

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

**British Apprentice Club
Records, 1921-1961**

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SUMMARY

Main Entry: British Apprentice Club

Title: Records 1921-1961, bulk dates 1940-1952.

Size: 8 AB, 18 FB (9.10 linear ft.)

Source: Gift of the British Apprentice Club (1961) and the Warsash Association via the National Maritime Museum (1992).

Organizational History: The British Apprentice Club (BAC) was founded on 2 December 1921 by two American women, M. Moyca Newell and Katherine Mayo; the purpose of this club was to provide hospitality for cadets from the British merchant navy while their ships were berthed in the ports of New York City. While in service with the YMCA in Great Britain during World War I, Newell and Mayo were impressed by the hospitality extended towards American servicemen. Upon their return to the United States, Newell and Mayo founded the British Apprentice Club at the Chelsea Hotel, 222 West 23rd Street, New York City. Lucile Brisbane Spaulding acted as the BAC manager and social director for thirty years. In 1923, the BAC was incorporated as a memorial to Walter H. Page who served as the Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James (1913-1918). Attendance at the Club fell during the 1950's, and it ceased operations in 1961.

Description: The records contain administrative files, letters, logbooks, registers and photographs of sailors documenting the Club's hospitality to British merchant sailors on shore leave in New York City.

Special formats: Sketches, photographs, poster

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Hospitality is synonymous with the British Apprentice Club (BAC). This was the legacy left by the BAC when this club for marine cadets (between the ages of sixteen to nineteen) ceased operations in 1961. Founded on 2 December 1921 by two American women, M. Moyca Newell and Katherine Mayo, the objective of the BAC was to provide a rest stop for British merchant sailors on shore leave. Newell and Mayo wanted to reciprocate the hospitality extended to American servicemen on leave in England. Located in the Hotel Chelsea, 222 West 23 Street, it was conveniently near the piers.

The BAC rented several rooms on the third floor of the Hotel Chelsea, where the cadets could relax in a "home-like" environment on their own or participate in various activities. Arrangements for many of these activities were planned by Mrs. Lucile Brisbane Spaulding, the club's manager and social director. Spaulding held this position for over thirty years (1922-1952) until her retirement. In recognition of her generosity on behalf of the British sailors and their families, Spaulding was appointed an Honorary Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Activities offered by the BAC were varied. There were no rules because the BAC felt none were necessary. The cadets were invited to tea parties, dances with the "BAC girls" (women who were carefully selected by the BAC to participate in various events), picnics, swimming excursions and weekends in the country with host families. Other amenities offered included a pantry full of food, stationery, newspapers and magazines, billiards and counseling. It should be recognized that the BAC operated during one of the most crisis-filled periods in modern history, World War II, and offered a safe haven for rest and recreation for the young cadets.

The BAC operated for over thirty-nine years, offering hospitality to approximately 12,000 cadets until the organization ceased operations in 1961. The administrators arrived at the decision to close for several reasons: British ships began to dock in other ports, British shipping companies were closing their offices and it was perceived that the cadets were better paid and more sophisticated, no longer needing the services of the BAC.

During the last year of the BAC, the club moved from the Hotel Chelsea to the Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street. Presiding over the dissolution of the BAC were the President Walter Hines Page and M. Moyca Newell, the Chairman of the Board. On 17 May 1961, the Board of Directors voted for the termination of the BAC.

NOTE ON PROVENANCE

The British Apprentice Club records were received as a gift from the British Apprentice Club in 1961. A later addition was received as a gift in 1992 from the Warsash Association (U.K.) via the National Maritime Museum in London, England.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records reflect the humanitarian role of the Club towards British merchant cadets on shore leave in New York City through its administrative files, letters, logbooks, registers and photographs. Although the BAC was a small organization, through efficient management policies it was able to offer a variety of activities and services to the cadets. Annual reports by the Board of Directors, Resident Secretary, Manager, Social Director (the two latter positions replaced the Resident Secretary) and the Treasurer outline the daily operations of the BAC. Subjects discussed at the annual meetings included finances, attendance, donations and social activities.

While the administrative records focus on the internal operations of the BAC, the general correspondence reflects the individuals and organizations who supported the BAC. For example, during World War II, the British Committee was responsible for lobbying the Seaman's Welfare Board (USA) to donate \$1500 dollars to the BAC. A prominent correspondent was Captain George W. Wakeford of the School of Navigation, Southampton, England who maintained a close relationship with the BAC.

Letters written by sailors reflect appreciation for the hospitality offered by the BAC. Many of these letters were written to Mrs. Lucile Brisbane Spaulding, the Manager of the BAC, often from ports around the world. The sailors recalled the "good times" that they had enjoyed at the BAC, and reported on their current status, shipmates and daily activities. Among these letters are some written to the BAC from sailors captured by the Germans and interned as POW's. These sailors usually requested small favors such as parcels of tobacco and chocolates. Although documentation was not retained by the BAC, it is evident from the letters that the BAC honored the requests of the prisoners. Families of the sailors were also appreciative of the efforts of the BAC on behalf of their sons as illustrated in the letters sent to the BAC from their families. On a more somber note, families also informed the BAC of the deaths of their sons.

