

**The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Committee of Fourteen
Records, 1905-1932**

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Summary

- Main Entry:** Committee of Fourteen (New York, N.Y. : 1905)
- Title:** Records, 1905-1932
- Size:** 76 lin. ft., (101 boxes)
- Restrictions:** Investigators' reports, 1927-1932 are restricted.
Researchers must sign hold harmless form.
- Source:** Gift of James Stewart Cushman, George Edmond Worthington,
William H. Baldwin (for the Committee), 1933
- Description:** Records of a citizens' association dedicated to the abolition of
commercialized vice (especially prostitution) in New York City.
- Special formats:** scrapbooks, artifacts

Historical Sketch

The Committee of Fourteen was founded in 1905 as a citizens' association dedicated to the abolition of "Raines Law hotels" which the final report of the Committee of Fifteen (1902) had pinpointed as responsible for the rapid spread of prostitution in New York City (see Committee of Fifteen Records finding aid) . The Raines Law of 1896 gave hotels the right to sell liquor on Sundays while saloons could not. This led saloonkeepers to annex rooms and apply for hotel liquor licenses. The extra rooms were then used for prostitution. The Committee attacked the situation by attempting to have the law amended and by making on-site investigations of the "hotels." It presented evidence of violations to the New York State Department of Excise, to the brewers who supplied the saloons, to the surety companies who bonded the saloons, to the real estate owners, the New York City Tenement House Department, and the police.

By 1911 most of the Raines Law hotels had closed up and the Committee's focus turned to the suppression of commercialized vice in New York City, with an emphasis on prostitution. Its investigators visited restaurants, dance halls, massage parlors, tenement houses, and other types of establishments where immoral conditions might prevail. The Committee worked closely with the police and the courts to see that all laws were enforced and that the criminal justice system operated in a manner that would discourage lawbreakers. It conducted research, collected statistics on prostitution, venereal disease, rehabilitation of female offenders, and related public health issues. By its last years, it had entered the area of crime prevention as well.

The Committee was dissolved in 1932 when it could no longer raise sufficient funds to support its activities. Members of the Committee and its staff included William H. Baldwin, Walter G. Hooke, Mrs. Mortimer Menken, James Pedersen, John P. Peters, Mary K. Simkhovitch, George Haven Putnam, Francis Louis Slade, Percy S. Straus, Lawrence Veiller, Frederick H. Whitin, and George E. Worthington.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Committee contain correspondence, minutes, reports, memoranda, card files and reports on vice investigations, secretary's and treasurer's files, financial records, copies of legislation, legal decisions, and records of court cases involving prostitution and other forms of vice, printed material, scrapbooks, and clippings.

The correspondence is divided into four series:

- General Correspondence
- Protest List Correspondence
- Tenement House Correspondence
- Military Training Camp Correspondence

It should be noted that there is considerable overlap among the various sections of the correspondence.

The General Correspondence, 1905-1932 contains primarily the incoming and outgoing letters of the Committee's secretaries, Walter G. Hooke, Frederick H. Whiting, and George E. Worthington. The correspondents include other Committee members, representatives of social welfare organizations, the New York State Department of Excise, New York City Police and Tenement House Departments, brewing companies, members of the state legislature, and the general public. The letters are presently divided into alphabetical and chronological series containing the same type of material. It should be noted that the alphabetical section contains subjects such as "Brewers" and "Police" as well as corporate and personal names.

The Protest List Correspondence, 1905-1922, contains letters regarding establishments licensed to sell liquor which were placed on the Committee's "protest list" for disorderly conditions or violations of the liquor tax and licensing laws. The Committee would protest the issuing of a liquor license or a reinsurance bond until the problem was resolved. Correspondents include members of the public, saloon and hotel owners, the Department of Excise, surety companies, brewers, and the police. Many of the letters are standard "probation agreements" from owners stating that they will conduct their establishments with propriety if the Committee will withdraw its protest. Also included are lists of establishments complying or not complying with the law.

The Tenement House Correspondence, 1905; 1911-1932, relates to actions taken against infringements of the Tenement House Law, usually solicitation or prostitution on the premises. There is correspondence with property owners, the Real Estate Board of New York, the Tenement Department, and the police. Also included are lists of suspected places, names and addresses of tenement house owners, and complaints sent to the Committee by members of the public.

The Military Training Camps Correspondence, 1917-1919, contains letters and reports of investigations of liquor sales and prostitution in the vicinity of military training camps in New York, New Jersey, and parts of Pennsylvania and New England. These

were treated as part of the Committee's participation in the U.S. War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities during World War I.

The investigators' reports, 1905-1932, present extensive and detailed information collected by the Committee's undercover investigators who patrolled the streets and posed as customers in a variety of establishments, including saloons, speakeasies, restaurants, hotels, dance halls, massage parlors, theatres and burlesque houses, employment agencies, and department stores. The reports contain a wealth of commentary on the activities taking place, including types of dancing, language, sexual behavior, gambling, and drinking as well as descriptions of the clientele as to sex, race, ethnicity, and physical characteristics. The reports also contain interviews and descriptions of interactions with prostitutes, dance hall hostesses, pimps, cab drivers, hotel bellboys, and other "go-betweens." Information gleaned from the reports is also present on card files.

