
Descriptive Inventory for the Collection at Chicago History Museum, Research Center

Please address questions to:
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Title: Mary McDowell Settlement (Chicago, Ill.) records, 1894-1970, bulk 1930-1962.
Main entry: Mary McDowell Settlement (Social settlement : Chicago, Ill.)
Size:
25.5 linear ft. (54 boxes)

Restriction: In order to consult certain boxes that may contain personal information, researchers must sign the form "Request for Research Access to Confidential Case Records." In part 1, this material is in folders 7A, 8, 10, and 14.
Restriction: Boxes 16-18, 27 (1 folder only), 30-32, 34-36, 38-45, 49-51 in part 2, the more recent portion of the collection, are closed to researchers.
Terms governing use: Copyright may be retained by the creators of items, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law, unless otherwise noted.
Please cite this collection as: Mary McDowell Settlement (Chicago, Ill.) records (Chicago History Museum) plus a detailed description, date, and box/folder number of a specific item.

This descriptive inventory contains the following sections:
Biographical/historical note,
Summary description of the collection,
Description of some material related to the collection,
List of online catalog headings about the collection,
Arrangement of the collection,
Detailed description of archival series in the collection,
List of contents of the collection.

Biographical/historical note:
Mary Eliza McDowell, head resident of the University of Chicago Settlement from 1894 to 1936, was the daughter of Malcolm and Jane Welch (Gordon) McDowell. She born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Nov. 30, 1854. Her father moved his family to Chicago at the close of the Civil War and established a steel rolling mill here. Mary McDowell witnessed the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and participated in the relief and rehabilitation work that followed. Her family later moved to Evanston, Illinois, where she met Frances Willard and became active in the Women's Christian Temperance
Union. She also taught Methodist Sunday School, graduated from the school of kindergarten training conducted by Elizabeth Harrison, and observed the work of Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr at Hull House. She moved to Hull House in 1890, intending to become a permanent resident and kindergarten worker there, but family illness recalled her to Evanston.

Meanwhile, the Philanthropic Committee of the Christian Union of the University of Chicago had decided to establish a settlement as a laboratory for the university's Department of Sociology. The laboratory was to be a window for first-hand observation of an industrial, immigrant neighborhood. The neighborhood selected was the Packingtown area in the vicinity of the Chicago Union Stock Yards. The laboratory, the University of Chicago Settlement, was established in January 1894 although it never officially belonged to the University of Chicago. Initial work of the settlement was carried on by faculty members and graduate students of the university. In the fall of 1894, upon the advice of Jane Addams, the Philanthropic Union invited Mary McDowell to direct the settlement. She accepted the invitation and became head resident of the settlement as the age of 39. She held this title until her death in 1936.

During her years as head resident, Miss McDowell was particularly effective in improving economic, educational, living, and health conditions in the Packingtown area. She was also active in labor affairs, especially those involving labor disputes at the Union Stock-Yards. She was the first President of the Illinois Women's Trade Union League and was officially connected with the National Trade Union League from 1903 until her death. She also served as the Commissioner of Public Welfare of the City of Chicago from 1923-1927 during Mayor William E. Dever's administration.

The Packingtown area was mostly inhabited by Irish Americans and Germans Americans in the 1890s. Shortly thereafter, Bohemians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Slovaks began to work and live in the area. During and after the First World War, many Mexicans and Negroes also came into the neighborhood. Miss McDowell was a friend to end helper of all these peoples. She worked with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, the Immigrants' Protective League, the League of Women Voters, the Y.W.C.A., and other organizations. Miss McDowell suffered a paralytic stroke in 1935, and died in Chicago on October 14, 1936, at the age of 81. On November 30, 1956, the name of the University of Chicago Settlement was officially changed to the Mary McDowell Settlement. Later, the organization merged into Chicago Commons Association.

(Most of this information was taken from Louise C. Wade's biographical sketch of Miss McDowell in the Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Two).

