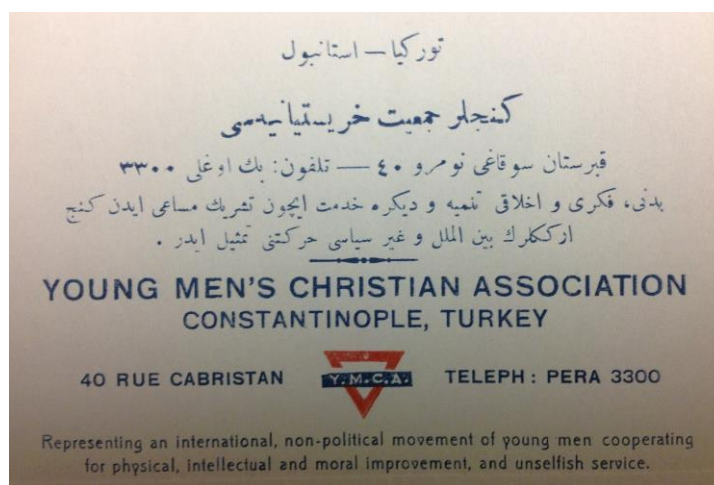


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

YMCA and YWCA Records, 1925 – 1945



YMCA Constantinople Letterhead, 1928. Credit to MRL 12: YMCA and YWCA Records, box 1, folder 7, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Debbie Liu, April 2012. Edited by Brigette C. Kamsler, April 2013.
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Summary Information

Creator: Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations
Title: YMCA and YWCA Records
Inclusive dates: 1925 – 1945
Bulk dates: 1925 – 1930
Abstract: Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations founded as a response to unhealthy social and living conditions in cities at the end of the Industrial Revolution. Collection includes reports, correspondence, minutes, and pamphlets from YMCA and YWCA branches around the world.
Size: 9 boxes, 4.25 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 12: YMCA and YWCA Records, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The Young Men's Christian Association was founded by George Williams in London, England on June 6, 1844 as a response to the unhealthy social and living conditions for young men living in big cities at the end of the Industrial Revolution. Williams and a group of fellow drapers, or cloth retailers, organized the first YMCA as a way to meet certain social, spiritual, and intellectual needs of young men who had migrated to the cities in search of work. By 1851 there were twenty-four YMCAs in Great Britain with a combined membership of 2,700. That same year, the first YMCA in North America appeared in Montreal on November 25, followed by a chapter in Boston on December 15, 1851.

In 1853, the first YMCA for African Americans was founded by a former slave named Anthony Bowen. By 1854, there were 397 YMCAs in seven different nations with a combined membership of over 30,000 members. In 1855, the YMCA First World Conference was held in Paris, France with ninety-nine YMCA delegates in attendance. The Paris Basis, a common mission for present and future YMCAs, was drafted at the conference. It was at the Fourth World Conference that the need to develop the individual in mind, body, and spirit through activities like physical work and sports was addressed and acknowledged.

In 1878, the official World Alliance of YMCAs was established in Geneva, Switzerland. By 1880, the YMCA became the first national organization to adopt a policy of equal gender and race representation. Today, YMCA membership is comprised of men, women, and children of all ages and ethnicities.

The Young Women's Christian Association in England was founded as a result of war, religious revivalism, and growing concern over the welfare of women working in large cities. The same root causes also led to the appearance of YWCAs in North America, first in New York City in 1858, then in Boston in 1866. The British YWCA began as a convergence of two separate

movements. In 1855, a Prayer Union was begun by Emma Robarts to create a space for women to come together for bible study and social activities. Simultaneously, Mary Jane Kinnaird established the first London Home where nurses following Florence Nightingale, going to or coming back from the Crimean War, could lodge for the evening. Bible and educational classes, additional homes, and employment agencies soon followed shortly afterwards. In 1877, Robarts and Kinnaird combined their separate organizations to formalize the YWCA. In 1894, the North American YWCA and British YWCA united to form the World's YWCA. At the first World's YWCA Conference in 1898, it was established that the YWCA was to be an inter-denominational movement open to all who wished to participate in its programs.

In 1946, the National Convention of the YWCA endorsed an "Interracial Charter," which pledged the YWCA to racial integration. The YWCA is the largest and second oldest women's organization in the world and continues to work to advance women's rights and liberties through education, physical activity, and recreation.

Sources:

- Crooks, George R., "Young Men's Christian Associations" , *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, January 1882, p.258.
- Doggett, Laurence Locke. *History of the Young Men's Christian Association*. New York, New York. Association Press, 1922.
- Johnson, Elmer L. *The History of YMCA Physical Education*, 1-19. Chicago, Illinois. Association Press, 1979.
- Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the YMCA", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Sep. 1963, pp. 214-234.
- Religious News Service, "YMCA Rebrands Itself as the Y", *Christian Century*, August 24, 2010, p.19.
- Seymour-Jones, Carole. *Journey of Faith: The History of the World YWCA 1945-1994*. London, England. Allison and Busby, 1994.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection is organized in four series:

- **Series 1: YMCA 19th World Conference 1925-1926 (part of 1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**
This series contains pamphlets, reports, and correspondence regarding the YMCA 19th World Conference in Helsinki, Finland. Helsinki is referred to in the YMCA records as Helsingfors. Much of the correspondence, which is arranged alphabetically, regards preparations being made for the conference. Series also includes a report summarizing discussions and questionnaires at Robert College in Constantinople, Turkey. This can be found in E.C. Steven's correspondence as attachments from Dr. Edgar J. Fisher. Additionally, an itinerary of unknown authorship indicating schedule and driving routes of the Helsinki Conference is included.
- **Series 2: YMCA Constantinople Branch, 1926-1928 (part of 1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**
This series includes records such as pamphlets, correspondences, minutes, and questionnaires related to the YMCA Constantinople Branch in Turkey between 1926-

1928. Much of the correspondence is either addressed to Dr. Edgar J. Fisher or noted on the letter as for his reference. Correspondence is ordered alphabetically and chronologically. Also included in the series is a program schedule for the All-Day Conference Board of Managers Meeting for the Constantinople YMCA that took place on February 19, 1926. The reports included in the collection regard developments in the Constantinople branch as well as how reforms and policies taking place in Turkey affected the YMCA.