The collection contains the Executive/General Secretary's topical files and drafts of minutes and annual reports, 1912-1932, the Committee's official minutes and reports, 1905-1932, bulletin books, 1912-1932, containing special memoranda, reports, and statistics, the Treasurer's correspondence, 1908-1932, and financial records, 1918-1931. Present also are the varied materials used by the Committee in its efforts to reform laws dealing with liquor sales and prostitution and to change the manner in which the criminal justice system handled offenders in these areas. The materials include copies of pertinent legislation, legal decisions, minutes of court cases, reports on the criminal justice system, and correspondence with officers of the court. Extensive card files document cases brought before the Women's Court, 1914-32, the disposition of the cases, and the sentences of the women.

Finally, the records include printed material, ca. 1910-1929, on prostitution, sex education, venereal disease, and public health, and two scrapbooks and loose clippings, 1905-1932, on vice and its reform in New York City.

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9		A (general), 1916-1926 Actors Equity Agar, John G. (Board of Directors), 1927-1928 Ahlborn, Helen, 1917-1919 Alger, George, W. (Board of Directors), 1915-1926 Alimony Payers Protective Association All-American Conference on V.D. American Birth Control League, 1928 American City Bureau American Social Hygiene Association, 1914-1916 American Social Hygiene Association, 1917; 1919 American Social Hygiene Association, 1920 American Social Hygiene Association, 1921-1922 American Social Hygiene Association, 1923-1924 American Social Hygiene Association, 1925 American Social Hygiene Association, 1926 American Social Hygiene Association, 1927 American Social Hygiene Association, 1928-1929 American Social Hygiene Association, 1928-1930 American Social Hygiene Association, 1928-1930 American Social Hygiene Association, 1929-1930 American Social Hygiene Association, 1929-1930

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Brewers, 1908 June-August
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Chamberlain, Joseph P., 1920-1924
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Chicago Health Commission
Church Mission of Help
Cincinnati Social Hygiene Society
Committee of Fifteen (Chicago)
Committee of Fourteen – Law committee
Committee of Fourteen – Mailing Lists and Correspondence
re *The Social Evil in New York City*
Committee of Fourteen – Mailing Lists and Correspondence
re *The Social Evil in New York City*
Committee of Fourteen – Mailing Lists and Correspondence
re *The Social Evil in New York City*
Committee of Nine (New York City), 1905
Committee of Sixteen (Buffalo)
Committee of Sixteen (Erie, PA)
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Committee of Sixteen (Montreal), 1920-1925
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Creel, George
Crowdy, Rachel, Dame (luncheon)
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Cushman, James S. (Board of Directors), 1921-1930
Cushman, James S. (Board of Directors) re fund raising efforts,
1929-1931
Cushman, James S. (Board of Directors) meeting at home of, 1930
Jan. 30

DuBois, W.E. B., 1911-1912

Ellis, Havelock, 1925
English Speaking Union, 1923-1924

L (general)
Laity League for Social Service, 1912-1913
League of Catholic Women, 1921
Legislative Index Publishing Company, 1916-1921
Leo Case – Judge Talley, 1923
Low, Josiah O. (Board of Directors), 1912-1924
London (miscellaneous), 1923-1926
London Public Morality Council, 1923-1925

N (general)
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P (general)
P (general)
P (general)
P (general)
P (general)
Pedersen, James, M.D.(Board of Directors), 1928-1932
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Peters, John P. (Board of Directors), 1909-1910
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Peters, John P. (Board of Directors), 1914
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Police Inspector Bolan
Police Inspectors – Brooklyn
Police, Lieut. Sweeney
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Police Inspector Zane
Police – Special Service Division
Police Headquarters
Police Sgt. Horrigan
Police Department – First Deputy Commissioner
Police - Special Deputy Commissioner
Police – Second Deputy Commissioner
Police – Special Squad #4
Police – Third Deputy Commissioner
Police – Fourth Deputy Commissioner
Police – Fifth Deputy Commissioner
Police – Patrolman William O. Jones
Police Department – Morals Commission
Policewomen
Policewomen
Pratt, Frederick (Mrs.)
Printers
Probation
Putnam, George Haven (Board of Directors), 1907-1914

R (general), 1916-1924
R (general), 1925-1931
Real Estate Advisory Council

Recreation Alliance – Committee on Amusement Resources of
Working Girls

References

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Sa-Se (general)

Salinardi, Anna Schiff case, 1925-1926

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Schieffelin, William Jay (Board of Directors), 1905-1912

Seligman, Isaac N.(Board of Directors), 1908-1914

Simkhovitch, Mary K. (Mrs. V.G.)(Board of Directors), 1905-
1914

Slade, Francis Louis (Treasurer), 1910-1914

Slade, Francis Louis (Treasurer), 1915

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Social Service Commission

Society for the Prevention of Crime

State Board of Social Welfare

State Charities Aid Association

Staten Island Law Enforcement League

Stewart, Warren & Company

Stockdale, Jackman T. (Investigator)

Straus, Percy S. (Board of Directors), 1912-1914

Straus, Percy S. (Board of Directors), 1915-1920

Straus, Percy S. (Board of Directors), 1921-1925

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Su-Sz (general)

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Swan, Eugene L., M.D.

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T (general)

Tobias, David Elliot
Toronto – National Conference of Social Work
Travelers Aid Society
Treasurer
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U (general)
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U.S. Department of Labor
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Welfare Council of New York City
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Woman's Municipal League
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	Baltimore Criminal Justice Commission Quarterly Bulletin 1932
	Citizens' Committee
	George Worthington –Personal reports, U.S. Army, 1918-1919
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