Institutional History

The Portland, Oregon YMCA was established on March 31, 1868 by Edward Quackenbush and William Wadhams. The initial focus of the organization was Evangelical Christianity and Bible instruction with Sunday school classes, lectures, library and reading rooms being provided. After the turn of the century, the Portland branch of the organization expanded to offer a technical training school for young men as well.

In 1910, the YMCA moved to a new building in downtown Portland at Southwest Sixth Avenue and Taylor and new programs and services were added, including dormitories, food service and physical education instruction. The following year in 1911, the first camp was founded at Spirit Lake near Mt. St. Helens. During WWI, the YMCA worked extensively with the Armed Services to provide services and support for the troops.

In 1926, the Northeast YMCA opened in the Hollywood District to provide families with instruction in physical education. During the next two decades, YMCA programs expanded to the suburbs. In response to the Great Depression, new services were added including job training and food and shelter for those in need.

During WWII, the YMCA again worked with the Armed Services both locally and world-wide. After the war, the booming economic climate fostered the expansion of the YMCA. The downtown building was remodeled and new locations were opened: the John R. Leach YMCA in Southeast Portland and the North Portland YMCA. Additionally, the youth camping program was expanded to include Camp Collins on the Sandy River. During this period, the organization focused on health education, youth work, camping and their new parent-child program called Y-Indian Guides.

During the 1960’s and 1970’s, the YMCA worked with the Job Corps and started community outreach programs. This period was also marked by devastation as Camp Meehan was destroyed by a storm, the North Portland YMCA was sold to the Salvation Army in 1974 and the Downtown YMCA branch was forced to close in 1975. However, in 1977, the YMCA Metro Center was opened on Barbur Boulevard with the help of a $4 million dollar campaign and Camp Collins was winterized to allow for year-round usage. The program expanded their services to emphasize outdoor education, family education, urban services, juvenile justice and international programs.

In the 1980’s, the YMCA began strategic planning to analyze community needs and provide for those needs through collaboration and volunteerism. A shift was made to decentralize the YMCA’s governance and program delivery systems in order to allow the
organization to strengthen and expand at a branch level. The Portland branch of the YMCA, now known collectively as the YMCA of the Columbia-Willamette, was able to use the information gathered to develop the foundation for their corporate plan and future vision.

Scope and Content
This collection contains materials spanning the history of the YMCA in Portland, Oregon from its founding in 1868 up to the 1980s. The majority of the collection is made up of Association publications from the early 1900s, including: weekly newsletters, course listings for the technical school, annual reports and financial statements, and other promotional materials. There are also a series of bound volumes entitled Association Men, which is a national rather than a local publication, and a small number of letters or correspondence.

Detailed Description of Collection

**Announcements: Course Offerings.** Date Range: c.1900-1906
1. (c.1900) Course Offerings (c.1., c.2., c.3)
2. (1902-03) Course Offerings
3. (1905-1906) Course Offerings

**Annual Reports and Financial Statements: YMCA.** Date Range: 1898-1932
1. (1898) YMCA 30th Annual Report
2. (1898) ¼ (Quarterly) Statement, Jan-March, 1898
3. (1899) Statement, 30th Annual
4. (1899) Condensed Financial Statement, September
5. (1901) Financial Statement
6. (c. 1900) Financial Statement: ‘The Better Portland’
8. (1907) Annual Report (c.1., c.2)
9. (1913) Annual Report
10. (1917-1918) Financial Statement: Comparative Statement
11. (1918) Letter, Financial
12. (1932) Annual Report

**Bound Volumes: Association Men/Annual publication.** Date Range: 1900-1905
1. (1900) Bound Volume
2. (1900-01) Bound Volume
3. (1902-03) Bound Volume
4. (1903-04) Bound Volume
5. (1904-05) Bound Volume

**Brochure: Better Men.** Date Range: 1910
1. (1910) no.6 (April)
Brochure: Building Proposal Plans (YWCA Proposal)., Date Range: c.1900

1. (c.1900) YWCA Building
2. (c.1900) YWCA Building

Brochure: Young Men, Date Range: 1895-1896

1. (1895) (12 issues/Complete)
2. (1896) (March and April present)

