



The New York Public Library
New York Public Library Archives

Guide to the

Founding Members' records

1895-1930 [bulk 1895-1915]

MssArc 4931

Compiled by Caleb Derven and Robert Sink; revised by Jim Moske; machine-readable finding aid created by Jim Moske.

Summary

Creator: New York Public Library. Board of Trustees

Title: Founding Members' records

Date: 1895-1930 [bulk 1895-1915]

Abstract: Records of three founding members of The New York Public Library Board of Trustees: John L. Cadwalader, Lewis Cass Ledyard and George Lockhart Rives. Records document the founding and early years of The Library.

Physical Location: RG 5

Conditions Governing Access:

Access to the collection is restricted to qualified scholars and researchers through the Office of Special Collections, Room 316.

Conditions Governing Use: All rights reserved. Permission to quote must be obtained in writing from the New York Public Library

Preferred citation: Board of Trustees Founding Members Records, The New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by Caleb Derven and Robert Sink; revised by Jim Moske; machine-readable finding aid created by Jim Moske.

Related Materials:

Creator History

The Board of Trustees, the governing body of The Library, was established in 1895 by an agreement that consolidated the Astor and Lenox Libraries and the Tilden Foundation to form The New York Public Library. Initially there were twenty-one trustees, with seven being appointed by each of the three institutions that had been merged to form The Library. Trustees had no set terms of office; they served on the Board until they resigned, died, or were removed by a vote of the other trustees. New trustees were elected by the current members of the Board. Following the consolidation of The New York Public Library and The New York Free Circulating Library in 1901, the number of trustees was expanded to twenty-five. This included three New York City officials as ex-officio members: the Mayor, the Comptroller, and the President of the Board of Alderman.

John Cadwalader, Lewis Cass Ledyard and George Lockhart Rives were the three most powerful members of the Board of Trustees during the first two decades of The New York Public Library. All three served on the original Committee on Consolidation of the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Libraries, Cadwalader as an Astor Library trustee, Ledyard as a Tilden trustee, and Rives as a Lenox Library trustee. All were on the Executive Committee and served at various times as President of the Board of Trustees. Rives served also as Secretary from 1895 to 1902.

Born at Trenton, New Jersey on November 17, 1836 to a family prominent in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, John Lambert Cadwalader received his B.A. from Princeton in 1856 and, in 1860, his LL.B from Harvard Law School. Cadwalader marked his 1869 arrival to New York by a brief association with the offices of Dorman B. Eaton and was active in founding the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Nominated to Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of State in 1874, shortly after his term expired, Cadwalader returned to New York to form a partnership, his definitive professional alliance, with Charles E. Strong.

Inaugurating a lengthy alliance with New York's public libraries, on November 5, 1879, Cadwalader was elected a member of the Board for the Astor Library. After the consolidation of the Astor with the Lenox Library and Tilden Trust on May 23 1895, he served as a member of the NYPL executive committee until his death in 1914. Cadwalader's profound interest in art was expressed by his involvement with the Art Committee and the Advisory Committee on Prints. His legacy of service to NYPL is typified by his tenure as First Vice-President (1909-1912) and his incumbency as President from 1912-1914.

Cadwalader shouldered a vital share of the work in effecting consolidation between the Astor and Lenox Libraries and the Tilden Trust. He proved to be of particular efficacy in unraveling legal and financial problems. For example, he drafted the consolidation agreement, created compromise resolutions, and arranged with members of the New York State Assembly to have a special consolidation bill passed. Cadwalader also negotiated with the heirs of Henrietta Lenox, who retained a vital share in Library property. From December 1895, Cadwalader played a pivotal role in the site acquisition, planning and construction of the Central Building. Besides effecting key negotiations for appropriations with the city, Cadwalader lent his aesthetic sense to design considerations, including the front statuary and various inscriptions. Cadwalader is usually credited with bringing John Shaw Billings, NYPL's first Director, to The Library. Also, while instrumental in taking over the work of the Free Circulating Libraries and other smaller endeavors funded by public money, he furthered arrangements with the city upon the funds of the Carnegie Library Bill.

The creation and development of the Print Department held a keen interest for Cadwalader. His will provided a gift of his entire personal collection of 360 eighteenth-century mezzotint engravings as well as a \$50,000 bequest for print acquisitions. Reflecting another abiding concern, his will also bequeathed a sum devoted towards increases in the salaries of the Reference Department.

