

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION  
ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # \*84M33

Location

Title Records. Town Hall [or America's Town Meeting of the Air]

Approximate inclusive dates 1895-1955. Bulk: 1940-1955

Date of receipt 1957

Received from The Town Hall (N.Y.U.)

Volume on arrival -

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 210 rc, 8 ab, 136 vols, 3 pkgs

Condition Good

Restrictions None

Description Following the defeat in 1894 of the women's suffrage amendment to the New York State constitution six prominent suffragists created the League for Political Education in New York City. Led by Mary Putnam Jacobi, the founders sought to continue the struggle for women's rights by raising political consciousness. In 1901 Robert Ely became its director, a post he held until 1937. In 1907 a kindred service, the Civic Forum, was formed by the League to foster higher standards of civic responsibility and international goodwill. In the same year the League formed The Economic Club as a non-partisan organization for the discussion of economic, social, and industrial problems. The League opened The Town Hall on 43rd Street in New York City in 1921 as "a meeting place, a clearing house for ideas, a forum, a lyceum [similar to the Chautauqua Institution which had served the needs of adult education in western New York in the 1870s] a concert hall, a school, and a college". In 1930 George Denny, a former drama teacher and professional actor, was appointed associate director. Denny created America's Town Meeting of the Air in 1935 as an integral part of the educational work of the Town Hall and The League for Political Education. He conceived ATMA as a nation-wide wide version of the New England town meeting where topics of community concern were discussed. He also hoped that it would help restore confidence in the democratic system in a nation shaken by economic instability and confused by the rapid rise and challenge of alien political ideologies. The National Broadcasting Company was persuaded to finance all out-of-pocket expenses and in May-July of 1935 six experimental programs were broadcast over a national network. The early programming reflected the concerns of the

Depression Era: unemployment, the New Deal, the threat of radicalism in the unions. By 1937 the imminence of war dominated the broadcasts. In 1944 and 1945 the programs were sponsored by Reader's Digest. During this period ATMA had to answer charges that its programming re-

Special Formats  Photographs  Maps  Audio Tapes  Films  Graphics  
 Artifacts  Machine-readable records  
 Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary catalog card added entries

*see attached*

Accessioned by Nicholas J. Jacobs

Date 5/23/84

flected the conservatism of the sponsor and that many of the questions asked by the audience were spontaneous but planted. The programming for the late forties and early fifties dealt with German guilt, corrupt unions, and the crucial issues underlying the cold war: internal national security, defense buildup, political and military commitments abroad, leftists infiltration of labor unions, etc. At this time, too, television began to take away the radio audience and ATMA experienced a decline in attendance and sharp drops in ratings. In 1952 Denny made his last appearance as moderator and in 1956 ATMA was broadcast for the last time after 928 programs. In the same year The Town Hall was reorganized and became affiliated with New York University. In 1958 its name was changed to The Town Hall of New York University and it became a part of the University's Division of General Education.

Included in the records are letters written by notable persons to Robert E. Ely, director of The League for Political Education, which was the parent organization and founder of The Town Hall. There are also correspondence, dossiers, preliminary records sheets, and brief biographies relating to proposed memorial chairs in The Town Hall auditorium and to lectureships and foundations to be endowed in the names of prominent deceased persons; correspondence and papers, late 1930-1950, of the Concert Department including lease registers and appointments books, statistics, engagement details, financial reports, box of office material. Also to be found are correspondence and papers, 1940s and 1950s of the Short Courses Division consisting of transcripts of lectures and workshops material; correspondence, 1930s, 1940s, of the Music Department; and correspondence and papers, c1935-1956, of the radio wing of The Town Hall, America's Town Meeting of the Air. These papers include general correspondence, letters from listeners, advance program correspondence, inter-office memoranda, audience mail reports, speakers' aid material, correspondence of the director of radio and t.v. operations, publicity, photographs, and newsclippings.

America's Town Meeting of the Air

Box No.

