



ArchivesSpace

Guide to the Prismatic Club Records UR001269

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	Prismatic Club (Detroit, Mich.)
Title:	Prismatic Club Records
ID:	UR001269
Date [inclusive]:	1867-2007
Date [bulk]:	1867-1879
Date [bulk]:	1960-2000
Physical Description:	46.5 Linear Feet (25.5 MB, 6 OS, 1 AV drawer)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	The Prismatic Club, a literary social club, was founded in Detroit in 1867. This collection includes administrative and officers' files, minutes, newsletters and club event documents, as well as members' presentations, publications and biographical forms. There are some photos and graphics, mainly cartoons and sketches by members. Photo negatives and slides of the club's portrait collection and some events are in the Reuther Audiovisual Department.

Citation Style

"Prismatic Club Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

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History

On January 10, 1867, five Detroit gentlemen, led by Samuel R. Bartlett, met to form the Prismatic Club. Patterned after a Massachusetts literary society, The Social Circle of Concord, the Prismatic Club, still active in 2017, is the oldest club of its kind in Detroit and one of the oldest in the United States. The

men-only club has a cultural, social and literary focus. Members come from a wide range of professions and careers. They have included many prominent Detroiters and Michiganders including elected officials, university presidents, businessmen, attorneys, physicians, artist and architects, clerics, historians and teachers, librarians and archivists. The club also elects selected honorary members from other parts of the country. Members give presentations weekly on a variety of topics, including history, medicine, engineering, genealogy, art, literature and gastronomy--any subjects encouraging the exchange of ideas. The club presents several annual social events, notably a members' annual dinner and a number of programs to which women are invited. Since 1928, the Prismatic Club has had its clubhouse at the former home of member Levi L. Barbour at 80 Eliot Street in Detroit. The club has commissioned portraits of club presidents since 1877 and therefore has one of the best portrait collections of the area's civic, social, business and community leaders. Two books of Prismatic Club history have been published: *Prismatic of Detroit: Prismatic Club 1866-1966*, by Philip P. Mason and Paul T. Rankin (1970), and *Prismatic of Detroit: Prismatic Club 1969-1996* (1997).

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Scope and Content

Series 1: Administrative files, 1867-2007. This series includes officers' files and correspondence, minutes and record books, some legal and financial documents. Series 2: Presentations and speeches by members, 1867-2007. Series 3: Event documents, 1867-2007. Annual dinner invitations and programs, event announcements and ephemera, some correspondence. Series 4: Graphics and photographs, 1867-1981. Club photographs, photographs and photocopies of some presidents' portraits, sketches and cartoons. Series 5: Club and member publications, 1869-2006. Club newsletters, member publications, various documents, some correspondence, one artifact. Various documents, proofs and correspondence re club history books. Series 6: Member biographies and biographical forms, 1867-2006. Note: two boxes in this series are restricted, accessible with Prismatic Club permission. Dates noted on folders correspond to year when the member joined the Prismatic Club. Series 7: Audiovisual materials, 1872-2002. One box of photographic negatives. One box of slides containing images of club presidents' portraits and some club events. One drawer of oversize club books with texts and drawings, and other loose drawings and documents.

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Arrangement

Arranged in 7 series – Series 1 (Boxes 1-19, 38, 39), Series 2 (Boxes 20-30, 49, 50), Series 3 (Boxes 31,32), Series 4 (Boxes 33, 34, 51-55), Series 5 (Boxes 35-37, 46-48), Series 6 (Boxes 40-45), Series 7 (Boxes 56-57). Boxes grouped by series, not necessarily in numerical order. Folders are generally in alphabetical order within series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

Acquisition

Initial accession from the Prismatic Club to the Reuther Library was in 1962. There have been subsequent additions to the collection.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Aimee Ergas on June 1, 2017. Original processing done and draft finding aid written by John Fillicaro.

Access

Collection is open for research, with the exception of two boxes (Boxes 49 and 50) containing recent members' biographies. Access can be obtained from Prismatic Club officers.

Use

Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library "Rules for Use of Archival Materials." Restrictions: Researchers may encounter records of a sensitive nature – personnel files, case records and those involving investigations, legal and other private matters. Privacy laws and restrictions imposed by the Library prohibit the use of names and other personal information which might identify an individual, except with written permission from the Director and/or the donor.

Other Copies

Copies of some text and graphic materials may be available at the Prismatic Club, 80 Eliot Street, Detroit, MI. The contents of Box19a has been digitized and placed into the Hold. Digital_part/UR001269/Box19a.