Correspondence, General YMCA., Date Range: 1890-1985

1. (1890) Letter, dated: May 7th, 1890
2. (1909) Letter from Auditor, dated: April 7th, 1909
3. (1910) General Correspondence YMCA, dated: May 13th, 1910
4. (1910) Letter to Mr. Burgess, dated: October 5th, 1910
5. (c.1914-1944) Envelope ‘Birthday Wishes from Eino’
6. (1918) Letter from Barclay Acheson, dated: March 9th, 1918
7. (1918) Letter from Barclay Acheson, dated: March 14th, 1918
8. (1919) Letter with stapled Photograph, dated: February 7th, 1919

Historical Information, General YMCA., Date Range: 1868-1909

1. (1868) List of Charter Members
2. (1880) Pamphlet, ‘Constitution and By-Laws’
3. (1899) Brochure, ‘Present Leaders-Past Leaders of YMCA 30th Anniversary’
4. (1909) Pamphlet, ‘Forty Years of YMCA in Portland 1868-1909’
5. (c.1900) List, ‘Time Capsule Inventory (?) for 19 items’

Minutes: Board Meeting., Date Range: c. 1902

1. (1902) Meeting Minutes/Boys Club

Miscellaneous: Promotional Materials., Date Range: c.1900-1914

1. (1908) Brochure, ‘Summer Institute and Training School’
2. (1909) Ephemera, ‘Building Tour’ Invitation for event dated: Dec 12-18th
3. (1913) Program, ‘13th Annual YMCA Convention’
4. (1914) Brochure, ‘Review’
5. (c.1900) Brochure, ‘The Hardest Work in the World’
6. (c.1900) Ephemera, ‘When you Need a Man’ advertisement

Newsletter: Association Events., Date Range: 1906-1907

1. (1906) Volume II, nos. 7, 10, 11 (c.1., c.2), 12-13
2. (1907) Volume II, no. 22
Newsletter: *The Bulletin*, Date Range: 1885-1892

1. (1885-1892) Various Publications

Newsletter: *Events*, Date Range: 1900-1901

1. (1900) Volume I, no.3
2. (1901) Volume I, nos. 19, 21

Newsletter, *Portland Young Men*, Date Range: c. 1926-1930

1. (1926) Volume I, nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7-13
3. (1927) Volume II, nos. 2-18
4. (1928) Volume II, nos. 19-21, 22 (c.1., c.2), 24-35, 37-39, 40-42
5. (1928) Volume III, nos. 1-17
6. (1929) Volume III, nos. 21-36
7. (1929) Volume IV, nos. 2-18

Newsletter: *The Telephone*, Date Range: 1894

1. (1894) Volume I, nos. 4-5

Pamphlets: Miscellaneous Titles., Date Range: 1899-1915

1. (1899-1900)-‘*Some of the work of*
2. (1901-1902)-‘*Activity’
3. (1903-1904)-‘*Power’
4. (1903-1904)-‘*Together’
5. (1904-1905)-‘*A Statement on Amusements, Education, Exercise, Religion and Other Things.’
6. (1905-1906)-‘*Announcement’ (c.1., c.2)
7. (1906-1907)-‘*A Portland Center’ (c.1., c.2)
8. (1908-1909)-‘*Efficient Men’
9. (1910-1911)-‘*Things Doing’ (c.1., c.2)
10. (1911-1912)-‘*Activities’
11. (1912-1913)-‘*1/2 Pictures’
12. (1914-1915)-‘*The Y’
13. (1915-1916)-‘*The Plus (+) Man’

Photographs: Various., Date Range: c.1920-c.1980

1. (c.1920) Naked Boys in Pool/NE Portland YMCA
2. (c.1960) Co-ed Dance (2 images)
3. (c.1980) Man and Boys Recording Stories

Publication: *The Beaver*, Date Range: 1909-1911
1. (1909) September-October issues
2. (1911) March issue

**Publication: Friday Evening Post,** **Date Range: 1910**
1. (1910) Volume I, no. 1
2. (1910) Volume II, nos. 6-9
3. (1911) Volume III, no. 1

**Publication: Rose City Boys,** **Date Range: 1906**
1. (1906) Volume I, no. 11

**Publication: Webfoot Boy,** **Date Range: 1905-1906**
1. (1905) Volume I, no. 3-4
2. (1905) Volume I, no. 5 (c.1., c.2)
3. (1905) Volume I, nos. 6-8
4. (1906) Volume I, nos. 9-10

**Publication: YMCA Ski Club,** **Date Range: 1924**
1. (1924) Publication

**Unprocessed: Various,** **Date Range: 1900-1918**
1. (c.1900) ‘The Man I Have Never Seen’, Reno Hutchinson
2. (1918) Meeting Documents: YMCA General Program