The papers of Mary White Ovington were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by Mrs. Carrie Burton Overton, Miss Ovington's secretary, in 1969, 1971 and 1973 and were opened for research in 1973.

Mary White Ovington was born in Brooklyn in 1865. In 1895, after education in private schools and at Radcliffe College, she began a career as an social worker. From 1904 on, she devoted herself to the particular problems of Negro populations in New York and other cities. In 1909 she participated in the founding of the NAACP. She remained an officer and prominent figure in the organization until her retirement in 1947.

Miss Ovington was the author of several books and numerous articles. Her history of the NAACP, The Walls Came Tumbling Down, is in both the Archives Library and the Wayne State Purdy Library collections. Miss Ovington died in New York in 1951.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

- Unpublished autobiographical material by Miss Ovington
- Living conditions of the poor in New York City in the early 1900s
- Negroes in the American South in the early 1900s
- Foundation and growth of the NAACP
- The Civil Rights Movement, in general, up to 1947
- Ovington family history, 1800-1948

Among the important correspondents are: (an index to the location of these letters will be found on the last page of the guide)

Jane Addams
Arna Bontemps
Benjamin Cardozo
John White Chadwick
Lorenza Cole
Babette Deutsch
W. E. B. DuBois
Louis Gannett
William J. Ghent
Shirley Graham
Roland Hayes
John Haynes Holmes
Langston Hughes
James Weldon Johnson
Herbert Lehman
Claude McKay
Elmer Rice
Robert H. Schauffler
A. B. Spingarn
J. E. Spingarn
Carl Van Vechten
Oswald Garrison Villard
Lyman Ward
Beatrice Webb
Walter White
Roy Wilkins
Richard Wright
Max Yergan
Contents

1/2 manuscript boxes

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Series V, Boxes 4-5
  Published Books: Records and Manuscripts

Series VI, Boxes 5A-6
  Early Unpublished Writings

Series VII, Boxes 6-7
  Later Unpublished Writings

Series VIII, Boxes 7-8
  Ovington Family Papers

Series IX, Boxes 9-10
  The Diaries of Charles K. Ovington

Series X, Box 10
  Writings by Friends

Series XI, Boxes 10-12
  Miscellaneous

Non-manuscript material
  Approximately 50 photographs relating to Miss Ovington and the
  NAACP have been placed in the Archives' Audio-Visual Collections.
Series 1
Box 1
Autobiographical Writings

The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the period from the 1860's to 1933. The material appears to have been written between 1910 and 1933.

Box 1
6-9. "Reminiscences" (original)
10. "Reminiscences" (fragment)
11-25. Autobiographical manuscripts
26-27. Manuscript on Jamaica, 1910
28-31. Diary of a trip, 1933

Series II
Boxes 1-3
Correspondence

Cards, letters, notes and telegrams sent to Miss Ovington from professional associates and friends. The files are arranged chronologically and cover the period from 1872 to 1948. (For correspondence regarding published books, see Series V)

Box 1
32-40. 1872-1927

Box 2
1-38. 1928-1947

Box 3
1-7. 1948 and no date
Miss Ovington pasted copies of most of her short publications in scrapbooks. Since the pages are now disintegrating, most of the material in this series has been photocopied. The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the years 1904-1940.

8. "The Penny Paper," "By the Playground," "John White Chadwick; In Memory"
9. "The Colored Women in Domestic Service in New York City"
10. "The Settlement in America"
14. "Working Girl's Clubs"
15-16. Reports to the New York Post (fragments)
18. "A Life of Service" (fragment)
22. "How the NAACP Began"
24. "On Christmas Eve," two untitled fragments
25. "The United States in Porto Rico"
Box 3 (cont'd)


27-29. "The Shadow"

30. "Revisiting the South"

31. Letter to The Forum, "Book Chat," letter to The Nation

32. "A Christmas Happening"

33. "A Christmas Tale"

34. "In the Land Where the Sons of the Prophet are the Children of France"


36. Two book reviews, untitled fragment, "Nativity"

Series IV
Box 4
Personal Financial Accounts

The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the years 1873-1883, and 1915-1947.

Box 4

1. 1873-1883 (Account book)

2-17. 1915-1947

Series V
Boxes 4-5
Published Books: Records and Manuscripts

The series contains correspondence, contracts and other papers relating to the publication of Zeke (1931) and The Walls Came Tumbling Down (1947). Included are three partial drafts of The Walls. The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the years 1930-1947.

Box 4

18. Correspondence on Zeke

19. Notes on Zeke

20. Publisher's agreement on Zeke
Box 4 (cont'd)

21. Royalty statements for Zeke and Upward Path
22. Correspondence on The Walls and publisher's contract
23-26. Correspondence on The Walls
27-32. The Walls Came Tumbling Down, first draft
33-37. The Walls, second draft

Box 5

1-21. The Walls, third draft
22-24. The Walls, final draft
25-31. The Walls, miscellaneous papers

Series VI
Boxes 5A-6
Early Unpublished Writings

The files are arranged alphabetically, by title. The material appears to have been written between 1880 and 1900.

