

Wednesday Afternoon Club records 1990.12

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Friends of Wood Memorial Library and Museum

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Business Number: 860-289-1783

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Summary Information

Repository:	Friends of Wood Memorial Library and Museum
Creator:	Wednesday Afternoon Club (South Windsor, Conn.)
Title:	Wednesday Afternoon Club records
ID:	1990.12
Date [inclusive]:	1901-2017
Physical Description:	1.88 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Wednesday Afternoon Club is a South Windsor social and philanthropic club for women. This collection includes three boxes of minutes, by-laws, constitution revisions, programs, audit reports, and membership lists from club inception in 1901 to present.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Wednesday Afternoon Club records (1990.12), Wood Memorial Library and Museum, South Windsor, CT.

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Biographical / Historical

The first official meeting of the Wednesday Afternoon Club of South Windsor, CT, was held on November 19, 1901. On that date, the new women's organization was called the Tuesday Afternoon Club. At a temporary meeting, those present voted that the club would become a permanent organization, meet once every two weeks at two o'clock, change its day of meeting from Tuesday to Wednesday, limit the number of its members to 20, and have a 25 cent membership fee. A president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer were elected. These officers and one other member of the club comprised the executive committee.

On November 26, 1901, the constitution and by-laws were framed. The organization's purpose was stated as "the mutual improvement of its members in literature, art, science, and the vital interests of the day," remaining the same over the years.

Initially, the club held met from November to April, but later included October and May. In its early years, meetings were hosted at the homes of members and they provided the activities and presentations. Most members lived on Main Street. Gradually, the format was altered to include male and female outside speakers.

From 1901 to 1915, a variety of topics were covered through readings, papers, exhibits, and travel reminiscences. Among the subjects discussed were famous Americans, American and European history and literary works, local and regional history, native flora and fauna, geology, natural resource conservation, art and museums, music, journalism, immigration, city planning, educational reforms, women's suggerage, women's higher education, child labor, emmancipation, and national development. Travel presentations included Europe, Africa, South America, and other parts of the world. Topics also included domestic matters such as interior decoration, home comforts, women's work, and household economics.

Although subject presentations continued to be important at meetings, emphasis shifted beginning in the 1920s. Musical presentations on the piano and Victrola became more frequent. In the 1930s, the club broadened its network. In 1935, it joined the Connecticut State Federation of Women's Clubs for one year. From 1936 to 1946 it held joint mmetings with the Parents and Teachers Association of Union School and later with the South Windsor Garden Club. Programs included color movies, evening meetings, and guest speakers. During those years, there was little mention of World War II, but at the December 15, 1937, meeting there was discussion of citizenship, a Nazi camp in Southbury, CT, and the possible spread of Nazi propaganda. In 1943 the number of meetings was reduced to three per year until the end of the war. From 1946 to 1951, the club became concerned with America's place in politics, the Marshall Plan, foreign affairs, domestic problems, and Native Americans. Of note was a presentation by local artist Albertus Jones in 1949 during which he showed many of his watercolors.

In addition to the improvement of its members, the club performed charity work. Beginning in 1903, it made contributions to the Newington Home for Crippled Children. Other donations were made to the American Red Cross, Connecticut Medical Assoc., Hoover Relief Fund, CARE, and the Christmas Seal campaign. Locally, it provided Christmas gifts to the children of needy families in town, and sent cards to shut-ins, flowers to hospitalized members, and floral wreaths to funerals, anniversaries, and other events.

The club was also involved with Wood Memorial Library. On March 27, 1929, it held its first meeting at the library, continuing into the 1960s. At one time, it attempted to collect historical items for display there. The club and the PTA purchased a circa 1885-1893 mahogany Steinway grand piano for \$350 in the 1930s for the library. In 1945, black-out shades were jointly furnished with the South Windsor Garden Club so that movies could be shown during the day. In 1947, the club, Garden Club, and PTA split the cost of a cabinet and electric stove for the kitchen. In the 1950s, the two clubs purchased the fabric and installed curtains in the upstairs meeting room.

Over the years, the number of members and annual membership fee increased. In 1907, the 25-member limit was removed, but in 1937 a limit was set at 50. It remained there until 1970, when it was raised to 75. Since then the membership level has decreased, due in some part to the greater number of women who work outside the home. Though the club has lost its original form and focus, it continues to educate its members through field trips and discussions of current events.

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Scope and Contents

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