

Hampshire Regional YMCA Records

1891-1978

16 boxes (11.25 linear ft.)

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Read collection overview

Hampshire Regional YMCA founded in 1890. Contains minutes, constitution and by-laws, reports, board correspondence, ledgers, publications, scrapbooks, and youth, recreation, and wartime program files. Also includes material relating to building campaigns and properties. Additionally documents the long career of Errol V. Ridgwell.

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Background on Hampshire Regional YMCA (Northampton, Mass.)

In February and March 1890, Smith College Professor J.H. Pillsbury organized several meetings for interested Northampton citizens on the work of the Young Men's Christian Association. Within a month, prominent local men, including C.H. Lyman, A.L. Williston, George Washington Cable, and F.N. Kneeland, established an Executive Board and committees with representatives from all the Protestant churches to raise funds and secure a building to begin the Northampton YMCA. By December, the Executive Board had leased the Smith Charities Building to start gymnasium classes, and in January 1891, Thomas Johnson was hired as the first general secretary. Incorporation followed shortly thereafter, in January 1892.

In the first decade, the YMCA established a Boy's Department under the direction of Robert L. Williston, started a Women's Auxiliary, and began a building fund that resulted in the purchase of property from A.L. Williston on King Street at "a nominal sum". The building, costing \$30,500, was dedicated on October 15, 1904. By 1912, the YMCA had also raised an additional \$25,000 for its summer camp, Nonotuck.

Throughout its history, the YMCA responded to local needs during periods of crisis or transition. During World Wars I and II, it established recreation programs for factory workers and soldiers stationed in the area. In 1942-44, the Hampshire YMCA became heavily involved in U.S.O. work, and, in the post-war era, developed programs with low-cost membership dues for returning servicemen. In 1936, the YMCA helped organize local flood relief, and during the depression it served as headquarters for the National Youth Administration. Similarly, the YMCA adapted to new groups in the area. In the 1920s it changed membership requirements to meet the needs of new immigrant groups entering Northampton and Easthampton to work in local factories. In the 1950s and 1960s, the YMCA began special programs on civil rights and desegregation.

Cutbacks in support from the Northampton Community Chest in the 1950s resulted in a decline in service in the post-war era. In 1960 the YMCA even considered a merger with the People's Institute. When the proposed merger collapsed, however, the YMCA established a new building fund drive that revived the Association and allowed it to build a more modern facility on Prospect Street at a cost of approximately one million dollars in 1966.

Over the years, a number of prominent local figures have played a role in the Hampshire Regional YMCA's history. Calvin Coolidge, George Washington Cable, and A.L. Williston were among the early board members. Robert L. Williston served on the board for nearly forty years, and Oliver L. Bradley for 36. Errol V. Ridgwell directed the YMCA's activities through four decades, serving as Executive Director from 1943 through 1969.

Scope of collection

Records of the Hampshire Regional YMCA document the organization from 1891 to 1978. Materials include minutes, reports, board correspondence, program files (1937-1970), ledgers, publications and scrapbooks. Records were maintained by the various Executive Directors.

The papers occupy approximately 11.25 linear feet, and are divided into five series, including Administration (1891-1978), Reports (1908-1978), Correspondence (1923-1978), Programs and Activities (1937-1967), and Publications, Ledgers, and Scrapbooks (1912-1969).

Arrangement

This collection is organized into five series:

Series 1. Administration, 1891-1978

Series 2. Reports, 1908-1978

Series 3. Correspondence, 1923-1978

Series 4. Programs and Activities, 1937-1967

Series 5. Publications, Ledgers, and Scrapbooks, 1912-1969

Series descriptions

Series 1. Administration

1891-1978

Includes the constitution and by-laws of the Association, historical sketches of the Hampshire YMCA completed in 1952 and 1969 by Errol Ridgwell, and minutes of the Board of Directors, the Annual Meeting, and the Ladies' Auxiliary. The early Board and Annual Meeting minutes are combined in a single volume (1891-1909), followed by relatively complete separate runs through 1978.

Series 2. Reports

1908-1978

The reports are arranged chronologically by year for each category.

Comprised of the reports of officers and various YMCA committees and departments. For a typical year, the committee and department reports include the Membership, House, and Camp committees, and the Boys', Businessmen's, Women's, and Activity Departments. The bulk of the officers' reports originate from the monthly reports of the general secretary, but some reports from other officers or professional staff are included. These reports are particularly thorough for the years 1935 to 1970. A third sequence is comprised of the financial committee's monthly statements and reports. For the years 1937 to 1970, there also exist published annual reports of the Association's programs and activities.

Series 3. Correspondence

1923-1978

Consists largely of the correspondence of the Executive Board or the General Secretary, concentrated primarily between the years 1930 and 1960. Most of the letters reflect routine YMCA business, but some highlight the social and cultural ideas which influenced or shaped YMCA policies.

Series 4. Programs and Activities

1937-1967

Alphabetically arranged by topic.