Box 5A

1. "The Celtic Sept"
2. "The Harvard Annex"
3. "Heroines of English Novels"
4. "Herrick as a Poet of Nature," "Charles Dickens"
5. "Literature for Young Girls"
6. "My Gallery"
7. "Ode to a Lamb Chop"
8. "The Order"
9. "Parsnips For Two"
10. "Peterkin Journal"
11. "Sidney Lanier"
12. "Tip-side Up"
Box 6 1896 and no date

1-2. "A Wealth of Fancy"

3. "Young Unitarian Women"

4. Miscellaneous themes

5-13. Untitled novel

14. Untitled story

Series VII
Boxes 6-7
Later Unpublished Writings

The files are arranged alphabetically, by title. The material appears to have been written between 1900 and 1942.

Box 6

15. "Alias Vera Fortune"

16. "Birds"

17-28. The Boy Detective (novel)

29-34. The Pokam River Mystery (radio drama)

35. "Catching a Baby" (a series of photographs, "Alabama Midwives," in the Audio-Visual Collection, accompanies this text)

36. "Christmas Peace"

37. "Contributions of the German Immigration to American Life"

38. "Enter Babbitt" and other sketches

39. "Georgia, Invisible Empire State"

40. "The Gull"
Box 7

1. "Her Mysterious Journey"
2. "The Nodding Head"
3. "One Fight More"
4. From a packet marked "plans for plays, MWO-HDO"
5-6. Verse
6. "The Price of a Coat"
7. "Scientific Approach to Peace"
8. "Shopping Yesterday"
9-11. "The Spode Cup"
11. "To Each His Fear"
12. "What Zeke Found"
13-16. "Winston, The 'Free County' of Alabama"
14. "Womens Clubs"
15. "Zillah"
16. Manuscript Fragment
17. Miscellaneous sketches on political themes
18. Untitled play in Four acts

Series VIII
Boxes 7-8
Ovington Family Papers

The series includes correspondence and miscellaneous writing by, or sent to, members of the Ovington family, including Miss Ovington herself. The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the period 1854-1942.

Box 7

26. Ovington Family genealogy
27-36. Theodore Ovington to Louise Ketchum Ovington
Box 7 (cont'd)

37-40. Typed copies of 27-36.

Box 8

1. "Poems" (an anthology, marked "L. Ovington from Annie Chadwick")
2. Verse by Louise Ovington
3-6. Miss Ovington to her family
7. Verse and writings with accompanying letter
8. John White Chadwick manuscript on Hebrews 2:15
10-11. Dr. N.E. Gorke-Davis to C.K. Ovington
12. C.K. Ovington, miscellaneous correspondence
13-14. Mrs. C.K. Ovington, miscellaneous correspondence
15-22. Yadwiga Smyk to Mrs. C.K. Ovington
23-26. Jennie Harding to Mrs. C.K. Ovington
27. Postcards from Gotts Island, Maine
28-29. Elizabeth W. Kingsbury, (Betty) to Miss Ovington
30-33. Elizabeth W. Kingsbury, "The Lives of Two Young Shepherds"
34. Elizabeth W. Kingsbury, 3 pencil drawings
35-39. Correspondence concerning Georgia Ovington
40. Family to Miss Ovington
Series IX
Boxes 9-10
The Diaries of Charles K. Ovington

The original manuscripts were returned to the family after the following photocopies were made. The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the years 1856-1929.

Box 9

1. 1856-1874
2-21. 1881-1892
22-39. 1905-1923

Box 10

1-10. 1924-1929

Series X
Box 10

Writing by Friends

Many of Miss Ovington's friends, like herself, wrote stories and verse, examples of which make up this series. The files are arranged alphabetically, by author's name. The material is not dated.

Box 10

12. Rosalie M. Jonas, verse
13. Ruth Moore, verse
14. Beth Torrey, "Little Elephant"
15-24. Elisa Van Wyck verse and related writing
25. Miscellaneous, verse
Items relating to Miss Ovington's career or careers of her friends and associates. The files are arranged in chronological order and cover the period from 1905 to 1948.

**Box 10**

26. Book of Birthdays and Wedding Dates
27. Sydney Oliver "The White Man's Burden at Home"
28. Articles on Miss Ovington
29. NAACP branches list, Atlanta Conference list
30. James Weldon Johnson, "Self-Determining Haiti"

**Box 11**

1. "Book Chats"
5. Haldeman-Julius, "Clarence Darrow's Defense of a Negro"
6. "Cheers" (student handbook), Tuskegee Institute
7. Lorenza Cole, papers
8. Christmas card lists
9. Christmas card lists
10. Christmas card lists
11. James Weldon Johnson Dinner Program
12. "Negroes Holding Presidential Appointment Offices Under the Roosevelt Administration, 1933-1937"
13. "Visits to Branches," "Report to (NAACP) Board by Miss Ovington re: Southern Trip"
14. Shirley Graham, "Spirituals to Symphonies"
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15. Miscellaneous articles and souvenirs
16. Address books
17. George Padmore, articles
18. Miscellaneous articles and souvenirs
20. Appointment calendar
21. Atlanta University Bulletin
22. W.E.B. Du Bois, reports on Pan African Congresses
23. George M. Houser, "Erasing the Color Line"
24-35. NAACP minutes and bulletins, 1946-1947

Box 12

1-6. NAACP minutes and bulletins, 1946-1947
7. New Africa (Bulletin)
8. Robert F. Wagner, "Service and Conduct of Negro Soldiers"
9. From Mary White Ovington's "Book File"
10. "Notes on Conversation between Miss Ovington and Mr. (Walter) White"
11. Minutes of the Negro Labor Assembly
13. CORE, "Corelator"
14. Matthew Browning, "My Tour Through Dixie"
15. NAACP tributes to Mary White Ovington
16. Book reviews and lists
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