



Guide to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University records, 1920-1969

This collection guide was produced in **2007**.

This PDF version was created on **April 3, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

askRL@duke.edu

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Table of Contents

[Summary](#) 3

[Background](#) 4

[Arrangement](#) 5

[Administrative Information](#) 5

[Related Materials](#) 6

[Names and Subjects](#) 7

[Collection Inventory](#) 7

Summary

Collection Title:

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University records, 1920-1969

Creator:

YMCA at Duke University

Abstract:

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University was established at then Trinity College in 1887-1888. In its early years, it functioned primarily as a sort of Bible class. Although it never abandoned its emphasis on Christianity, in its later years the YMCA dedicated itself more to campus and social service projects than Bible study. These records were produced by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University in the course of their activities as a student religious organization. Materials are present from 1920 to 1969; however, the bulk of the material is from the late 1930s to the early 1960s and consists mainly of annual reports. The majority of the remaining material consists of reports from other student religious organizations. Physical types of materials present include reports, pamphlets, correspondence, minutes, student publications, programs, flyers, and officer lists. There is one artifact, a gavel that is engraved with presidents' initials and years of service, 1945-1955.

Extent:

0.75 Linear Feet

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

UA.31.04.0014

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1qh80>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University Records, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Background

Scope and Content

These records were produced by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University in the course of their activities as a student religious organization. Materials are present from 1920 to 1969; however, the bulk of the material is from the late 1930s to the early 1960s and consists mainly of annual reports. The majority of the remaining material consists of reports from other student religious organizations. Physical types of materials present include reports, pamphlets, correspondence, minutes, student publications, programs, flyers, and officer lists. There is one artifact, a gavel that is engraved with presidents' initials and years of service, 1945-1955.

The majority of the records consist of reports of campus student religious organizations, and annual reports prepared by YMCA officers, which date from 1936-1967, although they are not inclusive. The annual reports summarize YMCA activities and projects from the past school year, and offer suggestions for the next year. See also catalogued and bound reports at call number 378.756 D887FA. There are two reports generated by the YMCA in the course of their campus activities: a proposal regarding the Freshman Advisory Council and a report on the success of the 1948 fund drive for the World Student Service Fund (WSSF). For more information on the incorporation of the Freshman Advisory Council (FAC) into the YMCA, see the annual report from 1957-1958. The remaining reports were created by other student religious organizations such as the Hillel Society (for Jewish students), the Baptist Student Union, and the YWCA. Correspondence is limited to one item. "Dads' Day" items consist of programs and schedules for the annual fathers' weekend. See also programs at call number 378.756 D887FD.

Publications are limited to examples of the student handbook and the "Dink," a daily publication for freshmen produced during Freshman Orientation Week. For other student handbooks see call number 378.756 D877S. For discussions of activities related to desegregation at Duke, see annual reports 1959-1960 and 1967-1968. Draft counseling materials are limited to announcements of seminars and conferences. For discussions of Vietnam and the selective service system, see annual reports of 1966-1967 and 1967-1968. For more information on Vietnam, the draft, and the counseling center, see YWCA and YM-YWCA Institute for Nonviolent Study and Action materials. Although there are no membership lists, there are quite inclusive lists of officers from 1888-1936 and 1956-1957.

Biographical/Historical

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University was established at Trinity College in 1887-1888. In its early years, it functioned primarily as a sort of Bible class. Although it never abandoned its emphasis on Christianity, in its later years the YMCA dedicated itself more to campus and social service projects than Bible study. It was one of the largest and most influential of the student organizations. Activities for the years 1947-1967 include the Edgemont Community Center, Wright's Refuge, Freshman Orientation Week, publication of the student handbook, Religious Emphasis Week, Dads' Day, discussion groups, vespers services, Bible study, and student ushers for Duke Chapel. A Board of Directors composed of faculty and administration members oversaw the YMCA.

