

**Register of the
Once-A-Week Club
of Seneca, South Carolina
1896-1997**

Seneca Once-a-Week Club, 1896-1997

Mss 170

1 cu. ft.

Introduction

This collection consists primarily of the Minutes and the Year Books of the first woman's club organized in the State of South Carolina, formed in Seneca in 1896 for the purpose of "mutual improvement". The collection was donated to the Library in September of 1997. There are no restrictions on the use of this collection beyond those of Special Collections with the exception that the club "shall be notified if any of its materials are referenced in publications". This collection was processed by Vicki Schmid in 1998.

Organizational History

The first meeting of the Once-A-Week Club took place on Thursday, September 24, 1886, at the home of Mrs. O.F. Bacon of Seneca. Officers elected at that meeting were President, Mrs. M.W. Coleman; Mrs. Bacon, Vice-President; Mrs. S.K. Dendy Jr., Secretary and Treasurer; and Mrs. W.J. Lunney, Critic (later to be known as Reference). It was decided to meet weekly from the last Thursday in September through the last Thursday in June at the homes of the original twelve members. According to the Preamble of the first Constitution and By-laws the organization's goal was to "furnish a stimulus for the study of general literature and for the purpose of social enjoyment and mutual improvement". This Constitution was officially adopted in June of 1898. Club membership at that time was restricted to twenty-five members living in Seneca.

"The Once-A-Week Club pioneered in club life in Seneca. Primarily a literary organization, The Once-A-Week Club always has been vitally interested in civic and community life and in human welfare. The town clock and drinking fountains of yesteryear, the trees, the Memorial Gateway to Seneca, and the Seneca Library were sponsored by the Once-A-Week Club."

This group became the forerunner and “mother club” of the South Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs. Through the efforts of a charter member, Mrs. J.H. Adams, the Federation was organized in Seneca June 15 and 16, 1898, with Mrs. M. W. Coleman of Seneca as the first president, and Mrs. Adams as Educational Chairman. The Once-A-Week Club continues to support the objectives of the State Federation.

The Once-A-Week Club celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1996, having at that time four members with over 50 years of active service. At that time the group was meeting on a monthly basis rather than weekly and the membership had expanded to a maximum of thirty. Meeting times have varied over the years and moved to the third Thursday of the month, beginning in September and continuing through May. Annual fees for the group were initially fifty cents, which became one dollar in 1925 and five dollars in 1960.

Scope and Content

The papers of The Once-A-Week Club of Seneca, include the minutes of meetings from 1896 through 1983(1984-1997 being in a ledger currently in use); Yearbooks from 1986 through 1997 with parts of 1975-76 and 1976-77 being missing; the Treasurer’s reports from 1921-1952 in a single ledger; and one copy of “The Keystone”, the official publication of the South Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs, dated October, 1899.

The Yearbooks are arranged chronologically by decade and the Minutes ledgers are arranged chronologically in boxes.