Scope and Content Note

The Founding Members Records consist of handwritten, typewritten and printed documents and span the years 1895 to 1930. They include John Cadwalader's correspondence, 1895-1914 and his general files, 1904-1913; Lewis Cass Ledyard's correspondence, 1897-1930; and George Rives' files, 1904-1916. Items include incoming and outgoing correspondence, interoffice memoranda, NYPL Executive Board memoranda, drafts of Board of Trustee minutes, budgets, clippings, receipts, bills, and reports of various NYPL committees generated during the day-to-day operations of The Library during its early years. The records document the founding of The New York Public Library and illuminate a wide range of Library affairs, as well as the careers of its trustees and staff.

Arrangement: The Founding Members Records are arranged in three series: I. John L. Cadwalader, 1895-1914; II. Lewis Cass Ledyard, 1897-1930; III. George Lockhart Rives, 1904-1916.

Key Terms

Subjects

Libraries -- New York (State) -- New York
Public library trustees -- New York (State) -- New York
Research libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

Names

New York Public Library. Board of Trustees
Cadwalader, John L. (John Lambert), 1837-1914
Ledyard, Lewis Cass
Rives, George Lockhart, 1849-1917

Container List

Series I. John L. Cadwalader 1895-1914 (2 boxes)

The records of NYPL Trustee John Cadwalader consist of two subseries, described below.

Subseries A. Correspondence 1895-1914 (1 box)

Arranged chronologically by date sent. The years 1895-1909 are primarily represented by incoming correspondence, while the remaining years, 1909-1914, consist of mostly outgoing correspondence. The subseries covers such topics as the consolidation of the Astor, Tilden, and Lenox Libraries to form NYPL; NYPL's absorption of other libraries (including the Aguilar and the New York Free Circulating Libraries); early print acquisitions; and exhibitions (1911). There is abundant material regarding the NYPL Central Building competition, as well as concerning its planning and construction. From as early as 1896, explicit mention is made of the 42nd Street site. During the ensuing fifteen years correspondence concerning site acquisition, funding, planning, and construction accounts for the bulk of the subseries. Highlights include Cadwalader's penciled annotations for the final competition designs. Memoranda are represented in almost every part of the correspondence and include commentary for early exhibitions of Library materials, a draft for The Library's accession policy (1896) and discussions on the exemption of humanitarian and charitable societies from the tax on collateral inheritance. From 1900 to 1913, a discussion evolves concerning exemptions from estate and inheritance taxes for charitable institutions and possible ramifications of this repeal for The Library. Other subjects include copyright law in relation to NYPL's book importation policy and Branch Library property purchases. Notably, a heated exchange about The Library's opening hours developed in 1912, involving Cadwalader, other trustees and contemporary newspapers. Also included are papers relating to the consolidation of the Free Circulating Libraries and NYPL. The correspondence gives glimpses into Cadwalader's personal life. There are numerous notes and lists addressed to John Shaw Billings and E.H. Anderson concerning books that he decided to purchase himself. Individuals who figure prominently in the correspondence include George Rives, John Shaw Billings, Edwin Hatfield Anderson, William Allen Butler, Steven H. Olin, Charles Howland Russell, Wilberforce Eames, and Robert de Forest.

- b. 1 f. 1 General n.d.
- b. 1 f. 2 General 1895
- b. 1 f. 3 General 1896
- b. 1 f. 4 General 1897
- b. 1 f. 5 General 1898
- b. 1 f. 6 General 1899
- b. 1 f. 7 General 1900
- b. 1 f. 8 General 1901
- b. 1 f. 9 General 1902
- b. 1 f. 10 General 1903
- b. 1 f. 11 General 1904
- b. 1 f. 12 General 1905
- b. 1 f. 13 General 1906
- b. 1 f. 14 General 1907
- b. 1 f. 15 General 1908
- b. 1 f. 16 General 1909
- b. 1 f. 17 General 1910
- b. 1 f. 18 General 1911
- b. 1 f. 19 General 1912
- b. 1 f. 20 General 1913
- b. 1 f. 21 General 1914

Series I. John L. Cadwalader (cont.)

Subseries B. Subject Files 1904-1913 (1 box)

Arranged alphabetically by topic. Correspondence, press clippings, pamphlets, programs and legal material relating to a variety of individuals, divisions, and concerns of The Library. Cadwalader's keen interest in The Library's print collection is well represented in material relating to exhibits and the Art Committee. Issues of funding and the search for a suitable music librarian attest to The Library's burgeoning Music Collection. Items include detailed explanations for the front statuary iconography for the Central Building (1913) and drafts for the attic statuary inscriptions (1905-1906). Cadwalader's concern with both individual employees and employee welfare is well represented. There are numerous files attesting to Cadwalader's intercession on an employee's behalf. Notably, proposals are made for cooperative employee housing (1911) and an employees' club (1911). The series is rounded out with an assortment of biographical sketches of deceased trustees for the minutes of the Executive of Trustees.

