17 Folder 1 Dunham Residence Hall Renovation Blueprints, 1999 [See Box 13, Folder 1 for the Floor Plan, which was found in the same envelope.]
Folder 2 140 East Hanover Street - Building Blueprints, 1924-1929
Folder 3 140 East Hanover Street - Building Floor Plans, n.d.
Folder 4 140 East Hanover Street - Building Electrical Floor Plans, 1999 [See Box 13, Folder 7 for the related documents, which were found in the same folder.]
Folder 5 140 East Hanover Street - Building Fire Code Upgrade Blueprints, 1989
Folder 6 140 East Hanover Street - Kitchen Lighting Floor Plan, 1956
Folder 7 140 East Hanover Street - Locker Room Renovation Blueprints, 1949 [See Box 13, Folder 4 for the related documents]
Folder 8 140 East Hanover Street - Locker Room Renovation Blueprints, 1950 [See Box 13, Folder 4 for the related documents]
Folder 9 140 East Hanover Street - Pool and Shower Room Renovation Blueprints, 1950, 1953 [See Box 13, Folder 5 for the related documents]
Folder 10 “Summer Camp at Rivermere, Penna.” Blueprints, n.d.
Folder 11 YMCA “Typical Dormitory” Floor Plan, n.d.

Series V: Artifacts, 1925-2002

Flat Box 16 Contains “Children’s Future of Trenton” Gold Pin, n.d.; YWCA Ink Press, n.d.; Box containing a gavel used by Mrs. Edward W. Dunham while president of the association, engraved “presented by her staff”, 1925 and a trowel presented to YWCA by Mrs. Edward W. Dunham and used at the cornerstone ceremony, n.d.; “Honoring the page… changing to meeting the future” YWCA VHS Video Tape, 2002; film reel in container, n.d.

Oversized Items

Flat Box 18 Folder 7 Artifacts – Prayer Plaque, n.d.
Folder 8 Artifacts – Louis XIV “The Distances from Everyone to You” Record, 2007
Folder 9 Artifacts – “30 Second Announcements” Record, n.d.