Denison House Records 1890-1984

Guide to the Scholarly Resources Microfilm Edition

From the holdings of the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College

Primary Source Media
Acknowledgment

The publisher wishes to thank Eva S. Moseley at the Schlesinger Library for her ideas, help, and effort in compiling the microfilm for this collection.

ISBN 0-8420-4247-4
Manufactured in the United States of America
First printing 1999

A microfilm publication by Primary Source Media.

Distributed on microfilm by:

Primary Source Media

12 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525
Tel: (800) 444-0799 and (203) 397-2600
Fax: (203) 397-3893
Website: [www.gale.cengage.com/psm/](http://www.gale.cengage.com/psm/)
Contents

Introduction, 1

Scope and Content, 3

Roll Contents, 5

Series I: History, 5

Series II: Administration, 6
  Board of Directors, 6
  Annual Meetings, 7
  Other Committees, 7
  Financial, 8
  Correspondence, 8
  Related Social and Government Agencies, 8

Series III: Program, 10
  Reports, 10
    College Settlement Association, 10
    Headworkers' Reports, 10
    Daily Activity Reports, 11
    Day Books, 11
    Other, 11
  Circolo Italo-Americano, 11
  Camps, 12
  United War Fund Campaign List, 13
  Denison House Printed Material, 13
  Photographs, 13
Introduction

Denison House, the third college settlement in the United States, was founded in 1892 by a small group of college-educated women who were "distressed" and "made restless" by "a sense of privileges unshared," and who looked forward to a time when there should be no barriers between workers of any kind and the so-called leisure class. Their ideal was not philanthropy but democracy, which they defined as "a free flowing life between group and group."

Residents and members of the Executive Committee, Emily Greene Balch (a Wellesley College professor who later won the Nobel Peace Prize), Helen Cheever, and Vida Scudder, and other residents and day workers of Denison House in 1892 and 1893 kept a communal diary in which they recorded their daily conversations with each other, the parish priest, and with the people they referred to as their neighbors. Throughout the early years a strong connection with Wellesley College continued. In 1893 Helena Dudley became the headworker, and for the next fifteen years a more business-like day book was kept of the expanding activities. The settlement, originally located at 93 Tyler Street in the Old South Cove area of Boston, grew rapidly and four neighboring buildings were purchased.

Under the leadership (1893-1912) of Helena Dudley, and of subsequent headworkers, Denison House provided the neighborhood with various activities and facilities: sports for girls and boys; numerous clubs; classes in basketweaving, English literature, home nursing, dancing, Dante, and Shakespeare; and a library, a gymnasium, and a clinic. In addition, during periods of strife and emergency, Denison House joined with other settlements in providing relief programs, such as a milk station and coal distribution.
Located in a neighborhood of many nationalities, principally Italians, Syrians, and Greeks, the settlement worked closely with its immigrant neighbors. Most notable was the Circolo Italo-Americano, which, under the direction of Vida Scudder, held a festival each May and an exhibition of Italian arts and crafts each December. During the summer there were day excursions, a vacation school, and Camp Denison. Members of the Social Science Club, 1893-1900, discussed socialism and the history and ethics of trade unions. The Federal Labor Union, Local 5915, held monthly meetings at the settlement.

For nearly two years, starting in October 1926, Amelia Earhart was a social worker and resident at Denison House. She worked with children and adults as a teacher and home visitor, and devoted her weekends to flying, once dropping leaflets over Boston to advertise a Denison House benefit.

In 1941, as a result of neighborhood studies by Denison House and the Boston Council of Social Agencies, the decision was made to move Denison House to the Dorchester-Roxbury area. The move took place in 1942. For six years the office and the various programs were not centralized under one roof but made use of several local buildings. In 1949 Denison House moved into permanent quarters in the renovated Howard Avenue School. In 1965 Denison House and three other settlements merged to form Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses. Each house retained its own director and program staff, with FDNH responsible for program coordination, fund raising, and fiscal management. In 1975, after a fire destroyed the Howard Avenue building, Denison House moved to Codman Square, Uphams Corner, where it still operates today as part of Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses.
Scope and Content

The Denison House records are divided into three series:

I. History
II. Administration
III. Program

These records document the settlement movement in the United States, the history and philosophy of Denison House, the women who started it, the people who worked there and those who took advantage of its services, its administration, and particularly its many neighborhood and summer programs.