Existence and Location of Originals

An original letter from Brigham Young to the club president has been removed from the records to the Reuther Library vault. A copy of the letter is in Box 48, Folder 22.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Wayne State University Presidents' Collections (Frank Cody, David D. Henry, Clarence B. Hilberry, William R. Keast); Richard T. Frankenstein Papers; Arthur F. Lederle Papers; John Dorsey Papers

Transfers

Photo negatives and slides of the club's portrait collection and some events are in the Reuther Audiovisual Department.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Detroit (Mich.) -- Intellectual Life -- 20th Century
- Social history

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Administrative Files, 1867-2007

Title/Description	Instances	
John Bissell, 1895	Box 1	Folder 1
Arthur Broomfield, 1949	Box 1	Folder 2
Alexander Blaine, 1967	Box 1	Folder 3
A.G. Boynton, 1875	Box 1	Folder 4

Walter Boynton, 1932	Box 1	Folder 5
Henry D. Brown, 1961	Box 1	Folder 6
Ralph Burton, 1964	Box 1	Folder 7
Glenn Coulter, 1957	Box 1	Folder 8
John Danhof, 1970	Box 1	Folder 9
John Dorsey, 1969	Box 1	Folder 10
Duane Doty, 1867-1868	Box 1	Folder 11
Douglas Dow, 1958	Box 1	Folder 12
E.G. Holden, 1888	Box 1	Folder 13
Percy Ives, 1901-1902	Box 1	Folder 14
Augustus Leggett, 1867	Box 1	Folder 15
Joseph Parsons, 1960	Box 1	Folder 16
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Paul Rankin, 1962	Box 1	Folder 18
Frank Ryerson, 1951	Box 1	Folder 19
Ernest Shurly, 1909	Box 1	Folder 20
Frederick Stearns, 1867	Box 1	Folder 21
Bryant Walker, 1905	Box 1	Folder 22
Granger Whitney, 1922	Box 1	Folder 23
Alfred Whittaker, 1976	Box 1	Folder 24
Harold Whittingham, 1968	Box 1	Folder 25
Arthur Woodford, 1982	Box 1	Folder 26
James Bartlett, 1868	Box 1	Folder 27
John S. Coppin, 1968	Box 1	Folder 28
D. Henry Farrand, 1878-1884, 1900	Box 1	Folder 29
Lewis Ives, 1869	Box 1	Folder 30
Secretaries' files, unknown correspondents, various dates	Box 1	Folder 31
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John Bissell, 1900-1904	Box 1	Folder 33
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Harold L. Bowen, 1941-1944	Box 1	Folder 35
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George Klein, 1949-1952	Box 1	Folder 42
Burton J. Lemon, 1928-1930	Box 1	Folder 43
Henry Lyster, 1939-1940	Box 1	Folder 44
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Ayers Morison, 1979-1990	Box 2	Folder 1
Ayers Morison, 1990-1992	Box 2	Folder 2
Ayers Morison, annual dinner documents, various years	Box 2	Folder 3
Ayers Morison, Battle of New Orleans research material, 1994	Box 2	Folder 4
Ayers Morison, humor, various years	Box 2	Folder 5
William Rohrkemper, 1952-1966	Box 2	Folder 6
Joseph Sill, 1905-1908	Box 2	Folder 7
Eugene C. Skinner, 1896-1898	Box 2	Folder 8
William Stapleton, Jr., 1896-1898	Box 2	Folder 9
William Stapleton, Jr., 1933-1935	Box 2	Folder 10
William Stapleton, Jr., 1935-1936	Box 2	Folder 11
William Stapleton, Jr., 1936, 1951-1973	Box 2	Folder 12
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Club constitution, 1867	Box 2	Folder 14
Club constitution, amendments, 1868	Box 2	Folder 15
Club constitution, amended, 1878	Box 2	Folder 16
Club constitution, amendments, 1958-1959, 1996	Box 2	Folder 17
Insurance documents, 1932-1972	Box 2	Folder 18
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Meeting locations, 1867-1871, 1913	Box 2	Folder 20
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Membership rosters, 1867-1908, 1931-1939	Box 2	Folder 22

Membership rosters, 1940-1970	Box 2	Folder 23
Officers' files, membership committee, 1966-1983	Box 2	Folder 24
Officers' files, long-range planning committee, 1978	Box 2	Folder 25
Officers' files, songs, toasts, various years	Box 2	Folder 26
Report of annual meeting at Frederick Stearns, bound volume, 1868	Box 3	Folder 1
Constitution, by-laws and minutes, bound volume, with inserts, 1866-1879	Box 3	Folder 2
Record of meeting, 10th anniversary, bound volume, 1877	Box 3	Folder 3
Secretary's minutes, volume 2, bound volume, with inserts, 1879 January-1890 January	Box 3	Folder 4
Record and minute book, volume 3, bound volume, with inserts, 1890 January-1904 December	Box 4	Folder 1
Record book, volume 4, bound volume, with inserts, 1905 January-1920 January	Box 4	Folder 2
Record book, volume 5, bound volume, with inserts, 1920 January-1928 March	Box 4	Folder 3
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Secretary's notebook, John Ehrlich, 1961-1975	Box 6	Folder 3
Meeting ledger, minute book, bound volume, with inserts, 1971-1980	Box 6	Folder 4
Secretary's notebook, John Ehrlich, 1976-1979	Box 6	Folder 5
Secretary's notebook, John Ehrlich, 1979-1980	Box 6	Folder 6
Minutes, Gordon Manson, 1980 October-1997 May	Box 6	Folder 7
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Officers files, Secretary, John Ehrlich, 1965	Box 7	Folder 6
Officers files, Secretary, John Ehrlich, 1966		