Summary description of the collection:
Letters, speeches, etc. of Mary McDowell, head resident, 1894-1936, of the University of Chicago Settlement, which later became known as the Mary McDowell Settlement, and other administrators; board minutes, reports, letters, and financial papers of the settlement. The board minutes contain related reports and letters. Early papers relate to McDowell's social-work career and family; the settlement's objectives, activities, and organization; and to economic and social conditions in the Packingtown area, especially during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Considerable data on labor conditions at the stockyards and on unemployment is present, along with information on immigrant groups in Chicago, chiefly those of Slavic and Mexican descent. The papers contain many items on recreational facilities operated by the settlement for adults and children and about mothers clubs and other clubs that met at the settlement.
Part one of the collection is organized by folders; part two is organized by boxes and folders.

Includes the collection formerly known as the Mary McDowell papers and the materials formerly known as the University of Chicago Settlement records at the Research Center, Chicago History Museum.

**Description of some material related to the collection:**
Related materials at Chicago History Museum, Research Center, include the Mary McDowell Settlement photograph collection (1980.0163).

**List of online catalog headings about the collection:**
The following headings for this collection were placed in the online catalog:

**Subjects:**
McDowell, Mary E., 1854-1936--Archives.
Mary McDowell Settlement (Social settlement : Chicago, Ill.)--Archives.
University of Chicago. Settlement--Archives.
Union Stock Yard & Transit Company of Chicago--Employees.
University of Chicago. Settlement--Archives.
4630 South McDowell Street (Chicago, Ill.)
Community centers--Illinois--Chicago--19th century.
Community centers--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Community organization--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Czech Americans--Illinois--Chicago.
Families--Illinois--Chicago--Statistics.
Mexicans--Illinois--Chicago.
Mexican Americans--Illinois--Chicago.
Packinghouse workers--Illinois--Chicago--19th century.
Packinghouse workers--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Polish Americans--Illinois--Chicago.
Slavic Americans--Illinois--Chicago.
Social settlements--Illinois--Chicago--19th century.
Social settlements--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Stockyards--Illinois--Chicago--19th century.
Stockyards--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Census, 1930.
Chicago (Ill.)--Census, 1934.
Women social workers--Illinois--Chicago--19th century.
Women social workers--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Economic conditions--19th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Economic conditions--20th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Social conditions--19th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Social conditions--20th century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Census, 1930.
Back of the Yards (Chicago, Ill.)
New City (Chicago, Ill.)

**Form/genre:**
Case files.
Census, 15th, 1930.
Census, 1934.
Correspondence.
Financial records.
Minutes.
Reports.
Statistics.

Added entries:
McDowell, Mary E., 1854-1936.
Masaryk, Alice Garrigue, 1879-1966
University of Chicago. Settlement
Mary McDowell papers.
University of Chicago Settlement records.
United States--Illinois--Cook County--Chicago.

Card catalog headings for small groups of items within the collection:
Chicago. Churches.
Crime and Criminals. Chicago.
Education. Chicago.
Housing. Chicago.
Strikes and Lockouts. Chicago. Union Stock Yards, 1904.
Masaryk, Alice, 1879-

Arrangement of the collection:
The collection is arranged in two parts. Part 1 is described folder by folder. Part 2 is described by box.

List of contents of the collection:
Part One. List of folders:
folders:
1 Mary E. McDowell biographical material (60 items, 1904-1941)
2 Mary E. McDowell memorial services (100 items, 1936-1937)
3-3b University of Chicago Settlement establishment (35 items, 1908?-1944), includes folder 3: "Beginnings"--Autobiographical
3c University of Chicago Settlement history & by-laws (15 items, 1924-1942)
3d University of Chicago Settlement 50th anniversary (50 items, 1944)
4 University of Chicago Settlement handbook (2 items, 1932- ?)
5 University of Chicago Settlement annual dinners (60 items, 1925-1944)
5a University of Chicago Settlement memorials (25 items, 1922-1943)
6 University of Chicago Settlement: Alice Masaryk (50 items, 1937-1940)
7-7a University of Chicago Settlement studies & surveys (50 items, 1924-1938)
[7A has restricted case records: Researcher must sign Confidentiality agreement before consulting this material.]
8 University of Chicago Settlement: Back of the Yards (25 items, 1934)

