



State Library of Massachusetts - Special Collections Department

Ms. Coll. 24 North American Civic League for Immigrants Records, 1908-1946: Guide

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator: North American Civic League for Immigrants.

Call Number: Ms. Coll. 24

Extent: 1 box (0.5 linear feet)

Preferred Citation Style: *Folder Title, Box Number #.* North American Civic League for Immigrants Records. State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections.

About This Finding Aid: Description based on DACS.

Provenance: Sarah McDuffie, January 6, 1966.

Processed by: Finding aid prepared by Marc Widershien, August 18, 1987. Updated by Abigail Cramer, March, 2012.

Abstract: This collection documents the activities of the North American Civic League for Immigrants in its efforts to investigate and improve the circumstances of immigrants to the United States.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The North American Civic League collection contains printed annual reports from 1908 to 1919 and Board of Directors meeting minutes as well as other minutes and correspondence files from 1930 to 1946. The collection also includes budget information, contribution lists, a furniture

inventory, obituaries, a brief history of the League, and a memorabilia file. According to the history of the League found in the collection, the records from 1913 to 1929 are missing.

HISTORICAL NOTE

In 1907, a committee was appointed by the Boston Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to investigate its relationship to the immigration problem. Called "the Committee on Industrial Work and Immigration," this committee was chaired by D. Chauncy Brewer, and it was authorized "to associate as an advisory committee or in a civic league as they saw fit." In 1908, the committee formed itself into the North American Civic League for Immigrants, independent of the Boston YMCA. Dr. Chauncy Brewer was the first president. The purpose of the League was "the betterment of the immigrant, with primary instruction in civics for a 'patriotic purpose.'" With headquarters at 173 State Street, Boston, its agents met immigrants at ship ports and train terminals. The members spoke the languages of the immigrants and gave lectures for, counseled, and secured employment for immigrants. The members also aided the immigrants in the naturalization process. Evening classes were held in many public schools, and there were annual dinners. Besides Boston, the League maintained branches in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, which were also seaports and debarkation points.

The North American Civic League for Immigrants splintered into a number of committees. By 1929 there were ten fields of installations in towns such as Worcester, Nashua, and Waterbury. In September 1934, the League shortened its name to the North American Civic League. The League's functions were gradually reduced because immigration rates reduced and many of the League's early leaders had died.

By the 1940s, the League was no longer a viable organization and was dissolved on March 15, 1945. The cash assets of the League were distributed among the American Red Cross, Harvard University, Northeastern University, and the Permanent Charity Fund of Boston.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Arrangement

The papers are arranged in their original order.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research during the Special Collections Department's regular hours.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with Special Collections staff.

Languages and Scripts

The materials are entirely in English.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Special Collections Department received these papers as a gift from Sarah McDuffie on January 6, 1966.

Container List

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title	Date
1	1	Annual Reports	1908-1919, 1929
1	2	Board of Directors meeting minutes	1907-1913
1	3	Annual Meeting minutes	1930-1946
1	4	Correspondence	1934-1946
1	5	Miscellaneous business papers	1938-1944
1	6	Brief history of the League	undated
1	7	Obituaries	undated
1	8	Memorabilia	undated