

Baylor University . The Texas Collection

BU Records: Rufus C. Burleson Society. 1900-1919

Summary Information

Creator	Rufus C. Burleson Society, 1887 - 1925 (Creator)
Extent (quantity/size)	1 document box
Language	English
Abstract	The Rufus C. Burleson Society records document the operations and activities of one of Baylor's literary societies that was most active in the early 1900s.

Subjects

Baptist universities and colleges -- Texas -- Waco -- History. / Baylor University -- History. / Waco (Tex.) -- History. / Women -- Education (Higher) -- Texas -- Waco. / Women -- Texas -- Waco -- Societies and clubs.

Administrative Information

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Preferred Citation When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

BU Records: Rufus C. Burleson Society, Accession BU/149, Box#, Folder #,
The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information Described by Brian Simmons and released on 2013-06-17.

Scope and Content

BU Records: Rufus C. Burleson Society was transferred from uncatalogued holdings in The Texas Collection.

The records of the Rufus C. Burleson Society date from approximately 1909 to 1919. Early records were destroyed in a fire, but in 1901, the organization attempted to recreate the roll, by-laws, and constitution. Items include the society's constitution and by-laws, minutes from meetings, and roll books (from 1909-1913 and 1915-1919). Also included are informational pamphlets, an event program, invitations, and correspondence.

Administrative/Biographical History

The Rufus C. Burleson Society, also known as the "R.C.B.'s", was one of two literary societies open to women at Baylor during the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was the last formed of the four dominant literary societies at Baylor at the time, which included the Philomathesian Literary Society, Erisophian Literary Society, and Calliopean Literary Society. Founded in October 1887 (almost twenty years after the last established literary society, the Calliopean Literary Society), the group faced initial adversity from the previously established societies and named itself after the then current Baylor president who supported the growing group. Their motto, "Step By Step," reflects the nature of the gradual acceptance of the organization.

Literary societies at Baylor reached their height of popularity around 1900 and offered members the opportunity to socialize outside of the academic setting while providing a unique group identity. Activities were primarily concerned with academic development; oratory skills were especially important. Societies encouraged personal development, held meetings, hosted events, and allowed access to private libraries. Joint meetings and debates were popular among the societies and contributed to the rivalry between them. Eventually, the Rufus C. Burleson Society formed an alliance with the Erisophian Literary Society after the Philomathesian Literary Society and Calliopean Literary Society became brother-sister organizations.

As popular interest in debate declined and membership dwindled in the 1920s, the Rufus C. Burleson Society merged with the Erisophian Literary Society, and the group retained the Erisophian name. The group held its last meeting in 1925 and after a brief attempt to revive the society in 1926, ceased to exist.

Related Resources

Related records in other Archive collections

Records BU Records: Philomathesian Literary Society, Inclusive 1859-1951, Bulk 1880-1913
Records BU Records: Calliopean Literary Society, Inclusive: 1885-1901, undated, Bulk: 1885-1901, undated
Records BU Records: Erisophian Literary Society, 1853-1928

Related citations

Amyett, P. D. W. "A History of Literary Societies at Baylor University." Master's thesis, Baylor University, 1963.
Bell, S. "Female College Life at Baylor, 1920-1930." Seminar paper, Baylor University, 1966.
Rollolazo, S. J. "Literary Societies: The Spirit of Baylor University." HESA Baylor History Project.
<http://blogs.baylor.edu/hesabaylorhistoryproject/literary-societies-the-spirit-of-baylor-university>. Accessed 30 May 2013.

Archival Arrangement

BU Records: Rufus C. Burleson Society was not organized, but there was an inventory.

Currently BU Records: Rufus C. Burleson Society is arranged in three series: I. Correspondence, II. Diaries, Minutes, Proceedings, and III. Literary Productions.

Series 1: Correspondence. 1904

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains two letters regarding the Rufus C. Burluson Society. This series is in fair condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1904

Series 2: Diaries, Minutes, Proceedings. 1900-1904**Administrative/Biographical History**

This series contains a journal of minutes and operational information. The series is in poor condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 2. Minutes, 1900-1904

Series 3: Literary Productions. 1901-1919**Administrative/Biographical History**

This series includes the constitution and by-laws and event materials of the Rufus C. Burluson Society. The series is in fair condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 3. Constitution and By-laws and Event Materials, 1901-1916

Box 1. Folder 4. Roll Book, 1909-1913

Box 1. Folder 5. Roll Book, 1915-1919