

Martha C. Wells Collection

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Creator - Author	Wells, Martha C., 1847-1948
Title	Martha C. Wells Collection
Date	1891-1917
Extent	1.0 boxes
Language	English

Biography

Martha C. Wells, a.k.a. Mrs. C. W. Wells, Mrs. M. C. Wells, Mrs. Cyrus W. Wells, Martha C. Howard Wells, of 2500 Stevens Avenue, was born in Kewanee, Illinois on April 4, 1847, and died on September 1, 1948 at the age of 101, the "oldest woman in Minneapolis" at that time, who could recall being a student when Lincoln was assassinated. Ms. Wells graduated valedictorian of her class from Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois, in 1866, married in 1872, and in 1880 came to Minneapolis with her husband, Cyrus W. Wells, a prominent real estate developer. She was a charter member of the Monday Club and of the Minneapolis Women's Club, and was one of the organizers of the State Federation of Women's clubs. She also lectured for and served as literary director of the Merriam Park Women's Club, the Merriam Park Study Club, and the Minneapolis Argosy Club.

A member of the Minnesota Historical Society, Ms. Wells founded the Minneapolis Primary Sunday School Teachers' Union in 1883, and formed the Tourist Club on November 23, 1891, in her home, and was the Tourist Club's first president. Thereafter she was custodian of the Tourist Club, and also on the program committee, coordinating many of its programs, which offered preparation for foreign travel through "mutual improvement and the study of countries and subjects of vital interest." The Club, at that time considered a "daring" association for women, assembled weekly at the public library, and was comprised of 30 women who became members by application and vote only when there were vacancies. The Club followed the Woman's Manual of Parliamentary Law, and Ms. Wells arranged the program was annually for 26 meetings, which included "map drills" and historical and cultural overviews.

Ms. Wells also served as president of the fifth district, Minnesota Federation of Women's clubs, from 1907 to 1909 and was its historian from 1919 to 1923, and was also state DAR Regent in 1910, during which the Sibley House in Mendota was presented to the Daughters of the American Revolution. After her husband's death (on October 29, 1916), she remained active and as chair of the department on international affairs for the Minneapolis Republican Women's club traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1925 to urge the national women's clubs to address the psychological, political, economic, and social causes of war, and to unite in search of a permanent solution for world peace. She was honored with an honorary degree, Master of Arts from Rockford College, in 1936, and in 1940 feted by the Minnesota Federation of Women's clubs for her "achievements and urged to continue work in upholding the standards of Americanism in the face of world disaster" and also encouraged to work on behalf of "the fundamentals of conservation." These are just a few of her many honors and dinners given to celebrate her.

Ms. Wells was living with her daughter, Mrs. William B. Newhall (at 3120 James Avenue South), in 1948 when an explosion rocked a neighbor's house and set fire to the Newhall residence. Ms. Wells was hospitalized for shock and returned to the rebuilt home, but her health declined thereafter. She was survived by her daughter, two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Description of the Collection

One box containing three scrapbooks, one folder. Collection consists of loose and bound notes and clippings or handwritten cards, and pamphlets produced by Ms. Wells dated 1891-1917.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

Related Materials

Related Materials

Minnesota Historical Society (Minneapolis Primary Sunday School Teachers' Union, P2335-1); and James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library (Woman's World's Fair Commission of the State of Minnesota. Hennepin County, SCMC M/A 2000.66.01; and Women's Literary Clubs Collection, M/A 2000.77.1 – "See also: VF Clubs and Organizations: Women's Literary Clubs for article written by Ruth Thompson about the portfolio, May 22, 1950 Minneapolis Tribune). Biography vertical files (Martha Howard Wells).

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Monday Club. (Minneapolis, Minn.)
- Tourist Club. (Minneapolis, Minn.)

- Woman's Club of Minneapolis.
- Woman's World's Fair Commission of the State of Minnesota. Hennepin County.

Subject(s)

- Women -- Minnesota -- Minneapolis -- Societies and clubs.
- Women -- Minnesota -- Societies and clubs.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Cards of introduction of Martha Wells to the Federation of Women's clubs. Passenger list aboard the <i>Statendam</i> , both from 1903. Two copies of the pamphlet "Outlines for Topics on History, Biography, and Art for Clubs, Classes, Teachers or Individual Students," 1897.	1	1
	Box	Box-folder
Scrapbook: "Mrs. C. W. Wells Miscellaneous Programs" containing Tourist Club programs, some with notes written in pencil, partial article about the club, Constitution and By-Laws, 1891-1912. Minneapolis Improvement League 1907-08 calendar. The Fortnightly, Moline, IL 1902-03 (16th year) program prepared by Wells. Merriam Park Woman's Club 1904-1905, 1906-1907, 1908-1909, 1909-1910 programs and 1910-1911 yearbook prepared by Wells. An undated article glued within a program listing "Men in the Service from Watonwan County, Minnesota" with penciled checks before some names and notes. The Monday Club, Fourteenth Annual Banquet (December 31, 1896) and 1916-1917 programs with lectures by Wells. The Argosy 1901-1902, 1906-1907 programs prepared by Wells Merriam Park Study Class, 1903-1904, 1904-1905, 1906-1907 programs prepared by Wells empty air mail envelope glued to last page	1	2
Scrapbook: In an alphabetized phone book: glued pages from catalogs detailing art questions (inside cover); handwritten catalog of art photographs (between facing pages and pages E-F), handwritten notes on "Spain II Toledo and the South Section" (between pages P-Q and T-U), "List of Durable Pictures by the Masters" (between pages T-U and V-W), "Questions upon the Period of the Rule of the Medicean Family in	1	3

Florence, suggested by George Eliot's 'Romola'" (in Y), recipes; more notes on art and artists, undated.

Scrapbook: Loose items in various pages: obituary of Mrs. D. H. Ferguson, list of names, poems from newspaper by Longfellow and Emerson, typewritten biography of Savonarola (penned by Ms. Wells), art notes, one on letter to Ms. Wells from Mary Bushnell, pages of catalogs, handwritten schedule, advertisement for Graves Printed Indexes, clipping on Lorenzo de Medici, undated.

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