Series I. History (#1-14), consists of the reminiscences of Vida Scudder, a paper on the "purposes" of Denison House, a radio talk (1945) by Edward Hudson (headworker), a 1980 slide show, and seven disassembled scrapbooks, containing mostly clippings.

Series II. Administration (#15-56), includes five sections in the following order: Board of Directors and Executive Committee minutes and reports, annual meeting documents, miscellaneous committee reports, some financial records, and material issued by related social and government agencies. Each section is arranged in chronological order.

Series III. Program (#57-115), documents Denison House activities and services. It consists of reports: by the College Settlement Association, by the headworker, by resident workers, and committee members, re: daily activities, attendance, and facilities; a disassembled Circolo Italo-Americano scrapbook; two disassembled albums, as well as reports, and photographs, about summer programs, other activities, and buildings; six disassembled scrapbooks of
mostly printed material (reports, pamphlets, tickets, office forms, newsletters, clippings, etc.), and some carbon copies of correspondence and reports; and two disassembled photograph albums. Each segment is arranged chronologically.

Documents such as Board of Directors minutes, reports by individuals and committees, meeting notices, etc. were preserved by Denison House both by category and pasted in scrapbooks with other items, more or less chronologically.
## Roll Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll No.</th>
<th>Folder No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series I. HISTORY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Early Days at Denison House&quot; by Vida Scudder, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Settlement Purposes,&quot; 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Denison House, 1892-1945: A Power-House for American Democracy,&quot; a radio talk by Edward W. Hudson (headworker), 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;An Oral/Pictorial History of Denison House&quot; by Park Dougherty, project director, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1893-1900, n.d. Photocopies; whereabouts of originals unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900-31, n.d.; includes photographs and information about Massachusetts Association of Women Workers, photographs of Asian-American girls' sports teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1927-60 (scattered); includes Amelia Earhart correspondence, clippings, photograph (1935).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1930-35; some clippings regarding Amelia Earhart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1941-50; includes photograph of Dorchester-Roxbury Neighborhood Committee meeting (1942)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1950-53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roll No. Folder No.
2 12 1952-58

13 1955-59; includes photograph of First Annual Spring Clean-Up Campaign (1955)

14 Photographs from #7, 8, 10, 13; filmed with respective folders

Series II. ADMINISTRATION Board of Directors, Executive Committee; see also #57-69, 105

15 1892-99

16 1892-1919: excerpts

17 1901 - Oct. 1, 1906

18 Oct. 16, 1906 - Oct. 9, 1911

19 Nov. 1911 - Mar. 1913

20 Jan. 1913, 1916-19; includes Articles of Incorporation, 1913

21 1920; includes index for 1918-20

3 22 1936-37

23 1938-39

24 1940-42
Roll No. | Folder No.  | Description
--- | --- | ---
3 | 25 | 1943-45
26 | 1946
27 | 1947
28 | Board mailings, 1944-47, n.d.
29 | 1948 Reports
30 | 1960
31 | 1961
32 | 1962
33 | 1963

**Annual Meetings**

34 | 1919, 1944, 1947

**Other Committees: Reports, Studies**

35 | Special Committee "to study the work of the House"; DH Folk Handicrafts Council Committee on Reorganization, 1919

36-37 | "Study of South Cove Area," two versions, 1941; *see also* #45

38 | Boston and local maps from #37, 1930-31

39 | "Denison House in Transition," 1943
Roll No. 3  Folder No. 40  Neighborhood "Family file" list, 1942

