

Versatile Club; Records

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Summary Information

Repository:	M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Title:	Versatile Club Records
ID:	apap040
Date [inclusive]:	1937-2011
Physical Description:	0.50 cubic ft.
Physical Location:	The materials are located onsite in the department.
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Versatile Club Records document the day-to-day operations of this community organization founded in 1910.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Versatile Club Records, 1937-2011. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Versatile Club Records).

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Administrative History

The Girls Versatile Club of Troy, New York was organized in 1931 under the direction of Reverend H. D. White of the A.M.E. Zion Church "to strengthen religious ties, to find an outlet in good clean fun, and above all, to learn to live and play as well as work together as friends." [1] The Club was formed following conflicts between the male and female members of the Elusion Club of the A.M.E. Zion Church of Troy. Reverend H. D. White advised the female members to form an all girl club, not restricted to members of the A.M.E. Zion Church, but to include any Troy girls who met moral and religious standards. [2] In February 1947 the club adopted its present name, The Versatile Club. [3]

In 1956 the Versatile Club restated its purpose "to further Christian aims and to strive always to make this community a better one because of the existence of the Versatile Club." [4] The purpose of the club currently is the "Pleasure and Recreation of its Members & Civic Service." [5] During the course of its

existence the Versatile Club has contributed to church repairs, sponsored African American entertainers, provided scholarship support for members attending colleges, since the 1961 sponsored women's only "Ladies of Leisure & Career Womens Luncheons" which brought prominent women speakers to Troy including Muriel Jenkins, Ersa Poston, Shirley L. White and Dr. Dorothy Brown. The Club formed a junior Versatile Club to reach young children. The Versatile Club has given strong support to drives to fund research on Sickle Cell Anemia. The Club also sponsors trips and outings for its members.[6]

The Versatile Club originally held its meetings every Monday night at the home of Club members, currently it holds monthly meetings at Bethel Baptist Church.[7] The Club also holds an annual Palm Sunday church meeting rotating among the Bethel Baptist, Oakwood Presbyterian, and A.M.E. Zion Methodist churches.

The administrative officers of the club are a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Assistant Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, and Assistant Chaplain. The Versatile Club's presidents have included: Jane Reese (1931-1981), Connie Gordon, Louise Byrd, Wilhamenia Simon, Carol Praylor, Irene Van Slyke, Patricia Hicks and and Catheryne Collington. 1. "Brief Club History," 25th Anniversary VC [pamphlet], The Versatile Club, Troy, N.Y, 1956. 2. Installation Ceremony Notes, [ca. 1936]. 3. Draft Meeting Minutes, February 10, 1947. 4. "Brief Club History" 5. Clause I, by-laws, revised October 11, 1986. 6. "The Versatile Club," 50 Anniversary [program], Versatile Club, Troy, NY, November 12, 1982. 7. Clause II, By-laws, [ca. 1939]; Clause II, By-laws, revised October 11, 1986.

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Scope and Contents

Contained in the records of the Versatile Club are official and draft minutes of meetings, memorabilia relating to social activities, by-laws, financial documents, photographs, and resumes/biographical sketches of club members covering the period from 1945 through 1988. Minutes of meetings from the 1930s and early 1940s were burned according to President Louise Byrd. A complete set of meeting minutes exists for the period, 1950-62, and 1981 - June 1988, while scattered draft minutes cover the period 1945-88. The official minutes from 1931-1949, July 1950-December 1950, and July 1962-March 1981 are missing.

Since the Versatile Club has operated primarily as a social club, the focus of its records relates to the social activities they sponsored from 1945-1988. Among the numerous entertainers the Versatile Club brought to Troy were Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Mary Lou Williams, Fat Man Robinson's Orchestra, and the pianist Dennie Carter. The rising cost of hiring entertainers forced the club to curtail its sponsorship of major bands in the late 1950s. The Versatile also sponsors African-American speakers, youth dances, fashion shows, and supports worthy charities such as the Girls Training School. The Club has a continuing interest in preserving a record of the underground railroad in Troy, and donated a plaque in honor Charles Nalle, an escaped slave who had been arrested under the fugitive slave act, and freed by a citizens riot in 1860.

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Arrangement of the Collection

The collection is organized alphabetically. There are no series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Encoded in EAD by Katy Sweet 2013

Processing Information

Processed in 1993 by Shurawl Bryan and updated by Jodi Boyle in 2011.

Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

Acquisition Information

All items in this record group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by the Versatile Club in February 1993. Two additional

accessions were received from Carol Praylor, former president, in September 2004 and in September 2011.

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Controlled Access Headings

- African Americans and Civil Rights Organizations
- Women
- Rensselaer County, New York
- Ethnic Groups
- Girls--Societies and clubs
- Baptist associations
- Troy (N.Y.)
- Membership
- Minutes
- Financial Records
- Photographs
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Bylaws (administrative records)
- Greeting Cards
- The Versatile Club

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Anniversary Brochures, 25th, 50th and 80th, 1956-1982-2011	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 1
Brown, Dorothy, News Clipping, ca. 2003	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 2
By-laws, 1939-1961-1986-Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 3
Charles Nalle Plaque, Photograph, Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 4
Club Cap, Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 5
Draft Meeting Minutes-Bound, November 1945-September 1955	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 6
Draft Meeting Minutes-Loose Pages, January 1951-April 1988		

	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 7
Financial Documents, 1950-1984	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 8
Installation Ceremony, Notes, Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 9
Ladies of Leisure & Career Girls/Women Luncheon, 1968-1990Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 10
Membership, 1950-1983	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 11
Miscellaneous Notes and Correspondence, 1987Undated	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 12
News Clipping, Class'ique, March 2002	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 13
Official Meeting Minutes, June 1950-January 1955	Box 1 (1-Box 1)	Folder 14
Official Meeting Minutes, January 1955-June 1962	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 1
Official Meeting Minutes, April 1981-June 19882002	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 2
Photographs, 19391995Undated	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 3
Rensselaer County Legislature Resolution, 2001	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 4
Resumes/Biographical Sheets, 1963-1976	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 5
Social Activity Memorabilia, 1937-1988	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 6
Social Invitations, 1951-1989	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 7
Thank You/Apology/Sympathy Cards, 1951-1990Undated	Box 2 (1-Box 1)	Folder 8