[8 has restricted case records: Researcher must sign Confidentiality agreement before consulting this material.]
9 University of Chicago Settlement census data, 1930 & 1934 censuses (20 items, 1933-1934)
10 University of Chicago Settlement delinquency (25 items, 1924-1927)

[10 has restricted case records: Researcher must sign Confidentiality agreement before consulting this material.]
11 University of Chicago Settlement education (60 items, 1932-1934)
12 University of Chicago Settlement foreign population (15 items, undated)
13 University of Chicago Settlement health (15 items, 1908-1933)
14 University of Chicago Settlement housing (15 items, 1912-1931)

[14 has restricted case records: Researcher must sign Confidentiality agreement before consulting this material.]
15-15c University of Chicago Settlement labor--stock-yards (160 items, 1902-1949)
16 University of Chicago Settlement unemployment committee, emergency relief (25 items, 1930-1932)
17-17a University of Chicago Settlement unemployment correspondence (120 items, 1930-1935)
18-18a University of Chicago Settlement unemployment statistics (90 items, 1930-1939)
19 University of Chicago Settlement political matters (40 items, 1903-1934)
20 University of Chicago Settlement recreation (50 items, 1904-1933)
20a-b University of Chicago Settlement gymnasium building funds (70 items, 1922-1933)
21 University of Chicago Settlement religion (25 items, 1904-1939)
University of Chicago Settlement board minutes & reports (3 volumes, 1896-1930)
   (Vol. 1 contains sundry account entries 1894-1895)
   filed between folders 21 and 22
22-34 University of Chicago Settlement board minutes & reports (530 items, 1931-1957)
35-39 University of Chicago Settlement letters, financial reports, etc. (270 items, 1920-1945)

Part Two:
box 1 Historical data
box 2 Board minutes 1944-1968
box 3 Board correspondence 1934, 1941-1967
box 4-5 University of Chicago Settlement, Woman’s Club 1896-1947
box 6 University of Chicago Settlement newsletters 1938-1956
box 7-9 General papers 1925-1970 and undated
Consists mainly of correspondence, the bulk of which deals with the work carried on at the settlement.

1940’s papers include printed material from the Council of Social Agencies in Chicago regarding the Chicago Group Work Agency Study.

1941 correspondence includes letters proposing the setting up of a National Citizenship Education Program at the Settlement to be sponsor by the WPA.
1940’s papers include printed material and letters of the Chicago Recreation Commission.

1943-1945 papers include letters from former Settlement participants now in the military commenting on their impressions of the settlement and military life.

Sept. 1945 minutes of the Committee on Minority Groups discusses kind of services rendered by social agencies to Mexicans, Jamaicans and other minority groups in the Chicago area.

Feb. 1963 address by Guido Tardi, executive director of the settlement given before the University of Chicago Service League commenting on the Service League’s contribution to the settlement and community. Also remarks on the interracial problems in the community, particularly discrimination against Blacks and Mexicans in the community.

box 10-11: Financial material & contributions 1923-1961
Letters to and from prospective donors regarding requests for financial support of the settlement.

box 12: Financial material
1 folder Mary McDowell Salary Fund 1927-1931
Letters requesting contribution for a salary for Miss McDowell
1 folder Douglas Smith Fund 1937-1942
Fund to provide health care and social needs of the working girl. Includes minutes and letters.
1 folder Cash reports 1963-1964 bank statements
4 folders Budget and audit reports 1924-1966
1 folder Treasurer’s reports 1927-1928, 1945-1956
1 folder Financial statements 1963-1965

box 13a: General financial correspondence 1921-1945
2 folders contain salary schedules, lists of charitable foundations, minutes of finance committee, letters regarding bequests.

