Tracy W. McGregor Collection

Papers, 1846-1970
(Predominantly, 1891-1954)

11.5 linear feet

Accession #1387
OCLC #

The papers of Tracy W. McGregor were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by the McGregor Fund and Philip P. Mason in March of 1973 and opened for research in September of 2005.

Tracy William McGregor, grandson of a Presbyterian minister and eldest son of Thomas McGregor and Elizabeth Taitt McGregor, was born April 14, 1869 in Berlin Heights, Ohio. Four years later the family moved to Toledo, where, in 1889, his father closed his music store and set up the Helping Hand Mission for homeless men. In 1890 Thomas McGregor came to Detroit to establish a second mission, but died less than a month after it opened its doors in April of 1891. Tracy McGregor was attending Oberlin College at the time, preparing for a career in the ministry, but left school to take up his father's work in Detroit. Under his leadership, the McGregor Institute, as it was later called, grew to be one of the largest of its kind in the country.

McGregor married Katherine Whitney, daughter of David Whitney, Jr., one of Detroit's wealthiest businessmen, in 1901. She shared his social conscience and together they used her substantial fortune to carve a place for themselves among Detroit's leading philanthropists.

In addition to his social welfare activities, Tracy McGregor devoted himself to the betterment of the growing metropolis of Detroit. As the guiding force behind the Thursday Group, an informal club of influential businessmen and professionals working behind the scenes to promote reform, he helped spearhead improvements in housing, schools, criminal justice and services for the mentally and physically disabled. In 1917, he helped organize the Detroit Community Union and Patriotic Fund, forerunners of today's United Way for Southeastern Michigan. He also served as president of the Merrill-Palmer School and the Provident Loan and Savings Society. Indeed, his growing civic and philanthropic commitments forced him to turn over the reins of the McGregor Institute to his brother Murray in 1915.

The crowning achievement of McGregor philanthropy occurred in 1925 when he and his wife created the McGregor Fund to channel their enormous wealth to social service during their lifetimes and beyond.
In the 1930's the McGregors moved to Washington, D.C., where Tracy had more time to feed his passion for rare-book collecting. After his death on May 6, 1936, his valuable library of Americana was donated to the University of Virginia, where it is housed in a special room of the school's Alderman Library. Katherine Whitney McGregor died in 1954.

The Tracy W. McGregor Collection contains correspondence, reports, journals, meeting minutes, publications and other material documenting the extended McGregor family, the founding and flourishing of the McGregor Institute, his civic and philanthropic activities, especially with regard to the McGregor Fund, and his later life as a bibliophile. The collection also contains some contemporary documentation compiled from other sources by McGregor biographer, Philip P. Mason, as well as oral histories and other material collected for the Fund's McGregor biography project.
Important subjects in the collection:

Charitable and social work--Michigan--Detroit
Depressions 1929--Michigan--Detroit
Homeless persons--Michigan--Detroit
Hulbert, Henry S.
McGregor, Douglas
McGregor, Katherine Whitney
McGregor, Thomas
McGregor Fund
McGregor Institute
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
McMath-Hulbert Observatory
Poor--Michigan--Detroit
Rare books--Collectors and collecting

Important correspondents in the collection:

Randolph Adams
Fred Butzel
Harry Clemons
Percival Dodge
J. L. Hudson
Henry S. Hulbert
James Inglis
Douglas McGregor
Katherine Whitney McGregor
Murray McGregor
Thomas McGregor
Francis C. McMath
Robert R. McMath
Sidney T. Miller
Kenneth L. Moore
William J. Norton
Alexander G. Ruthven
Frank J. Sladen
Cleveland Thurber
Renville Wheat
Kirby B. White
Lawrence C. Wroth
Contents

17 manuscript boxes
3 clamshell boxes

Series I, Family and Personal Files, 1846-1967, Boxes 1-7:
Correspondence with family members and others, journals containing
daily diary entries as well as notes on a wide range of topics for
Mission talks, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, oral histories
and other biographical information, personal financial records and
material related to the publication of his 1933 speech at a convention
of social workers in Detroit.

Series II, McGregor Institute, 1890-1956, Boxes 8-11:
Correspondence, annual service reports, financial statements,
newsletters and promotional literature, press coverage,
and his notes and other material documenting the founding and
history of the Mission and the men it served.

Series III, Civic and Philanthropic Activities, 1900-1937,
Boxes 12-13:
Correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, newspaper clippings and
other material documenting both the McGregors' charitable activities,
but in particular, Tracy McGregor's involvement in the reorganization
of the delivery of social services in Detroit and his participation in the
Thursday Group.

Series IV, McGregor Fund, 1925-1970, Boxes 14-16:
Correspondence, particularly that of Fund trustee Henry S. Hulbert,
reports, meeting minutes, financial records and biographical
information documenting the charitable foundation's projects and its
board of trustees.