Financial; see also 99-105

41  List of treasurers, 1891-1942; annual reports, 1909-18; finance committee minutes, 1947

42  Tyler Street property: mortgage (1922-23), sale (1941-42)

Correspondence

43  1891-1912 (scattered); includes Emily G. Balch, extracts from Jane Addams letter, JA pamphlet

Related Social and Government Agencies

43a  National Federation of Settlements: quarterly, Neighborhood, July 1928. Issue is dedicated to two pioneers, Graham Taylor of Chicago Commons and Amelia Earhart of Denison House, and includes Jane Addams article, an interview with Amelia Earhart, and NFS executive commitee minutes.

44  Boston Council on Social Agencies; see also #2; correspondence, report, proposed standards of membership, 1932-41 (scattered)

45  "A Study of Denison House" by BCSA, 1939; see also #70
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll No.</th>
<th>Folder No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Notes for study in #45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>DH report to BCSA, 1942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Other Boston settlement organizations, 1934-60 (scattered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Boston City Planning Board, &quot;The People of Boston&quot; (portions), 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Dorchester-Roxbury Neighborhood; meeting agenda, brochure, newsletter, 1942-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Maps from #50, 1932, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Photographs from #50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>United Community Services, &quot;Settlement Relocation Study,&quot; 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Proposal to National Institute of Mental Health re: Vocational rehabilitation of discharged mental patients, 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Boston maps, 1935, 1940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series III. PROGRAM
Reports
College Settlement Association

4  57  1890-1904

58f  "1897-1927," incomplete draft

59  1905-15

60  1914, 25th anniversary report

61  1915-28

62  1928-42

Headworkers’ Reports; see also #26, 47, 57-62,
93-94, 101

63  1918-20

64  1934-36

65  1936-38

66  1938-39

67  1939-40

68  1940-42

69  1948
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll No.</th>
<th>Folder No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>DH &quot;Dorchester-Roxbury Neighborhood Study,&quot; 1943; includes maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Maps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Daily Activity Reports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Dec. 27, 1892 - Mar. 21, 1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Jan. 2-18, 1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Jan. 18 - Feb. 14, 1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Day Books</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>1893-94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>1894-97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>&quot;D.H. Diary,&quot; 1900-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Summaries of attendance and activities, 1930-34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Programs and facilities report, 1945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Circolo Italo-Americano</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>1903-06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>1906-08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roll No. 5
Folder No. 82 1907

83 1908

84 1909; includes club constitution

85 1910

86 1911

87 Design for a cabinet, 1908?; Boston entertainment license, 1909

88 Re: "Stage Fund of 1910," 1910-28; includes Helen Cheever and other correspondence, PHOTOGRAPHS, tickets

Camps

89 Correspondence re: Sunnyside Farm, 1909

90 DH Farm guest book, 1919-30

91 Camp Denison: Camp committee report, 1931

92 Blueprint from #91

93 "Development of Georgetown Property," 1935; includes bunkhouse blueprint

94 Headworker reports to camp committee, 1938

95 Girls’ camp, 1952-53: Report
Roll No. | Folder No. | Description
--- | --- | ---
5 | 96 | Girls’ camp: Photographs

97 | Miscellaneous camp photographs, 1927, 1937, n.d.

United War Fund Campaign List

98 | 1943

Denison House Printed Material

99 | 1904-49

100 | 1929-38

101 | Disassembled scrapbooks, 1900-30

102 | Photographs from 101

103 | 1943-48

104 | 1943-49

105 | 1949-51; includes Board of Directors' minutes, meeting notices

Photographs: Classes, Plays, Parties, Camp Outings, Buildings

106 | 1898-1917, n.d.

107 | Loose photographs from #106
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll No.</th>
<th>Folder No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>108-109</td>
<td>1918-41 (scattered), n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1935-37, 1949, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1930s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1950s-1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1976-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Camp Denison, 1977; see also #91-97, 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Buildings: 25 Howard Avenue, 584 Columbia Road, 1970-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>