

**Collection #**  
**SC2943**

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S READING CIRCLE OF INDIANA CERTIFICATE, 1893**

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF                   1 folder  
COLLECTION:

COLLECTION  
DATES:

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NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Young People's Reading Circle was preceded by the Teachers' Reading Circle, which was created in 1884 by the Indiana Teachers' Association. Marshall County Superintendent W. E. Bailey introduced the idea of a reading circle for Indiana school children at a County Superintendents State Association meeting in 1887, following a positive report about the success of the Teachers' Reading Circle. The State Teachers' Association organized a volunteer committee to research the feasibility of standardizing the general reading of students. This committee included a history professor from Earlham College, the president of the State Normal School, and the Superintendent of Edinburgh Schools.

At a subsequent Association meeting, the committee reported that a reading circle for young people would serve to "substitute ... the trashy and often vicious reading matter which finds its way into the hands of children and youth" with selected literature that was instead "chaste in its language and imagery, and pure in its moral tone." Association members unanimously voted to establish such a moralizing endeavor, and appointed the Board of Directors of the Teachers' Reading Circle as its facilitators.

Immediately the board decided on annual reading lists of sixteen to twenty books for five groups, which were students in (1) second grade, (2) third grade, (3) fourth and fifth grades, (4) sixth and seventh grades, as well as (5) eighth and "advanced grades." The board's reading lists included various books on subjects ranging from mythology, colonial history and poetry to biology, non-West travel and nature or mammal study, according to a group's reading level. Annual book lists between 1887-1888 and 1904-1905 included *Aesop's Fables* (second grade); *American History Stories* (third grade); *The Story of Indiana, Some Successful Women, and Neighbors with Wings and Fins* (fourth and fifth grades); *Fairy Land of Science and Tropical Africa* (sixth and seventh grades); as well as *Julius Caesar, Ethics for Young People, and Indiana Poets and Poetry* (eighth and advanced grades).

Reading at least one book from a year's reading list would earn a student a certificate of membership in the Young People's Reading Circle. By the 1902-1903 year there were 141,787 members in the Circle. At first members were charged fifty cents (25 cent membership fee plus 25 cent examination fee) to support the Board and management expenses, but after three years the fee was eliminated. Instead, the Board cooperated with book publishers to receive selected books, which were in high demand due to the Reading Circle, at a reduced rate.

Sources:

Indiana Teacher's Reading Circle. *Concerning the history and management of the teachers' and young people's reading circles of Indiana* (1905). MSN, 10 Mar. 2001.  
<http://archive.org/details/concerninghistor00indi>

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of a Young People's Reading Circle of Indiana certificate for Mary E. Reynolds dated March 12, 1893. The certificate is signed by W. H. Elson and W. H. Glascock, who were the president and secretary of the group, respectively, at that time. The words "Wm B. Burford Lith. Indianapolis" appear in small print below the signatures.

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Young People's Reading Circle of Indiana Certificate,  
awarded to Mary E. Reynolds, 1893

### **CONTAINER**

Folder 1

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2943).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.