Series V, Book Collecting, 1921-1970, Boxes 17-20:
Correspondence with book dealers and other experts concerning
McGregor's rare book purchases as well as the establishment of the
McGregor Library at the University of Virginia in 1939. Included are
files documenting his partnership with the American Historical
Association to enhance the American history holdings of college
libraries, the so-called "McGregor Plan."

Non-manuscript material:
A number of photographs have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual
Collection.
Series I
Family and Personal Files, 1846-1967
Boxes 1-7

Box 1
1. McGregor, Eliza; corres. — Tracy McGregor, 1884-93, 1906
2. McGregor, Eliza; corres., n.d., 1890-95
3-7. McGregor, Elizabeth; corres. — Tracy McGregor, 1846-1921
8. McGregor, Elizabeth; death, 1921
10. McGregor, Elizabeth; Taitt family, 1846-1921
12. McGregor, Katherine; death, estate, 1954
13. McGregor, Katherine; "Detroit's Lady Bountiful" (Detroit News-Tribune), 1902
14. McGregor, Katherine; marriage to Tracy McGregor, 1901
15-16. McGregor, Katherine; mental condition — corres., notes, 1937-44
17. McGregor, Katherine; Whitney family — David, Jr.
18. McGregor, Katherine; Whitney family — Flora Demme
19. McGregor, Katherine; Whitney family — Grace Hoff
21. McGregor, Thomas; biographical information
22. McGregor, Thomas; corres., 1872-91
23. McGregor, Thomas; corres. — Tracy McGregor, 1890-91
24. McGregor, Thomas; death — condolence letters, 1891

Box 2
1. McGregor, Thomas; death — condolence letters, 1891
2. McGregor, Thomas; notes on faith and love, n.d.
3. McGregor, Tracy; address books, birthday book
4-6. McGregor, Tracy; appointment books, 1928-30
7. McGregor, Tracy; articles about — "Tracy McGregor as a Leader of Social Reform," 1967
8. McGregor, Tracy; articles about — "Tracy McGregor as He Appears to W. C. Richards" (The Detroiter), 1928
9. McGregor, Tracy; articles about — "Tracy McGregor, Practical Philanthropist" (Detroit Free Press), 1905
10. McGregor, Tracy; biographical information
11. McGregor, Tracy; biographical information — Pliny Marsh interview, 1954
12. McGregor, Tracy; biographical information — Murray McGregor interview, 1954
Tracy W. McGregor Collection

Box 3

1. McGregor, Tracy; biographical information—James Redhouse interview, 1954
2. McGregor, Tracy; biographical information—reminiscences, misc., 1954-55
3. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—Brown family
4. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—Ebaugh, Franklin (re psychiatry), 1936
5. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—McGregor, Donald, 1928
6-8. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—McGregor, Douglas, 1922-29, 1933-35
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11-12. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—Slagle, Kathryn, 1934-35
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19. McGregor, Tracy; death, 1936

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1. McGregor, Tracy; education, 1886-91
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4. McGregor, Tracy; estate—loans, 1936
5. McGregor, Tracy; estate—Reliance Copper Co., 1922-38
7. McGregor, Tracy; finances—accounts book, 1912-22
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11. McGregor, Tracy; finances—real estate/Beaubien Madison, 1913-28

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1. McGregor, Tracy; finances—real estate/Brush Farm, 1925-28
2. McGregor, Tracy; finances—real estate/Sheridan Ave., 1921-30
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6. McGregor, Tracy; honors, memorials—University of Detroit honorary degree, 1925
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8. McGregor, Tracy; honors, memorials—McGregor School (Detroit), 1949-67
9. McGregor, Tracy; speech—"Social Service as a Life Profession," 1910
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11. Brush St. building; property acquisition, 1909-28
14. History; founding, 1890-91
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17. History; "The McGregor Mission in Detroit" by Sidney T. Miller, c. 1899
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1. History; Tracy McGregor notes
2. Homeless men; Tracy McGregor speech, notes, n.d.
3. "Homeless Men, The Effects of Prohibition on" (radio address by Murray McGregor), 1938
4. Investigation, 1930
5. McGregor, Thomas; "Gospel for the Masses," 1890-91
6. McGregor, Tracy; corres., 1898, 1921-34
7. McGregor, Tracy; corres.—J. L. Hudson, 1906, 1910-12
8. McGregor, Tracy; notes for Mission addresses
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11. Mission men; cemetery plots, 1917-36
12. Mission men; John Hurley
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16. Mission men; statistics, 1893, 1908-12, 1931
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6. Thursday Group; member biographies
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8. Thursday Group; political endorsements, 1917-18
9. Thursday Group; projects—Americanization schools, 1915-19
10. Thursday Group; projects—Detroit Housing Assn., 1914-15
11. Thursday Group; projects—Kruesi report, 1914-15
12. Thursday Group; projects—Michigan State Prison reform, 1911
13. Thursday Group; projects—Wayne Co. prosecutor fund, 1919-22
14. Thursday Group; projects—Winterhalter Parental School, 1919-24
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11-13. Financial statements, 1931-Jan 1939

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