box 14: Community Fund 1928-1966
Correspondence and monthly financial reports concerning annual funds

box 15: Fund raising material
1 folder General fund raising material 1960, 1962
1 folder Annual bazaars 1939-1952
1 folder Benefits 1939-1959
1 folder Tag day 1943-1953, 1960

box 16-17: Personnel 1920’s-1960’s --CLOSED
Letters from individuals seeking employment at the settlement; letters of recommendation; letters concerning salary increases; and resignations (arranged alphabetically by last name)

box 18: Personnel --CLOSED
1 folder Correspondence with participants in the National Youth Administration, WPA, and Voluntary Workers programs who were former workers in the Settlement.

2 folders Personnel evaluation 1934-1965
Outgoing letters of recommendation for former settlement workers; arranged alphabetically by last name.

2 folders  General personnel material on salaries, work schedules and job descriptions.

1 folder  Antioch College Work-Study Program 1960-1961
Correspondence concerning work-study program whereby undergraduates worked and lived in the settlement for three month periods.

box 19
2 folders  Annual reports 1918-1930, 1934-1948
Annual summary of settlement programs and activities, statistical summaries of activities and statements on settlement income and expenditures. Most of the reports also comment on the changing ethnic composition of the Back-of-the-Yards community. Found throughout the reports are observations on the attitudes and social and economic status of primarily the Mexicans but also their Polish, German and Yugoslav neighbors that resided in the area. Also included are ethnic breakdowns of people that used the settlement. Mid 1930’s reports include comments on the effect of the depression on the settlement operations.

6 folders  Monthly reports 1934-1953
A more detailed account of settlement activities in areas of adult education, health care, social services and recreational activities is given in these monthly reports. Comments on Mexican and Polish participation in settlement activities are interspersed throughout the monthly reports.

1 folder  Annual service reports 1950, 1958-1968
Summarizing progress and direction of the settlement program; agency’s purpose and objectives.

box 20: Social service and departmental reports
3 folders  Social service reports 1936-1946
Monthly reports written by social workers describing case work being done in the area. Most of the reports given dramatic accounts of the problems encountered by the people living in the settlement area during the 1930’s and 1940’s. Problems of relief, unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of food and clothing come up frequently in the reports.

2 folders  Residents reports 1936-1949
Monthly reports by the residence manager summarizing building improvements on the Settlement House, events held in the settlement and changes in staff.

3 folders  Adult Dept. reports 1935-1960
Monthly reports including comments on adult education, citizenship and English classes, Mexican work and various arts and craft classes.

box 21: Departmental reports
1 folder  Kindergarten reports 1936-1942
Monthly reports on enrollment and attendance along with progress reports on children enrolled at the settlement Kindergarten.

1 folder  Library reports Feb.-May 1946
1 folder    Mexican work (reports) 1929-1933, 1936
Monthly reports written by case workers summarizing work being done for the Mexican
participation in settlement activities.

3 folders    Nursery and playschool reports 1936-1954, 1960-1961
Monthly reports on enrollment, attendance and progress reports on children attending nursery
school.

1 folder    Boys’ Dept. reports 1945-1959, 1956

1 folder    Girls’ Dept. reports 1938-1949, 1956

2 folders    Clubs and groups 1923-1925, 1945-1960
Monthly and annual summaries of the various clubs and classes offered to the people of the
settlement community.

box 22: Group work statistical reports 1930-1946
3 folders    Composite statistical reports on Settlement activities listing numbers of groups,
sessions and enrollment sent to the Chicago Council of Social Agencies.

box 23: Programs and activities 1926-1968 and undated
Contains brief descriptions of programs, club membership lists, fliers, and small amount of letters.

box 24: Clubs and Groups 1950-1954
Composed of club minutes, notes and attendance records arranged alphabetically by group names.

box 25: Adult Dept.
3 folders    General Adult Dept. material 1932-1954, 1959-1961
Program for adults in the Settlement neighborhood. Includes correspondence, fliers, club
membership lists, articles, citizenship and English class material, and material on the Adult
Education Program.