- b. 2 f. 1 Annual Report 1912-1913
- b. 2 f. 2 Art Committee 1912
- b. 2 f. 3 Arts Commission of the City of New York 1913
- b. 2 f. 4 Astor Library - Endowment 1910
- b. 2 f. 5 Astor Library - Memorandum n.d.
- b. 2 f. 6 Astor Library - Property Lease and Sale 1910-1913
- b. 2 f. 7 Bigelow, John, Portrait of 1907
- b. 2 f. 8 Billings, John Shaw - Gift of Securities to Him 1904
- b. 2 f. 9 Billings, John Shaw - Jury Service 1908
- b. 2 f. 1 Billings, John Shaw - Last Letter 1 March 1903
- b. 2 f. 2 Billings, John Shaw - Memorial 1913-1914
- b. 2 f. 3 Bills for Disbursement 1906-1907
- b. 2 f. 4 Board of Trustees - Executive Committee Meetings 1906-1907, 1913
- b. 2 f. 5 Board of Trustees - Extracts from the Minutes 1911
- b. 2 f. 6 Board of Trustees - Photographs of Original Members 1908
- b. 2 f. 7 Board of Trustees - Report of the Trustees 1911
- b. 2 f. 8 Board of Trustees - Treasurership 1908-1909
- b. 2 f. 9 Bookbinding - Central Board of Bookbinders 1908
- b. 2 f. 10 Bookbinding - International Brotherhood of Bookbinders 1908
- b. 2 f. 11 Book Repair and Restoration 1904-1905
- b. 2 f. 12 Boone and Crockett, Bibliography 1906
- b. 2 f. 13 Brainard, Owen, Estimate of Cost of Library Building 1913
- b. 2 f. 14 Branch Libraries - Construction and Repair 1907
- b. 2 f. 15 Branch Libraries - Memorandum n.d.
- b. 2 f. 16 Branch Libraries - Purchase Appropriations 1911
- b. 2 f. 17 Budget 1907
- b. 2 f. 18 Budget 1909
- b. 2 f. 19 Carnegie Library Bill 1901
- b. 2 f. 20 Central Building - Appropriations by the City 1912
- b. 2 f. 21 Central Building - Correspondence with Carrère and Hastings 1901-1911
- b. 2 f. 22 Central Building - Electric Generating Plant 1907-1909
- b. 2 f. 23 Central Building - Estimate of Costs 1911
- b. 2 f. 24 Central Building - Fire Proof Condition 1911