Contents

League for Political Education

1 Correspondence (mostly with Robert E. Ely) Adler, Felix-Knox  
2 " " " " Kropotkin, Peter-Wright  
Volume - League of Political Education & The Town Hall Inc., Minutes  
of the Executive and other committees, 1935, April 1-1937, March 31  
Volume - The Town Hall Inc., Minutes of Meetings of Executive Committees,  
1939, May-1941, April

America's Town Meeting of the Air

Radio Dept. & Radio & T.V. Dept

3-7 Relating to programs, 1945-1946; audience mail reports, 1941-42  
8 General correspondence- interoffice memoranda, 1930s, 1940s  
9 General correspondence, 1940; Town Hall Community survey forms  
10 & 11 General correspondence, 1940s  
12 General correspondence, 1940s, financial papers  
13 & 14 General correspondence, 1940s  
15 General correspondence, 1940s; audience mail reports, 1944-1945  
16 Correspondence, Ala.-N. Mex.  
17 Correspondence, N.Y.-N.C.  
18-24 Listeners' suggestions and questions for future programs,  
1941-1946  
25 & 26 Letters from the public responding to programs, 1945  
27 correspondence re: proposed sites for broadcasts, etc.  
28 Mixed; see also: boxes 36-41  
29 Radio advisory committee; press releases; field trip  
reports; annual report, 1940-41  
30 Radio advisory committee; lists of women's groups  
31-35 Speaker's Aid materials, 1945-47  
36-37 Program folders, 1947, and corresp.  
38-39 Program folders, 1948, and corresp.  
40-41 Program folders, 1950, and corresp.

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## Radio Dept. &amp; Radio &amp; T.V. Dept.

42 & 43 Program outlines and corresp., 1947-1951

44 Press releases, 1945, 1946

## Director's Office

45 Corresp. & Papers; audience reactions; budgets, 1943-1949

46 Correspondence, audience reactions, 1950, Aug.-1951, May 1

47 Correspondence, audience reactions, 1951, May 8-1952, May 6

48 & 49 Program correspondence, 1955-1956

50 Correspondence, 1954; Asia Town Hall Mission

51 General correspondence, 1950-1953, Ala.-N.J.

52 General correspondence, 1950-1953, N.Y.-Iyo.

53 Correspondence & papers

54 & 55 Program folder, 1946, Aug. -1947, June 12

56 & 57 Audience mail reports, 1948-1949

58 & 59 Correspondence, 1950s

61 Audience mail reports, 1950; correspondence; T.V. workshop; interoffice memos re T.V. programs; questionnaires; letters re: ATMA visits to various towns and institutions; photographs of participants & audiences

62 Audience mail reports; preliminary mail reports, 1944-1950

63 Waivers ( permission to use statements, print names & addresses, etc.); 1940-50s T.V. program questions

64-68 Fan mail, 1954, Oct.-1956, May

69-75 Advance program corresp., 1951, Jan.-1956

## Radio Dept. &amp; Radio &amp; T.V. Dept.

76 & 77 Correspondence, late 1930s

78 Radio Dept. Correspondence, 1940-1951

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America's Town Meeting of the Air

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- 79 Correspondence, 1949, May-Oct. 18; program comments; ticket requests
- 80 Correspondence, 1949, Oct. 25-Nov; program comments; ticket requests
- 81 Radio & T.V. Dept., Correspondence, 1948, March-1949, Oct.; audience mail reports; facts & figures forms
- 82 Radio & T.V. Dept., Correspondence, 1949, Nov.-1950, April; audience mail reports
- 83 Radio & T.V. Director's correspondence; Denny correspondence
- 84 Radio & T.V. Director's correspondence, 1944-1949
- 85 Radio & T.V. Director's correspondence; speakers' fee, 1941, 1944-1951
- 86 Radio & T.V. Director's correspondence, 1950-1951, May
- 87-91 World Tour, 1949-1950, correspondence, travel arrangements, press releases, memoranda
- 92 World Tour, 1949, June 29-Oct. 4; domestic corresp., 1949, Oct. 11-Dec. 6; program correspondence, 1949.
- 93 Domestic broadcasts, program correspondence, 1949, Jan.-June
- 94 Publicity, photos, news releases, 1945-1949
- 95 Photos of program participants, 1935, June-1944
- 96 Clippings, publicity, 1940s
- 97 Publicity? Correspondence, 1948-1949
- 98 & 99 Speakers' Aid material, 1944, 1945, background research material relating to program questions
- 100 & 101 Season of 1946-1947; correspondence, 1944-1946; audience mail; continuity, 1945-1946; departmental memoranda; Town Hall clubs; Town Hall lectureships; some Historical Dept. material
- 102 & 103 President's Office correspondence, 1940s
- 104 Correspondence, some President's Office; Reader's Digest, 1944-1945; program responses; Radio Div. programming, 1946
- 105 Photos & clippings