- **Series 3: YMCA/YWCA Reports, 1930 (7 boxes, 3.50 lin. ft.)**

Within this series are reports regarding the history and progress of the YMCA and YWCA in different countries. The reports are arranged alphabetically by country name.

- **Series 4: YMCA General, [192?] – 1940 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**

This series refers to pamphlets, questionnaires, records, and history of the YMCA in different parts of the world including Japan, Czechoslovakia, Poland, China and Belgium. Copies of questionnaires in German, French and English, Histories of the Foreign Program of the YMCA and the YMCA in Belgium, and “Japan Mail,” a series of excerpts from cables and correspondences as well as short reports regarding the Japan YMCA are included in Series 4.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials. Fragile material photocopied. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. YMCA material from this collection was pulled from several different unprocessed boxes as well as the circulating library collection. No original order existed; therefore order is imposed.

Further sources

Further YMCA sources can be found in the Kautz Family YMCA Archives at the Elmer L. Anderson Library at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. This collection holds the historical records of the Y’s national resource office, YMCA of the USA, and also holds records of the Metropolitan Minneapolis and Great New York YMCAs. The collection documents the evolution of the Y from its Protestant evangelical origins, public health campaigns in China, rural reconstruction in India and Korea, and war relief, among others. The archive also holds biographical material as well as small collections of personal papers of prominent YMCA of the USA leaders. The following is a link to the Kautz Family YMCA Archives:

<http://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca>.

Related Sources

The Burke Library archives house a collection of personal papers that contain related YMCA information. For information regarding YMCA in China, please see the papers of David Willard Lyon and Charles Luther Boynton in MRL 3. John Mott was an active member of the Young Men’s Christian Association and worked extensively with the organization. Please see MRL 12: John Mott Papers for more information.

Finding aids and information on the collections can be located online at:
<http://library.columbia.edu/content/libraryweb/indiv/burke/archives/mrl.html>.

Contents list

Series 1: YMCA 19th World Conference, 1925 – 1926

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Pamphlets, 1926
1	1	2-3	Correspondence, 1925-1926
1	1	4	Reports, 1925-1926
1	1	5	Itinerary, 1926

Series 2: YMCA Constantinople Branch, 1926 – 1928

2	1	6	Pamphlets, 1926-1927
2	1	7	Correspondence, 1928
2	1	8	Survey and Questionnaire, 1927
2	1	9	All-Day Board of Managers Conference Program Schedule, 1927
2	1	10	Minutes and Reports, 1926-1928

Series 3: YMCA/YWCA Reports, 1929 – 1930

3	2	1-2	Argentina Survey of the YMCA, 1930
3	2	3	Brazil: Survey of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	2	4-5	Bulgaria: Survey of the YMCA, 1930
3	2	6	Chile: Report of the International Survey of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	2	7-8	China: Study of the YWCA 1890-1930, 1930
3	2	9-11	Czechoslovakia: Survey of the YMCA, 1930
3	3	1-4	Egypt: Survey of the YMCA, 1930
3	3	5-6	Esthonia: Report of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	3	7-8	Greece: Report on the Survey of the Work of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	4	1	India: Report on the Work of the Rural Department India National Council YMCA, 1930
3	4	2-6	A Study of the YMCA in India, Burma, and Ceylon, 1930
3	4	7	Italy: Report of the YMCA in Italy, 1930
3	5	1-4	Japan: Survey Report, 1930
3	5	5-6	Korea: Comments on the Report and Survey of YMCA/YWCA, 1930
3	5	7-9	Latin America: Area Report, 1930
3	6	1	Latvia: Survey of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	6	2	Mexico: Survey of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	6	3	Palestine: Report of the Survey, 1930
3	6	4-5	Philippines: Report of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930
3	7	1-4	Poland: Report of the Polish Survey Commission on the YMCA in Poland, 1930

Series 3: YMCA/YWCA Reports, 1929 – 1930 (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
3	7	5	Portugal: Survey Report of the YMCA, 1930
3	7	6-8	Survey of North American YMCA Service to Russians in Europe, 1930
3	7	9-10	South Africa: Report of the YMCA, 1930
3	8	1-4	Turkey: Report of the Service Centers Istanbul, Turkey, 1930
3	8	5	Uruguay: Survey of the YMCA and YWCA, 1930

Series 4: YMCA General, [192? – 1940]

4	9	1	Pamphlets [192?]
4	9	2	Japan Mail, 1937-1938
4	9	3	History [19??]
4	9	4	Record, 1940
4	9	5	Questionnaire [192?]
4	9	5	International Survey, 1928-1930
4	9	6	Post War Study, 1943
4	9	7	Speakers Kit, Overseas Relief [194?]
4	9	8	China Bulletins, 1937-1938
4	9	9	George Edmund Haynes Records [19??]
4	9	10	Women's Work in China, 1937