

AccNo.: 1988.018
A0581-A0583, 7.2.D
3 manuscript boxes
(1.5 cubic feet)

Women's Exchange of Brooklyn Collection
1863-1964

Brooklyn Historical Society
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January, 2006
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January, 2006

Introduction

The Women's Exchange of Brooklyn was founded in 1854 as the Brooklyn Female Employment Society and it, like earlier predecessors in other U.S. and European cities, was a labor cooperative that furnished simple employment to women whose circumstances – physical or economic - impelled them to work from home. The Exchange instructed women and marketed their work. The exchange merged in 1923 with the Brooklyn Decorative Art Society and Woman's Exchange to become *The Needlework Society and Exchange of Brooklyn*, and acquired its present name in 1936. In its early days, the Woman's Exchange established sewing schools to train women in sewing skills and techniques and later opened a storefront in Brooklyn Heights in 18__ to sell hand-crafted wares on consignment, including knitted goods, children's apparel, baked goods, and handmade toys. The Brooklyn Exchange is (2006) the oldest among the twenty-five members of the Federation of Woman's Exchanges in the United States. Its shop is located at street level, 55 Pierrepont Street between Hicks and Henry Streets, in Brooklyn Heights, tel. (718) 624-3435.

Scope and Content

The dates of this collection range from 1863 to 1964, with the bulk of material dating from the 1920's to the 1940's, and is made up of four series. Series 1 contains the monthly meeting minutes of the Board of Managers, accompanied by a treasurer's report on the previous month's activities. The minutes provide details on the activities, plans, and concerns of the Woman's Exchange, and reported on new memberships, resignations, and the business affairs of the Exchange. Series 2 consists of financial documentation, annual reports and audits, and legal documents. Of particular note are the receipts and expenditures reports that outline the monthly expenses and income of the Woman's Exchange. Also of interest is a constitution that describes the mission of the Woman's Exchange and a 1958 rules booklet that governed its actions. Series 3 is primarily comprised of correspondence, most of which relates to various properties owned by the exchange. Series 4 is chiefly made up of materials related to public relations and development, including donation requests, advertising efforts, and newspaper articles. The ephemera in series four uniquely enhances the collection because it includes sewing books with textile samples that demonstrate sewing techniques taught to students at the Woman's Exchange sewing school, as well as a notebook containing the names of graduates.

The Woman's Exchange collection was donated to the Brooklyn Historical Society by the Woman's Exchange of Brooklyn in October of 1988. It was originally housed in four boxes, and is now in three manuscript boxes, totaling 1.5 cubic feet. Preliminary processing was done in the summer of 2005 by students of Pratt Institute and Pratt GATEWAI intern Jillian Cuellar completed the inventory in Fall, 2005. Dr. Pettit edited this inventory, May, 2006.

(Needs date of storefront and date of charter by New York State. Shop was in basement of Montague St building opposite Heights Casino w/JLB on top floor until c. 1980. MHP May 2006)

Container List

Series 1: Board of Managers Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report, 1942-1964

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Board of Managers meeting minutes and treasurer's report	1942-1945
	2	Board of Managers meeting minutes and treasurer's report	1946-1948
	3	Board of Managers meeting minutes and treasurer's report	1949-1954
	4	Board of Managers meeting minutes and treasurer's report	1960-1962
	5	Board of Managers meeting minutes and treasurer's report	1962-1964

Series 2: Finances, reports and legal documents, 1863-1964

	1	Receipts and expenditures reports	1919-1939
2	2	Receipts and expenditures reports	1939-1941
	3	Receipts and expenditures reports	1949-1959
	4	Annual financial reports and audits	1888-1935
	5	Annual financial reports and audits	1936-1964
	6	Bequests to Woman's Exchange	1932-1941
	7	Financial correspondence and documentation	1863-1955
	8	Constitutions, Laws, and Certificate of Existence	1924-1958

Series 3: Correspondence, 1923-1948

	1	Correspondence, documents regarding various properties	1931-1937
	2	Correspondence, documents regarding various properties	1937-1941
	3	Correspondence, documents regarding Court St. property	1923-1932
3	4	Correspondence, documents regarding Court St. property	1933-1941
	5	Correspondence, documents regarding Pierrepont St. property	1926-1934
	6	Correspondence, documents regarding Pierrepont St. property	1936-1946
	7	General correspondence and reports	1925-1936
	8	General correspondence and reports	1941-1948

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Series 4: Public relations, development, and ephemera, 1890-1964		
1	Advertisements and contribution requests	1927-1943
2	Invitations	1929-1943
3	NY, NJ, and Federation of Woman's Exchanges	1929, 1964
4	Newspaper clippings	1939-1948
5	Graduate notebook, name and address book, ephemera	1899-1926
6	Student sewing books	1890