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Town Hall

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110-148	Correspondence relating to the Book of Enduring Names; Town Hall Tributes; Memorial chairs; biographies of candidates for memorial chairs, 1930s & 1940s
110 & 111	A-D <i>in detail</i>
112	A-Benedict
113	A-H
114	A-M
115	Benet-Butler
116	B-Cay
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143	Memorial chairs, closed: A-Barr
144	Memorial chairs, closed: Bars-Brz
145	Memorial chairs, proposals-non replies
146	Town Hall Tributes, biographical material, A-Fo
147	Town Hall tributes, biographical material, Fr-Lo; Book of Enduring Names
AB 148	Memorial chairs, pending; deferred
149	Committees
150 & 151	Correspondence, 50th Anniversary Campaign; interoffice memos; Christmas appeal; purchase orders
152	Correspondence and phots re: Ely's birthday luncheon; correspondence re: Memorial chaires; library endowment fund; Foundations
153	Correspondence re: Ely luncheon; Memorial chairs, T-Z
154	Correspondence re: Ely Anniversary; corporate gifts; contributions, A-O
155	Correspondence re contributions, P-Z; other gifts
156 & 157	Publicity; printed material, 1930s, 1940s
158 & 159	Publicity; workshops; lectures; statistics
160	Photographs

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Town Hall

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- 162 Correspondence, 1950s, re: lectures; short courses; pledges & contributions, etc.

Concert Dept.

- 163-165 Correspondence & papers, late 1930s, early 1940s
- 166-167 Correspondence & papers, late 1940s
- 168 Engagement leases; financial states; Concert Dept. financial reports: 1945-1946
- 169 Correspondence, 1946-1947
- 170 Correspondence, Annual report, 1947-1948
- 171 Correspondence, leases returned, 1949-1950
- 172 Statistics, box office receipts; engagement details, 1949-1950
- AP: 173 Lease registers; budget; attendance figures; annual report, 1945-1946
- pkg Lease registers and appointments, 1947, May-1949, April
- pkg Lease registers, 1949-1950
- 174 Correspondence, 1930s & 1940s
- 175-177 Correspondence, 1940s
- 178 1947-1949 Season; leases; control sheets; flyers
- 179 Correspondence, 1948-1949; Maggie Teyte concert
- ~~Box Office~~
- 180 Concert mail; individual performers, late 1940s, mid 1950s
- 181 Concert mail, 1951-1952; manager's mail, 1952-1954
- 182 Concert mail, 1952-1953
- 183 Concert mail, 1950-1952; 1954, 1955
- 184 Manager's mail, 1946-1951; 1954-1955
- 185 Manager's mail, 1951-1952; concert mail, 1953-1954



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Town Hall

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- 187 Lecture transcripts, 1949-1951
- 188 & 189 Workshops, 1940s, 1950s, photos
- 190 Lectures; correspondence, 1950s
- 191 Psychiatry course, Mexican series, 1950s
- 192 ← Egyptian Town Hall Mission, 1951
- 193 ← Fund-raising Dept., gifts acknowledgement corresp., 1940s
- 194-197 ← Honors Day file; Founders' day data 1940s
- 198 & 199 ← 50th Anniversary Committee, Corresp. & papers, 1939-1940
- 200 & 201 ← Committee of 600, Corresp. & papers, 1940s
- 202 ← General Appeal, 1948, 1949; Town Hall patrons; Foundations; Corporations
- 203 Music Dept., Corresp., late 1930s, early 1940s
- 204 General Corresp. (mainly ATMA) A-Interoffice
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- 206 ATMA Tour, 1950s, Ala-Mass
- 207 ATMA Tour, 1950s, Mich.-Ohio
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- 209 & 210 ATMA World Tour, 1949: photographs, correspondence; personal notes of Mr. & Mr. Denny  
and Universities:
- 211 Libraries, schools, and Universities: corresp. re: Town Meeting of the Air Bulletin, 1950s, A-C
- 212 Libraries, schools, and Universities: corresp. & papers re: America's Town Meeting of the Air Bulletin, 1950s
- 213 Libraries, schools, and Universities: corresp. & papers re: Town Meeting of the Air Bulletin, 1950s, G-N
- 214 Libraries, schools, and Universities: corresp. & papers re: Town Meeting of the Air Bulletin, 1950s, O-Z

Box No.

