FORTNIGHTLY LITERARY CLUB
RECORDS, 1885-2005

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Processed by
Jenny Holly
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org
COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 13 manuscript boxes, 1 oversized folder, 1 folder photographs, 1 folder color photographs, 1 bin slides

COLLECTION DATES: 1885-2005

PROVENANCE: Fortnightly Literary Club, Indianapolis, IN, 1990; 2006; 2015

RESTRICITONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0309; 2015.0184

NOTES:
**HISTORICAL SKETCH**

The Fortnightly Literary Club began in the home of Mrs. Charles Warren Fairbanks as the Nameless Literary Club in 1885. Fairbanks, the first president of the club, presided over meetings at her home on the corner of Park Avenue and what is now Sixteenth St. The idea for the club came from Mrs. Albert Baker. While visiting Crawfordsville, IN, Baker attended a women's literary club meeting and was inspired to create a similar organization in Indianapolis. The original purpose of the Indianapolis club was to present sketches of literary figures, read their works, and participate in discussion. However, as the club grew, this purpose expanded to include the reading of personal essays, fiction, and poetry written by the club members themselves as well as guest speakers and authors.

The Fortnightly Literary Club took as their motto a quote from Shakespeare: "Light Seeking Light, Doth Light of Light Beguile" and a lighted lamp with a book became their symbol. These features are visible on the club materials throughout its history.

Soon after the club's founding, in 1892, the club outgrew the space provided in Fairbanks' home. The club moved to the original Propylaeum where they would continue to meet for the next 31 years. Once that building was razed in 1923, the club moved to the new Propylaeum location.

The club continued to grow throughout its history. New members joined, including the daughters and granddaughters of original founders. When members passed away, they were honored with a memorial reading at the following club meeting.

Each year, the club produced a yearbook detailing upcoming readings and lectures. In addition, the club invited guest speakers and held luncheons, teas, and anniversary parties. In 1985, the club celebrated its 100th anniversary by members dressing in fashions popular throughout the club's 100 year history.

2015 marks the 130th anniversary of the Fortnightly Literary Club which continues to meet in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Information in collection
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series One: Club History

This series contains a number of historical accounts written regarding the Club's history. Additionally, it includes the recollections of past club presidents written in 1948.

Series Two: Members

This series contains lists of members as well as more detailed information. The club kept member binders that contained a page for each Fortnightly member. This series contains the contents of two of those binders. Each member's page profiles their involvement with the Fortnightly Literary Club. This series also contains memorials for deceased members. When a club member passed away, a memorial was written and read at a club meeting.

Series Three: Correspondence

This series contains miscellaneous correspondence for the Fortnightly Literary Club.

Series Four: Minutes and Administrative

This series contains the minute books of the Fortnightly Literary Club from 1885 to 1998 as well as undated and loose minutes from committee meetings. Early minutes for the club (1885–1888) appear twice in two different bound versions of the Fortnightly Minutes. They were copied into a new minute book that continues until 1896. Also included in this series is the ballot box used for Fortnightly Club meetings.

Series Five: Financial Records

The Financial records for the club contain ledger books, budgets, annual reports, audits, and miscellaneous notes.

Series Six: Events

This series contains event planning documents, reservations, and dues, as well as ribbons related to a number of events planned by or attended by Fortnightly members.

Series Six: Clippings

This series contains a number of newspaper clippings from 1905–1997 that deal with the Club.

Series Seven: Writing and Essays

This series contains a number of essays read at Fortnightly Club meetings, magazine compilations of essays, and, a manual for writing.

Series Eight: Yearbooks, 1885-2005
This series contains the annual yearbooks for the Fortnightly Literary Club from 1885-2005. Throughout the history of the club, an annual yearbook program was printed to indicate the schedule of speakers, current and past members, and the Club's constitution and bylaws.

**Series Nine: Photographs, 1950–1993**

This series contains photographs from 1950 to 2009. The majority of the photographs are from anniversary events held by the members where current members would dress up in period clothing representative of the club's history.
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