

**Watertown Free Public Library**

123 Main Street

Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

**Local History Collection**

**Watertown Book Club records,  
1875-1999 (inclusive)**

**SC117**

## Summary

**Collection name:** Watertown Book Club records, 1875-1999 (inclusive)

**Collection number:** SC117

**Repository:** Watertown Free Public Library (Watertown, Massachusetts)

**Creator:** Watertown Book Club (Watertown, Mass.)

**Extent:** 0.28 cubic feet (4 books and one legal folder in a drop-spine clamshell box)

**Language:** English

**Provenance:** The two oldest volumes in this collection were donated to the Watertown Free Public Library from the Watertown Book Club in 1999. The provenance of other items in the collection is unknown.

**Processing information:** This finding aid was created by Caroline Littlewood in 2021. It draws heavily on transcriptions of Series II materials created by library volunteers circa 2010. Items in this collection were previously identified by the call number 367.97443 BOO 1888-.

**Conditions governing access:** Collection is open for use in the Local History Room, Watertown Free Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** Watertown Book Club record books, SC117, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

## Organizational History

The Watertown Book Club was founded in Watertown, Massachusetts. It was reportedly organized by Reverend John Weiss, pastor of First Parish Church in Watertown. It is still active and is considered one of the oldest round robin book clubs of its kind in the country.

Since 1844, Watertown Book Club members have circulated books and periodicals among themselves on a regular schedule, meeting once a year to auction off the previous year's titles. Revenue from the auction and small annual membership fees fund the next year's purchases. The Club has limited its membership size through the years, averaging about 15 members at a time until 1975, when membership was capped at 12.

Some past members (in no particular order) include:

Allen, Edward E.

Appel, Lilly

Bean, Marshal, Mr. and Mrs.

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Bejcek, Evelyn	Fitz, F.	Morton, Avery A.
Bejcek, Harold	Furber, Edward P.	<i>(President 1935-1987)</i>
<i>(President)</i>	Glidden Family	Musket, Jacqueline
Brigham, Maria	Goff, Lawrence C.	Noftsker, Jack
<i>(Secretary 1888-1903)</i>	Goodsell, Alson	O'Dwyer, Lyanne
Broderick, Gertrude	Gwaltney Family	Pinder, Edward P.
Bumstead, Mrs.	Holmes, E. M.	Rankin Family
Burkhardt, Gwynne	Holmes, Winifred L.	Robertson, Edward Family
Critchett, E. H.	Hopewell Family	Robbins, Martha
Clapp, Robert	Hormor, Jack	Robinson, G. Frederick
Cleveland, L. Sidney	Horne, Mary B.	<i>(Secretary 1931-1949)</i>
Cleveland, Lulu B.	Horne, Mrs.	Rowan, A. J.
Coolidge, Herbert	Horne, R.	Scudde, Rita
Corbett, Bernadette	Horne, R. B.	Smullin, Ruth
Corbett, John, Sr.	Keene, James B.	Snow, Walter B.
Corbett, Marie	Kendall, Francis	Soussou, Helen
Denison, Roy E.	<i>(President)</i>	Stone, Edwin L.
<i>(President 1940-1951)</i>	Kendall, Mrs.	Tyler, Earle S. Family
Dickinson, John D.	McGowan, David	Whitney, Robert
Donahue, Rita	McGowan, Evelyn	Whitney, Sylvia
Edwards, Eleanor	McGowan, Frank	Williston, S.
Everett, Polly	Robbins, Miss	Wright, Genevieve S.
Everett, Walter	More, Russell J.	Wright, George S.
Ferris, Raymond T.	Morse, Clara Belle	Wright, Helen Robinson
Fitz, Charles F.	Morse, Mrs.	Young, Louisa

## Scope and Content Note

This collection documents the activities of the Watertown Book Club in Watertown, Massachusetts from 1875 to 1999. It consists of official club records and related ephemera. It is arranged into two series:

Series I. Record books, 1889-1999 (inclusive)

Series II. Book slips, notes, and letters, 1875-ca. 1940

### Series I. Record books, 1889-1999 (inclusive)

Extent: 4 bound volumes

This series includes four record books documenting official club business from 1889 to 1999. Books primarily contain meeting minutes relating to membership nominations and

changes, officer appointments, book purchases and sales, and periodical subscriptions. There are also a few short essays about club members or club history.

Volumes in this series all have titles and penciled annotations to the titles, presumably added in the 1990s or later.

- *Watertown Book Club 1889-1911* (and in pencil, "vol. 2")
- *Watertown Book Club 1911-1938* (and in pencil, "vol. 3")
- *Records of the Watertown Book Club 1938-1999* (and in pencil, "vol. 4 part 1")
- All in pencil, *Records of the Watertown Book Club*, vol. 4, part 2

This last volume, vol. 4 part 2, is primarily financial records kept by the treasurer for the years 1980 to 1999.

## Series II. Book slips, notes, and letters, 1875-ca. 1940

Extent: 1 folder

This series contains several loose items, including: a letter of resignation from Mary B. Horn (regarding Horne and Maria Brigham), sent to Herbert Coolidge, November 2, 1920; a letter from Lulu B. Cleveland to G. Frederick Robinson, Club Secretary, cancelling her membership, circa 1940; a handwritten copy of notes found in possession of club member Miss Martha Robbins, 1912; a list of books, with prices, circa 1932; a list of books sold at auction, 1893; and a note with meeting minutes, 1895.

It also contains loose book slips which each document the circulation of a single book. They list members down the side and have columns for the dates the book was received and delivered. There are two blank book slips (1903, 1905), six used book slips (1875, 1885, 1888, 1901, 1902, 1903), and one undated book slip (circa 1885).

## Access Points

### People:

Robinson, G. F. (George Frederick), ca. 1861-1949

### Corporate names:

Watertown Book Club (Watertown, Mass.)

### Subjects:

Clubs—Watertown—Massachusetts

Watertown (Mass.)—Social life and customs