



**FINDING AID TO
THE PHILALETHEAN LITERARY SOCIETY
RECORDS, 1877-1924**

**Purdue University Libraries
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections
Research Center
504 West State Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058
(765) 494-2839**

<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol>

© 2013 Purdue University Libraries. All rights reserved.
Processed by: Virginia Pleasant, October 15, 2013

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Philalethean Literary Society, 1878- 1936
Title	Philalethean Literary Society records
Collection Identifier	MSP 101
Date Span	1877-1924
Abstract	The collection includes records ledgers, photos, and event programs documenting the activities of the Philalethean Literary Society, as well as their published constitution.
Extent	0.7 cubic feet (2 boxes)
Finding Aid Author	Virginia Pleasant
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Preferred Citation:	MSP 101, Philalethean Literary Society records, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University
Related Materials Information:	MSP 124, Eurodelphian Literary Society records MSP 34, Irving Literary Society records MSP 141, Carlyle Literary Society records MSP 142, Emersonian Literary Society records

Subjects and Genres

Organizations

Philalethian Literary Society

Topics

Literary Societies.

Purdue University--Students--Social life and customs

Purdue University—History

Women's history and culture

Women's clubs

Form and Genre Types

Event Programs

Handbooks

Records (documents)

History of Philaethean Literary Society

The Philaethean was a women's literary society at Purdue University that was founded in 1877 after a petition by women students for the creation of a literary club was sanctioned by the University. Prior to their recognition and sponsorship by the University, the group was known as the Cereal Society and hosted annual programs in 1876 and 1877. The first president of the Philaethean was Derexa Morey Errant. Errant also held the honor of coming up with the name of the society, which she borrowed from the Philaethean Society at Vassar (where she had previously attended). At its inception, the Philaethean was the only University sponsored extracurricular activity for women. The society's activities were modeled after those of the Irving Literary society (the only male literary society on campus at the time), and focused on literature, music and debate. The Philaethean found strong support from early Deans of Women, including Emma McRae and Carolyn Shoemaker. McRae's contributions were memorialized by the McRae Medal, which was awarded to a senior member of the Philaethean at their annual banquet for the duration of McRae's tenure at Purdue. Shoemaker, who was both a member and advisor for the society, instituted a Philaethean award that she awarded to an undergraduate woman of outstanding literary achievement each year. Eventually the Philaethean was joined by two other women's literary societies, the Eurodelphian and the Anonian. Shoemaker was also responsible for the merging of the Philaethian and the Eurodelphian in 1933, in the interest of strengthening both groups through increased interest and membership. Members of the Philaethean contributed significantly (along with the Irving and Carlyle Literary Societies) to the founding and production of both *The Purdue* and *The Exponent* newspapers. The last appearance of the Philaethean in the student handbook is in the 1936 edition. It appears that as the extracurricular activities available to women became more diverse, interest in the Philaethian declined.

Sources:

Philaethean Literary Society records, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

Debris Yearbooks, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

Student Handbooks, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

The Purdue, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

The Exponent, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

Hepburn, William Murray, Sears, Louis Martin. *Purdue University, Fifty years of progress*. Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press, 1925. Print. Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University

Collection Description

Scope

The Philaethean Literary Society records (1877-1924, 0.7 cubic feet) document the meetings and events of Purdue University's first women's club. The record ledgers document the public and secret weekly meetings of the society from 1890-1920. These ledgers contain information on membership and offices, programs and presentations, as well as the society's interactions with the male literary societies and University administration. The ephemera portion of the collection is comprised primarily of prototype and printed versions of programs for the society's annual events as well as co-sponsored events (with the male literary societies). Also included in this portion of the collection are two versions of the Philaethean's constitution and bylaws (one from 1890 and the other undated), and some clippings from the 1904 Debris. The collection might be useful for researchers interested in women's history, Purdue University history, literary societies, extracurricular activities of female students, nineteenth and twentieth century material culture, and the impact of Deans McRae and Shoemaker. Types of material include: records ledgers, programs, photos, and printed materials. The Records are organized into two series:

Arrangement

1. Ephemera, 1877-1924 (0.2 cubic feet)

The Philaethean Literary Society ephemera are composed primarily of programs from events that the society sponsored or cosponsored. Also included are published versions of the society's constitution and some photo clippings from the 1904 edition of Debris. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically and by type.

2. Ledgers, 1890-1920 (0.5 cubic feet)

The Philaethean Literary Society ledgers document the meetings of the Philaethean society. The minutes include administrative and attendance information, as well as subject matter for society presentations. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically except when loose papers were previously filed out of order.

Descriptive Rules Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

All materials have been housed in polyester sleeves, acid-free folders, and acid-free boxes. All newsprint has been photocopied and in most cases original newspaper

clippings have been discarded. Metal fasteners have been removed when integrity of documents was not threatened.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Ephemera, 1877-1924

(0.2 cubic feet)

Box 1, Constitution, programs, and images, 1877-1914

Folder

1. Constitution and Bylaws, circa 1890
2. Programs, 1877
3. Programs, 1880-1889
4. Programs, 1890-1899
5. Programs, 1900-190
6. Programs, 1913, 1924
7. Images, circa 1904

Ledgers, 1890-1920

(0.5 cubic feet)

Box 2, Ledger Books, 1890-1920

Item

1. Record Ledger, 1890-1898
2. Record Ledger, 1898-1909
3. Record Ledger, 1909-1920