

Coll. 108
Cecilian Club of Freehold Collection
1883 - 1997

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Monmouth County Historical Association
Library & Archives
70 Court Street, Freehold, N.J. 07728

Background

The Cecilian Club of Freehold, formed in 1883, was New Jersey's first federated club and the second oldest music club in the United States. It was named after Cecilia, the patron saint of music. It originally existed as an incorporated club, but eventually became associated with the Legislative body of the State of New Jersey. The club was designed in a fashion to promote music, but eventually became an organization for people who enjoyed performing concerts in addition to learning and listening to music. The club performed nationally across the country and was a home for vocal and instrumental music which educated young people in the science of music. The club also exchanged books and other information with similar organizations.

The first president and founder of the club was Laura H. Conover. The original leaders of the club were Matilda H. Walker, Georgia W. Bennett, Lillie F. Anderson, Kate Smock Rosell, and Adeline Yard Lawrence. At first, club membership was limited to 20 people and the annual dues were 75-cents per person. No one under 18 years of age was allowed to join the club and only women could be members. If a member did not attend meetings and practice, a fine was implemented. The total cash balance of the club this first year was \$6.54.

The Cecilian Club of Freehold's membership gradually rose during the early 1900s, and was increased to 85 by 1909. During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s membership grew, but

Background (cont.)

plummeted during the late 1950s and into the 1960s. However, because of student involvement, scholarship opportunities, and the formation of the Battleground Arts center, membership rose again in the mid-1960s and continued to stay active up until the 1990s.

Scope and Content Notes

This collection consists of minute books, record books, membership and dues books, newspaper articles, programs, invitations, yearbooks, scrapbooks, and various loose articles and letters that range from the years 1883 to 1997. The collection is approximately 3 cubic feet in size and is housed in 7 boxes. The Cecilian Club of Freehold Collection is divided into four series: I. Records Books, II. Bylaws and Constitutions, III. Documents, and IV. Photographs.

Series I. Record Books contain minutes books, treasurer's books, secretary's books, and membership and dues books. They include member lists, financial records, and official meetings minutes.

The minutes books show structured models of how the meetings were conducted and include names of members and their attendance record (1883-1924). The 1924-1966 minute books contain more information about the concerts that took place, and whether they were performed locally or out of state. Concert programs are attached in each book.

The treasurer's books (1910-1944) show cash balances through the years.

The secretary's book contains information about the concerts given, detailed programs, and about the club in general (1966-1991). There are also letters about the club's Notice of Dissolution

Series II. Bylaws and Constitutions address the ideology and basic organization of the club, and reveal details about the club's policies and how it was run.

Series III. Documents contain invitations to concerts, newspaper articles, programs, flyers, and yearbooks. These documents contain information about the concerts, auditions, members, and the club in general.

A scrapbook of programs contain many of the concerts that the Cecilian Club performed (1903-1940). The programs list where the concerts were held, who performed, what instruments were used, and what songs were sung.

Scope and Content Notes (cont.)

Series IV: Photographs were taken in 1993.

Container List

Folder Title	Dates	Box #	Folder #
Minutes Book	1883-1884	1	1
Minutes Book	1883-1889		2
Minutes Book and Dues Book	1889-1904		3
Minutes Book	1904-1909		4
Minutes Book	1908-1912		5
Minutes Book	1913-1918		6
Minutes Book	1918-1924		7
Minutes Book	1924-1932	2	1
Minutes Book	1932-1940		2
Minutes Book	1940-1947		3
Minutes and Programs Book	1947-1966		4
Membership and Dues Record Book	1909-1914	3	1
Membership Records	1913-1920		2
Constitution and By- Laws	1922		3
Treasurer's Book	1910-1912	4	1
Treasurer's Book	1927-1934		2
Treasurer's Book	1935-1944		3
Treasurer's Book	1924-1958		4
Notice of Dissolution	1950		5
Incorporation Documents	1952		6
Letters From Lawyers	1957		7
A Brief History	1993		8
Invitations	1882, 1885	5	1
Invitations	1823-1939		2
Invitations	1983, 1993		3
National Freedom of Musical Clubs.			
Proposed Plan of Work for Musical Clubs, 1903			4
Constitutions and By Laws	1909, 1923, 1942		5

Container List (cont.)

Folder Title	Dates	Box #	Folder #
Programs	1901-1917	5	6
Programs	1919-1932		7
Programs	1932-1937		8
Programs	1937-1945		9
Programs	1945-1983		10
Secretary's Book	1966	6	[1 vol.]
Programs	1908, 1947		1
Programs	1986-1997		2
Upcoming Events	1947		3
Yearbooks	1980		4
Newspaper Articles	1982, 1993		5
Cecilian Music Club	1989, 1996		6
Flyers About Auditions	1992		7
Photographs	1993		8
Yearbooks	1903-1940	7	[1 vol.]