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Town Hall: miscellaneous correspondence and memos; academic referral evaluation cards

217

Town Hall-ATMA: scripts; honors day brochures

218

Town Hall-ATMA: photographs of World Tour; Enduring Names, etc.

Volumes

*(Separate loc. ?304-K-1)*

ATMA scrapbooks of news clippings, 1935-1948, 78 vols. ↓

ATMA & Town Hall Institutional, 1946, Apr.-1948, June, 3 vols.

ATMA scrapbooks re: ticket distribution, 1944-April 1955, 11 vols.

ATMA audience reports, 1948-1951, 5 vols.

ATMA mail reports, bylaws, 1951-1953, 2 vols.

14th anniversary letters from station managers, 1949; sponsors, 1947-1948, 1 vol.

Tour invitations, 1 vol.

Town Hall scrapbooks, lectures 1943-1947 seasons; institutional, 1945, 4 vols.

Town Hall, short courses, 1946-1948, 2 vols.

Honors series, 1 vol.

Production, 1946-1947, 1 vol.

Staff Council Meeting Minutes, 1947-1950, 3 vols.

Fund Raising scrapbook, 40s & 50s, 5 vols.

50th anniversary campaign, 5 vols.

Survey, Analysis and Plan of Fund-raising for The League

Photograph border proof sheets of biographies contained Vol II of Book of Enduring Names, 1 pkg.

Albums of photographs of participants on ATMA programs (photobooks 8 & 9) 2 vols.

Photographs, 1 vol.

Lists of speakers and their subjects, 2 vols.

Oversize albums: San Francisco program, 1945, 1 vol.

Volumes

Oversize album: World Tour, 1949, 1 vol.

Oversize album: The Story of America's Town Meeting, 1 vol.

Town Crier, vol. 6, nos. 1-5, 1935-1936, 1 vol.

**AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR (TOWN HALL)  
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**Town Hall, Inc. Records**  
**Sound Recordings**  
**Mental Health Short Courses**

104 audio disks (78 rpm) and 24 open reel tape copies of twelve lectures from Town Hall's short courses on mental health. Present are the full eight lectures from the series "Psychiatry and You" given in the spring of 1949 and four of the lectures from the fall 1949 series, "Psychiatry and Personal Relations." Prominent lecturers included Erich Fromm, Lawrence Kubie, and Margaret Mead. Among the topics covered were alcoholism, mental illness, physical disabilities, male-female relations, and psychiatric services.

Original disks and open reel tapes are not available for public use. Consult the archivist on duty to arrange for service cassettes to be created for use in the reading room.

Transcripts are available in Box 187 for the lectures by Erich Fromm, Lawrence Kubie, Frederick H. Allen, and Leo H. Bartemeier. [There are also transcripts of the remaining lectures in the "Psychiatry and Personal Relations" series and later mental health short courses, 1950-1953].

**Psychiatry and You, Spring 1949**

Control #	Tape #	Title / Lecturer	Date
03501	1 and 2	When Do You Need a Psychiatrist? Thomas A.C. Rennie	February 22, 1949
03502	3 and 4	What Makes Your Child Sick? Milton J.E. Senn	February 29, 1949
03503	5 and 6	Mental Health and Mental Illness Kenneth Appel	March 7, 1949
03504	7 and 8	Alcohol: One Man's Meat Edward Strecker	March 14, 1949
03505	9 and 10	Emotional Problems in Physical Disability Howard Rusk	March 21, 1949
03506	11 and 12	An Anthropologist Looks at Mental Health Margaret Mead	March 28, 1949
03507	13 and 14	Psychiatry and the Road Back Robert P. Knight	April 4, 1949
03508	15 and 16	Building for Mental Health Carl Binger	April 11, 1949

## Psychiatry and Personal Relations, Fall 1949

Control #	Tape #	Title / Lecturer	Date
03509	17 and 18	Psychiatry and Personal Relations: <i>husband/wife</i> Lawrence S. Kubie	October 10, 1949
03510	19 and 20	Psychiatry and Personal Relations: <i>employer/employee</i> Leo H. Bartemeier	October 17, 1949
03511	21 and 22	Psychiatry and Personal Relations: <i>man/woman</i> Erich Fromm	October 24, 1949
03512	23 and 24	Psychiatry and Personal Relations: <i>mother/child</i> Frederick H. Allen	October 31, 1949