1 folder    Mary McDowell discussion group 1930-1945, 1950
Conducted informal discussions centering around political, social, and economic problems of today.
Includes correspondence, membership lists, minutes, and articles.

1 folder    Mexican work 1930-1937
Minutes and correspondence of various Mexican clubs meeting at the settlement. Includes letters
requesting contributions for the continuation of Mexican work.

1 folder    Study of Mexican families of the stockyard district
The survey provides a comparison of immigrant Mexican families in the United States to families of
similar social status in Mexico.

1 folder    Mothers’ Club 1948-1952

1 folder    Mexican Mothers’ Club 1933-1934 Correspondence & minutes, in Spanish.

box 26: Adult activities attendance records 1933-1945
box 27: Camp Farr material
1 folder   General information and history of Camp Farr
2 folders   General camp information 1937-1959
1 folder   Staff employment applications 1944-1964 --CLOSED
3 folders   Camp Farr Committee notes and camp reports 1921-1945

box 28: Camp Farr material
1 folder   Camp Farr Committee notes and camp reports 1946-1962
1 folder   Camp records 1933-1934
3 folders   Various summer camps and Camp Farr budget reports 1915-1964
1 folder   Contributions 1923-1964

box 29: Camp Farr material
3 folders   General correspondence 1924-1964
1 folder   “Camp Farr News” and “Farr Cry” newsletters 1941-1948, 1955-1957
1 folder   Photographs
1 folder   General camp material
1 folder   American Camping Association material 1939-1958

box 30-32: Camp Records --CLOSED
Contains registration forms and activity reports. Records often include casework done with the families of children sent to camp.

box 33: Halfway House
Program for training and rehabilitation services for mentally retarded adults at Illinois state schools
1 folder   General information
3 folders   Correspondence 1961-1965
1 folder   Professional advisory planning committee
1 folder   General mental health information

box 34: Halfway House group session reports 1963-1966 --CLOSED
Monthly progress reports of residents participating in the Halfway House project.

box 35-36: Halfway House patient records --CLOSED

box 37: Nursery school material
1 folder   Nursery school attendance records 1944-1955
1 folder   Correspondence 1938-1954
3 folders   Nursery school material (general)

box 38-45: Nursery School Case Records 1935-1955 --CLOSED
Includes progress reports, ethnic background of the parents, family history and economic status. Arranged by year and alphabetically by child’s last name within each year.

box 46: Topical material
2 folders   Housing
Includes 1930’s correspondence re. Wagner-Steagall low rent housing bill; Chicago Housing Authority news releases.
1 folder  Social Service Employees Union (Local 39) 1939-1950
Bulletins, fliers, news releases and form letters regarding such matters as personnel practices, endorsement for collective bargaining.

box 47: Chicago Congregational Union minutes 1946-1947, 1950
Organization to supervise and support various religious institutions and houses in the Chicago area. One of the houses under its supervision was the South Chicago Community Center. Everett Cope, assistant head resident of the Settlement in 1949 was asked by the General Directory of the Chicago Congregational Union to accept the position of director, which he did in Aug. 1949.

box 48
3 folders  Newspaper clippings on the settlement and public housing 1931-1965
1 folder  Photographs of 1960, 1962 annual dinner
Printed material
1 scrapbook  Newspaper clippings on settlement activities, 1937-1940 plus a few loose 1966 clippings.

box 49-50: --CLOSED
Plus 3 card files measuring 12 in. of case work records providing such data as ethnic, religious, and educational background material and economic status of families in the community. Also giving are descriptions of casework done for families. Arranged alphabetically by last name. Dated primarily in the 1950’s

box 51: --CLOSED