Includes correspondence, newsletters, publications, and information about the variety of programs implemented by the Hampshire YMCA, including social action as well as recreational, cultural, and club activities, especially during the 1940s and 1950s. The files also include material about building campaigns, funding agencies, properties, and the proposed merger with the People's Institute.

Series 5. Publications, Ledgers, and Scrapbooks

1912-1969

Contains early financial ledgers (1912-1921), miscellaneous YMCA publications and newsletters (1945-1960), and several scrapbooks documenting the 1920s, World War II, the 1965 building campaign, and the long career of Errol V. Ridgwell.

Inventory

Series 1. Administration

1891-1978

Constitution and By-Laws

1936, 1964

Box 1

Historical Sketch of the Northampton YMCA

1952, 1969

Box 1

Board of Directors Minutes

1909-1939

Box 1

Board of Directors Minutes

1940-1963

Box 2

Board of Directors Minutes

1964-1978

Box 3

Annual Meeting Minutes

1891-1978

Box 3

Ladies Auxiliary Minutes

1905-1913, 1917, 1920

Box 3

Series 2. Reports

1908-1978

The reports are arranged chronologically by year for each category.

Officers Reports

1925-1969

Box 4

Committee and Department Reports

1915-1947

Box 4

Committee and Department Reports

1948-1978

Box 5

Finance Committee and Statements

1908, 1922-1939

Box 5

Finance Committee and Statements

1940-1978

Box 6

Annual Reports

1937-1969

Box 7

Series 3. Correspondence

1923-1978

Board Correspondence

1923-1961

Box 8

Board Correspondence

1962-1978

Box 9

Series 4. Programs and Activities

1937-1967

Alphabetically arranged by topic.

Activities and Clubs

1941

Box 10

Boys Workers Forum

1938-1939

Box 10

Brief Outlines of Services

1956

Box 10

Building Campaign

1962-1965

Box 10

Building Committee

1964-1967

Box 10

Camp Hodgkins

1956-1957

Box 10

City Bureau Program

1965-1966

Box 10

Civil Rights

1964

Box 10
Community Chest
1951
Box 10
Community Youth Program
1958-1960

Box 10
Cosmian Hall
1945-1954
Box 11
Cost Analysis Workshop
1958

Box 11
Day Camp
1955-1959
Box 11
Fund Raising
1960-1961

Box 11
Hi-Y Ceremony
1952
Box 11
Junior Hi-Y
1945
Box 11
Juvenile Delinquency
1943

Box 11
Kiwanis Underprivileged Child Committees
1954
Box 11
Leaders Club
1966-1967

Box 11
Merger with People's Institute
1960-1963
Box 11
Northampton Community Survey
1963
Box 11
Northampton Recreation Program
1948-1949

Box 11
Northampton YMCA Survey
1936
Box 11
Older Boys Conference
1937-1947

Box 11
Organized Labor
1944
Box 12
Other Y's
1959-1965
Box 12
Overseas Work
1945, 1948
Box 12
Program Ideas

1949
Box 12
Program Planning
1944
Box 12
Returning Servicemen Program
1943-1945
Box 12
Segregation
1965
Box 12
Services to Youth
1943-1945
Box 12
Sex Education
1945-1949
Box 12
Speeches
1955-1956
Box 12
Talks and Discussions
1946-1947
Box 12
Training and Leadership
1943, 1948
Box 12
U.S.O. Work
1942-1955
Box 12
YMCA Men's Club
1940-1947
Box 12
YM-YWCA Relations
1960
Box 12
Y-Weds Club
1949-1966
Box 12
Young Adult Conference
1952
Box 12
Series 5. Publications, Ledgers, and Scrapbooks
1912-1969
Miscellaneous Publications
1945-1960
Box 13
Photographs
undated
Box 13
Building Campaign Clippings
1965
Box 13
Scrapbook
1942-1943
Box 13
Ledgers
1912, 1915-1918
Box 13
Ledgers

1919-1921

Box 14

Scrapbook

1924

Box 14

Scrapbook

1925

Box 15

Ridgwell Scrapbook

1936-1951

Box 15

Scrapbooks

1960s

Box 16

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Susan Walker, 1984

Processing Information

Collection processed by Kenneth Fones-Wolf, 2003.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

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Search terms

Subjects

Associations, institutions, etc.--Massachusetts --Northampton--History--Sources.

Hampshire Regional YMCA (Northampton, Mass.)--Archives.

Northampton (Mass.)--Social conditions--Sources.

People's Institute (Northampton, Mass.)

Recreation--Massachusetts--Northampton--History--Sources.

Ridgwell, Errol V.

Social service and race relations--Massachusetts --Northampton--History--Sources.

Young Men's Christian Association (Northampton, Mass.)--Archives.

Contributors

Hampshire Regional YMCA (Northampton, Mass.) [\[main entry\]](#)

Young Men's Christian Association (Northampton, Mass.)

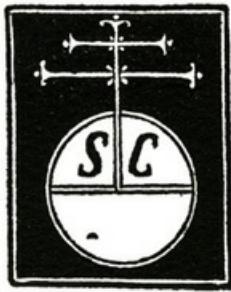
Genres and formats

Scrapbooks.

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