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Officers files, Secretary, John Ehrlich, 1966	Box 7	Folder 8
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Officers files, Secretary, John Ehrlich, centennial projects, 1964-1967	Box 7	Folder 11
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Richard Frankenstein, Roy Gamble Memorial, 1973	Box 9	Folder 9

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Gordon Manson, correspondence, documents, 1984-1985	Box 10	Folder 10
Gordon Manson, correspondence, documents, 1985-1986	Box 10	Folder 11
Gordon Manson, correspondence, documents, 1986-1987	Box 10	Folder 12
Gordon Manson, correspondence, documents, 1987-1988	Box 10	Folder 13
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Gordon Manson, correspondence, documents, 1989-1990	Box 11	Folder 1
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Vittorio Re, presentations, drafts, 1980-1988	Box 12	Folder 6
Vittorio Re, presentations, drafts, 1991-2004	Box 12	Folder 7
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Charles Wolf, treasurers, executive committee correspondence, 1983-1992	Box 13	Folder 3
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Frank Menagh, treasurer's documents, 1952-1962	Box 15	Folder 18
George Price, treasurer's documents, 1972	Box 15	Folder 19
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Philip Mason, correspondence about the Club and archives, 1969-1972	Box 17	Folder 7
Philip Mason, correspondence about the Club and archives, 1970-2007	Box 17	Folder 8
Philip Mason, Bartlett biography, Tolman collection, 1972	Box 17	Folder 9
Philip Mason, correspondence with Wayne State University, 1978	Box 17	Folder 10
Professor L.T. Davis, correspondence of and about, 1870-1904, 1960s	Box 17	Folder 11
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Eliot Street clubhouse, correspondence and documents, "Morison," 1949-1985	Box 38	Folder 9
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Eliot Street clubhouse, correspondence and documents, "Manson," 1984-1994	Box 39	Folder 1
Eliot Street clubhouse, correspondence and documents, V. Re (Manson), 1976-1992	Box 39	Folder 2
Eliot Street clubhouse, correspondence and documents, V. Re, 1979-2001	Box 39	Folder 3
Eliot Street clubhouse, correspondence and documents, C. Wolf, 2001-2005	Box 39	Folder 4
Eliot Street clubhouse, Brush Park Owners Association, 1993-1997	Box 39	Folder 5
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Series 2: Members' presentations and speeches, 1867-2007

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Presentation: At Last... A President, unidentified writer, possibly 1900	Box 21	Folder 3
Presentation: Carmina Prismatica, unidentified writer, 1870 January 6	Box 21	Folder 4
Presentation: Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 5
Presentation: Postponed, news clipping, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 6
Presentation: That's Quinby, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 7
Presentation: Notes by the Rev. Long Suffering Apocrypha Kent, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 8
Presentation: What Ought to Happen to Him, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 9
Presentation: The Defense of Dave, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 10
Presentation: Geography, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 11
Presentation: The Locomotive Engine, by Samuel Bartlett, before 1888	Box 21	Folder 12

Presentation: An Apology, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 13
Presentation: The Pennsylvania Bank, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 14
Presentation: Mark Twain's Forbidden Masterpiece, unidentified writer, after 1910	Box 21	Folder 15
Presentation: Now What on Earth is a Man to Do, unidentified writer, undated	Box 21	Folder 16
Presentation: To Deal Shrewd Blows, unidentified writer, circa 1870	Box 21	Folder 17
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Presentation: The Prismatic Alphabet, by Jean Hoon, after 1940	Box 21	Folder 20
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Presentation: Bibliography, by R. W. Storer, after 1952	Box 21	Folder 22
Presentation: Philosopher or Philosophaster, by Paul D. Aird, 1969 April 12	Box 21	Folder 23
Presentation: Yesterday and Today But Not Tomorrow, by W. Coit Allee, 1965 May 8	Box 21	Folder 24
Presentation: Travel is Educational, by W. Coit Allee, 1967 March 11	Box 21	Folder 25
Presentation: In a Mist, by John R. Axe, 1992 February 1	Box 21	Folder 26
Presentation: My Guest Tonight, by James A. Babcock, 1997 January 3	Box 21	Folder 27
Presentation: Travel: Michigan's Low-Tech Growth Industry, by Len Barnes, 1983 September 29	Box 21	Folder 28
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Presentation: Annual Dinner address, by John Bissell, 1985	Box 21	Folder 36
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Presentation: Art Collecting-Part 1, by John L. Booth, 1963	Box 21	Folder 38

