

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.

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