Series I. John L. Cadwalader (cont.)
Subseries B. Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 25 Central Building - Front Statuary 1913
- b. 2 f. 26 Central Building - Inscriptions for Attic Statuary 1905-1906
- b. 2 f. 27 Central Building - Memoranda - Branch Libraries 1911
- b. 2 f. 28 Central Building - Memoranda - Cost to Finish the Building 1907
- b. 2 f. 29 Central Building - Memoranda - Electric Generating Plant 1911
- b. 2 f. 30 Central Building - Memoranda - Repairs 1911
- b. 2 f. 31 Central Building - Repairs and Maintenance 1911
- b. 2 f. 32 Central Building - Third Floor Plan 1903
- b. 2 f. 33 Central Building and Branch Libraries, Repairs n.d.
- b. 2 f. 34 Circulation, Funds and Expenses 1912-1913
- b. 2 f. 35 City Record, Report Concerning Carnegie Library Sites 1911
- b. 2 f. 36 Club for Library Employees 1911
- b. 2 f. 37 Collection on Charity and Philanthropy 1910
- b. 2 f. 38 Commitment of Ewing to Bloomingdale n.d.
- b. 2 f. 39 Committees 1905-1906
- b. 2 f. 40 Common Council of the City of New York - Extract from City Record 1913
- b. 2 f. 41 Common Council of the City of New York - Minutes [1784-1831] 1913-1914
- b. 2 f. 42 Cooperative Apartment Housing for Staff 1911
- b. 2 f. 43 Copyright Bill of 1906 - Memorandum Draft 1906
- b. 2 f. 44 Copyright Bill of 1906 - Memorandum of the Committee on Copyright and Trademark of the Association of the Bar of New York 1906
- b. 2 f. 45 Copyright Law 1907-1908
- b. 2 f. 46 Daily News, Retraction 18 April 1906
- b. 2 f. 47 Draper, Anna Palmer, Gift of Books and Portraits 1913
- b. 2 f. 48 Economics and Sociology Division
- b. 2 f. 49 English Porcelain Books 1908
- b. 2 f. 50 Exhibit of German Sculpture 1908
- b. 2 f. 51 Financial Reports 1907
- b. 2 f. 52 Foote, Florence 1913
- b. 2 f. 53 Gaynor, William J., Demand for a List of Library Employees and their Salaries 1911-1912
- b. 2 f. 54 George, Henry, Bust of 1911
- b. 2 f. 55 Harvey, E.C., American Library Association 1906
- b. 2 f. 56 Hill, Frank P., Rules of Brooklyn Public Library 1907
- b. 2 f. 57 Hasse, Adelaide R. - Index to Public Documents 1904-1913
- b. 2 f. 58 Hasse, Adelaide R. - Indexing of Fish Papers 1913-1914
- b. 2 f. 59 Inter Library Loan n.d.
- b. 2 f. 60 Jenkins, Thomas 1913
- b. 2 f. 61 Kennedy, Henry Van Rensselaer 1912
- b. 2 f. 62 Kennedy, J.S., Transfer Tax of Estate and Succession Tax 1909-1913
- b. 2 f. 63 King, Edward 1906
- b. 2 f. 64 Kitson, Annis, Gift of Longfellow Bust 1910

Series I. John L. Cadwalader (cont.)
Subseries B. Subject Files (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 65 La Farge, John, Mural Painting 1908
- b. 2 f. 66 Lanston Monotype Machines 1909-1910
- b. 2 f. 67 Lenox Bibles 1912
- b. 2 f. 68 Library Press and Agent 1913
- b. 2 f. 69 Library School 1911
- b. 2 f. 70 Loan of Books, Exchange with Columbia University and American Museum of Natural History 1910-1913
- b. 2 f. 71 Loyalist Papers 1913
- b. 2 f. 72 Lyons, Samuel B. 1907
- b. 2 f. 73 McKim, Charles M., Memorial Meeting 1909
- b. 2 f. 74 McKim, Mead & White, Receipts for Construction of Branch No. 35 [Hamilton Grange]
- b. 2 f. 75 Maitland, Alexander 1907
- b. 2 f. 76 Manuscripts Division, Employment of Paltsis 1913
- b. 2 f. 77 Marquand, Allen 1913
- b. 2 f. 78 Moran, Edward, Paintings 1909-1910
- b. 2 f. 79 Music Collection - Assessment of by E.H. Anderson 1913
- b. 2 f. 80 Music Collection - Funding and Expenditures 1914
- b. 2 f. 81 Music Collection - Search for a Music Librarian 1914
- b. 2 f. 82 New York Herald, Mutilation of Files 1908
- b. 2 f. 83 Nelson, Sarah C. 1911
- b. 2 f. 84 O'Brien, Morgan J. 1906
- b. 2 f. 85 Philippine Papers 1906
- b. 2 f. 86 Print Collection 1904-1912
- b. 2 f. 87 Stauffer, David McNeeley, Print Collection 1913
- b. 2 f. 88 Theft, Music Scores 1913
- b. 2 f. 89 Tilden Records 1911

Series II. Lewis Cass Ledyard 1897-1930 (2 boxes)

Chronologically arranged correspondence files contain information on Library administration and operations. There is also substantial documentation of NYPL's sale of Lenox Library properties, including the site at 5th Avenue between 70th and 71st Streets.

- b. 3 f. 1 Correspondence regarding sale of Lenox Library property 1905-1911
- b. 3 f. 2 General correspondence 1897-1900
- b. 3 f. 3 General correspondence 1901-1903
- b. 3 f. 4 General correspondence 1904-1914
- b. 3 f. 5 General correspondence 1917-1918
- b. 3 f. 6 General correspondence 1918-1919
- b. 3 f. 7 General correspondence 1920
- b. 4 f. 1 General correspondence 1921
- b. 4 f. 2 General correspondence 1922-1924
- b. 4 f. 3 General correspondence 1925-1926
- b. 4 f. 4 General correspondence 1927-1930

Series III. George Lockhart Rives 1904-1916 (2 boxes)

Alphabetically arranged files contain information on the NYPL Central Building project, Reference Department collections, Circulation Department branch libraries and other administrative matters.