Presentations: two by William Bostick, 1973, 1991	Box 21	Folder 39
Presentation: Carthage, by Harold L. Bowen, 1944	Box 21	Folder 40
Presentations: three by Harold L. Bowen, 1949, 1951, 1952	Box 21	Folder 41
Presentations: two by Harold L. Bowen, 1958, 1963	Box 22	Folder 1
Presentations: two by Harold L. Bowen, undated, 1965	Box 22	Folder 2
Presentations: four by Harold L. Bowen, undated, 1953	Box 22	Folder 3
Presentation: D. Ferrand Henry, by Herbert Bowen, 1918 January 5	Box 22	Folder 4
Presentations: two by Lem Bowen, 1963, 1968	Box 22	Folder 5
Presentations: two by Lem Bowen, 1970, 1974	Box 22	Folder 6
Presentations: Annual Dinner address, inaugural address, by Lem Bowen, 1975, 1976	Box 22	Folder 7
Presentation: Life and Career of William J. Norton, by Lem Bowen, John Ehrlich, 1960	Box 22	Folder 8
Presentation: The State Fair, by Albert Boynton, 1868 September 26	Box 22	Folder 9
Presentation: Digging in the Archives, by Walter Boynton, 1929 September	Box 22	Folder 10
Presentations: five by Stanley Brams, 1983-1994	Box 22	Folder 11
Presentations: two by Charles Brigham, undated, 1870	Box 22	Folder 12
Presentation: The Life and Times of Levi Lewis Barbour, by Henry D. Brown, 1961 January 7	Box 22	Folder 13
Presentation: The European Community and 1992, by Martin J. Bull, 1990 May 26	Box 22	Folder 14
Presentation: The Flight from Insecurity, by Earl S. Bullock, possibly 1935	Box 22	Folder 15
Presentations: two by Bruce J. Burton, 1988, 1999	Box 22	Folder 16
Presentation: The Title of 80 Eliot Street, by Frank Burton, 1953	Box 22	Folder 17
Presentations: four by Ralph James Burton, 1954-1961	Box 22	Folder 18
Presentations: five by Ralph J. Burton, 1960-1963	Box 22	Folder 19
Presentations: three by Ralph J. Burton, 1964, 1965	Box 22	Folder 20
Presentation: Quercus Virginiana 1794, and two poems, by Ralph Moore Burton, 1965, 1969	Box 22	Folder 21
Presentations: two by Ralph M. Burton, 1971, 1995	Box 22	Folder 22
Presentation: Rum, Sodomy and the Lash, by Ralph W. Burton 1993	Box 22	Folder 23

Presentation: The Philanthropies, by Brewster Campbell, circa 1955	Box 23	Folder 1
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Multiple slide trays and small boxes: slides of presidents' portraits, cartoons, Detroit zoo picnic 1963, annual dinner 1991. Plastic sheet of 20 slides marked "Prismatic Murals." Printed sheets with lists of portraits. One envelope containing two slides: "Ives cartoons."	Box 57	
"The True Story of the Four Companions." Large bound volume. Poems by A.G. Boynton, ink drawings by L.T. Ives. 1875. Fragile condition; binding broken.	Flat drawer 1	
"The Voice of the Sweet Singer of Michigan, Illustrated Edition." Large bound volume. Poems and prose by various club members, ink drawings by L.T. Ives. 1878. Fragile condition; binding broken.	Flat drawer 2	
Large folder with loose documents. Two drawings: Statue of Dr. McGraw; still life. Undated. Resolution of Board of Health of the City of Detroit in memory of Dr. Orlando W. Wight. 1888.	Flat drawer 3	
"Nursery Rhymes." Bound volume. Sixteen poems re various club members, ink drawings by L.T. Ives. 1872 January 8. Fragile condition; binding broken.	Flat drawer 4	
Large portfolio with loose sheets. "The Process of Fermentation Considered Prismatically." Four ink drawings-caricatures by L.T. Ives: vinegar, alcohol, sugar, starch. 1877. Fragile condition; binding broken.	Flat drawer 5	
Large folder. Two photos. 1. Group photo of 16 men, probably club members. Undated, probably 19th century. 2. Group photo with separate key to names. "Members of the Prismatic Club grouped on the porch of Dr. Ernest Shurley." Undated, probably early 20th century.	Flat drawer 6	
Certificate. Resolution ("passport") re Darius J. Davison, from Clerk of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. 1884 July 16. Fragile.	Flat drawer 7	

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