In 1969, the YMCA merged with the Young Women's Christian Association to form the YM-YWCA. Post-merger activities include draft counseling, Vietnam seminars and discussions, sponsorship of speakers and activists, promotion of Black Days, and so on. The organization ceased functioning in 1980-1981. See also issues of the *Chanticleer*, the *Chronicle*, and student handbooks as well as *The Front Line: Materials for a Study of Leadership in College and After* by Ben M. Patrick (Duke University, 1938) for more historical details. See YM-YWCA Institute for Nonviolent Study and Action and YWCA materials for more detail on collaborative activities in the 1960s-1970s.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Loose materials and bound reports are arranged alphabetically by subject. Items within the folders are arranged chronologically. The two largest series of records, annual reports and reports of other organizations, are arranged chronologically within the series.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive
Duke University
Durham 27708
askRL@duke.edu
URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Copyright for Official University records is held by Duke University; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

Acquisition Information

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Duke University records were received by the University Archives as a transfer in 1975, 1988, 1995 and a gift in 2019.

Processing Information

Processed by Sarah Nerney, July 1999

Encoded by Sherrie Bowser, March 2007

Accessions 78-88, A88-0031, A95-42 were merged into one collection, described in this finding aid.

Accession UA2019-0096 added by April Blevins, January 2024

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Material

William Wade "Cap" Card papers, 1918-1919. University Archives, Duke University. Young Men's--Young Women's Christian Association. University Archives, Duke University. Young Women's Christian Association records, 1908-1971. University Archives, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- College student orientation -- North Carolina -- Durham -- 1947-1967
- College students -- Alcohol use -- 1939
- College students -- North Carolina -- Durham -- Religious life
- Edgemont Community Center (Durham, N.C.)
- Wright's Refuge (Durham, NC)
- Duke University -- Students -- Public services -- 1920-1969
- Duke University. Freshman Advisory Council
- YMCA of the USA

Collection Inventory

Annual Report (incomplete), 1936-1937	Box 1
Annual Report, 1947-1948	Box 1
Annual Report (condensed), 1947-1948	Box 1
Annual Report, 1949-1950	Box 1
Annual Report, 1950-1951	Box 1
Annual Report, 1951-1952	Box 1
Annual Report, 1952-1953	Box 1
Annual Report, 1953-1954	Box 1
Annual Report, 1954-1955	Box 1
Annual Report, 1955-1956	Box 1
Annual Report, 1957-1958	Box 1
Annual Report, 1959-1960	Box 1
Annual Report, 1966-1967	Box 1

Committee on Research and Analysis, 1969	Box 1
Correspondence, 1935	Box 1
"Dads' Day" , 1954, 1958-1960, 1962-1964	Box 1
Draft Counseling, 1966, 1969	Box 1
Minutes, YMCA Board of Directors, 1956 October 2	Box 1
Budget, 1938-1939	Box 1
North Carolina YM-YWCA Conference, Duke University, 1933 April	Box 1
Scope and Contents	
Includes a group photo of the North Carolina YM-YWCA Conference held at Duke University.	
Officer Lists, 1888-1936, 1956-1957	Box 1
Programs or Announcements of YMCA Sponsored Events, 1921, 1929, 1931, 1935, 1938, 1944, 1967, undated	Box 1
Publications, "Dink" , 1957	Box 1
Publications, Duke University Handbook, 1920-1921, 1964-1965, 1968-1969	Box 1
"Report from the YMCA on the Possibilities of Transferring the Freshman Advisory Council to a Place in the Organization of the YMCA" , 1957 March 1	Box 1
"Report of the World Student Service Fund Organization" , 1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, School of Religion, Student Body Activity Report, 1939-1940	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, Semi-Annual Report, Westminster Fellowship, 1944 May	Box 1

Reports of Other Organizations, Annual Report, Hillel Society, 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, Annual Report, Westminster Fellowship, 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, Annual Reports of Campus Religious Organizations (incomplete), 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, East Campus World Student Service Fund Drive, 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, President's Report, Baptist Student Union, 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, Vespers Schedule of Meetings, School of Nursing, 1947-1948	Box 1
Reports of Other Organizations, Report of Young Women's Christian Association 1948-1949, 1947-1948	Box 1
Gavel, 1945-1955	Box 1