- b. 5 f. 1 A
- b. 5 f. 2 Anderson, Edwin 1912-1916
- b. 5 f. 3 Appleton, William W. 1910
- b. 5 f. 4 B
- b. 5 f. 5 Bigelow, John 1910-1916
- b. 5 f. 6 Billings, John Shaw 1908-1913
- b. 5 f. 7 Bookbinding 1909
- b. 5 f. 8 Briggs, Alanson T. 1909-1911
- b. 5 f. 9 Bryant Statue 1910-1911
- b. 5 f. 10 Budget 1914
- b. 5 f. 11 Butler, Nicholas Murray (Columbia University) 1909-1915
- b. 5 f. 12 C
- b. 5 f. 13 Cadwalader, John 1904-1916
- b. 5 f. 14 Carnegie 1906-1913
- b. 5 f. 15 Carrère & Hastings 1905-1915
- b. 5 f. 16 Carrère & Hastings - Central Building Statues 1908-1913
- b. 5 f. 17 Central Circulation 1913
- b. 5 f. 18 Cheseborough, Mr. 1910
- b. 5 f. 19 Columbia University 1910-1915
- b. 5 f. 20 Contractors 1906-1910
- b. 5 f. 21 D
- b. 5 f. 22 Draper, Mrs. Henry 1916
- b. 5 f. 23 Duyckinck, Margaret W. 1912
- b. 5 f. 24 Electricity (Central Building) 1907-1909
- b. 5 f. 25 Emerson, Harrington 1912
- b. 5 f. 26 Emmet 1910
- b. 5 f. 27 Farber, Miss 1909
- b. 5 f. 28 Finance Committee Reports 1907-1908
- b. 5 f. 29 Finances 1907-1913
- b. 5 f. 30 Five Trustee Museum Bill 1909
- b. 6 f. 1 Francesconi Family 1912-1913
- b. 6 f. 2 Furniture & Equipment Contract (Central Building) 1909-1910
- b. 6 f. 3 George Bruce Branch 1913-1915
- b. 6 f. 4 Halsey, Frederick R. 1914-1915
- b. 6 f. 5 Harlem Branch 1909
- b. 6 f. 6 Inter-Library Loan 1913
- b. 6 f. 7 J
- b. 6 f. 8 K

Series III. George Lockhart Rives (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 9 Kennedy 1909-1914
- b. 6 f. 10 L
- b. 6 f. 11 Lenox Library 1905-1912
- b. 6 f. 12 Library Catalog Company 1896
- b. 6 f. 13 Lydenberg, Harry M. 1913-1914
- b. 6 f. 14 M
- b. 6 f. 15 McKim 1909
- b. 6 f. 16 Manuscript Division (Paltsits) 1913
- b. 6 f. 17 Moore, Anne Carroll 1916
- b. 6 f. 18 Morgan 1915
- b. 6 f. 19 Morris, Dave (Lenox Property) 1909-1910
- b. 6 f. 20 Municipal Reference Library 1915-1916
- b. 6 f. 21 Newspapers 1914
- b. 6 f. 22 New York Academy of Medicine 1912
- b. 6 f. 23 New York Herald Newspaper 1896
- b. 6 f. 24 Nominating Committee 1914
- b. 6 f. 25 O
- b. 6 f. 26 Olin, Stephen 1915
- b. 6 f. 27 Ottendorfer branch 1913-1915
- b. 6 f. 28 P
- b. 6 f. 29 Pensions 1913
- b. 6 f. 30 Prints Division 1915
- b. 6 f. 31 R
- b. 6 f. 32 Reference Department
- b. 6 f. 33 Russell, Charles H. 1911-1916
- b. 6 f. 34 S-V
- b. 6 f. 35 Sheldon, Edward W. 1910-1915
- b. 6 f. 36 Stinson, Frederick J. (Argentina) 1915
- b. 6 f. 37 Stokes, I.N. Phelps 1916
- b. 6 f. 38 Stuart Collection 1911
- b. 6 f. 39 St. Gabriel's Park Branch 1914
- b. 6 f. 40 Tenth Avenue Branch (Columbus) 1908
- b. 6 f. 41 Tilden Estate 1911
- b. 6 f. 42 Tompkins Square Branch 1911
- b. 6 f. 43 W
- b. 6 f. 44 Washington Heights Branch 1913-1915