Complementing the letters sent by sailors and their families are the logbooks (1923-1960), containing statements written by the cadets about their shore leave experiences in New York City. The cadets signed and dated the logbooks. The **registers (1921-1960)** contain the names of over 12,000 cadets who visited the BAC over its thirty-nine year history. The **photographs** are pictures of the cadets who visited the BAC; many of the pictures were taken on ships or in their hometowns. A few of the photographs are pictures of family members and wedding pictures. The remainder of the collection consists of **miscellaneous papers** such as special events held at the BAC, addresses and printed material.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The British Apprentice Club records are arranged into nine series: I. Administrative Records; II. General Correspondence; III. Letters to the British Apprentice Club from British Sailors; IV. Letters to the British Apprentice Club from the Parents of Sailors; V. Miscellaneous Papers; VI. Printed Material; VII. Logbooks; VIII. Registers; IX. Photographs

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS/CONTAINER LIST

Series I. Administrative Records (Box No. 1)

The Administrative Records (1923-1960, .5 linear ft.) reflect the activities of the organization through by-laws; Board of Directors annual reports (1941-1960); files on the dissolution of the British Apprentice Club (1960-1961); the annual reports of the Resident Secretary (1940-1952), the Manager (1952-1959) and the Social Director (1952-1954); and the reports of the Treasurer (1941-1943). Proposals for the Officers Club, attendance records and wartime ration accounts (1942-1947) complete this section.

Box

1	f.1	By-laws
	2-10	Board of Directors. Annual Reports 1941-1960
	11	Dissolution 1960-1961
	12	Reports of the Resident Secretary 1940-1952
	13	Reports of the Manager 1952-1959
	14	Reports of the Social Director 1952-1954
	15	Reports of the Treasurer 1941-1943
	16	Proposal for an Officers Club 1925
	17-19	Attendance Records for the BAC 1923-1960
	20	Ration Accounts 1942-1947

Series II. General Correspondence (Boxes 2-3)

The General Correspondence, (c1922-1961, .7 linear ft.) is arranged alphabetically. The bulk of the letters are addressed to Spaulding and to a lesser extent her colleagues Newell and Mayo. There are copies of some replies. The correspondence reflects the general interests of the BAC, inquiries regarding navel cadets, wartime activities and invitations. Correspondents include George Wakeford (see: School of Navigation).

Box 2	A-S
Box 3	Sh-T

Series III. Letters to the BAC from British Sailors (Boxes 4-5)

The series (1921-1960, .10 linear ft.) is arranged alphabetically. The bulk of the letters were written to Spaulding. There are a few replies. The sailors who wrote to the BAC expressed their appreciation for the hospitality extended to them by the British Apprentice Club while they were on shore leave in New York City.

Box 4 A-J
Box 5 K-Z

Series IV. Letters to the BAC from the Parents of Sailors (Box 6)

The series (c1940-1950, .2 linear ft.) is arranged alphabetically. The letters were written by the parents of the sailors (a few from siblings) who expressed gratitude to Spaulding for the kindness extended to their sons while they were on shore leave in New York City. Other subjects included the sailors' current status and requests for assistance in forwarding information to their sons. The remainder of this section contains letters to the BAC from the parents of deceased sailors.

Box 6 f. 1 Letters to the BAC from British POW's in German camps.
 f. 2-5 Letters to the BAC from the parents of sailors.
 f. 6-8 Letters to the BAC from the parents of deceased sailors.

Series V. Miscellaneous Papers (Boxes 7-8)

The Miscellaneous Papers (c1922-1961, .6 linear ft.) are arranged by subject. This section contains sympathy letters on the deaths of Katherine Mayo and Lucile Brisbane Spaulding; obituaries; BAC solicitations 1940-1961; BAC participation in sports; special events of the BAC and miscellaneous addresses and notes.

Box 7 f. 1 Sympathy letters on the death of Katherine Mayo 1940

 f. 2 Sympathy letters pertaining to the death of Lucile Brisbane Spaulding 1954
 f. 3 Obituaries - Moyca Newell 1948
 f. 4 Obituaries - Lucile Spaulding 1954
 f. 5-6 BAC solicitations 1940-1961
 f. 7 BAC participation in sports
 f. 8 Special Events - Captains's Tea Party; Acknowledgements 1939
 f. 9 Special Events - Cocktail Party 1952
 f. 10-13 Special Events - Silver Jubilee: invitations; acknowledgements, review
 f. 14 Special Events - Unveiling of plaque: Lucile B. Spaulding 1956
 f. 15 BAC Programs
 f. 16 Katherine Mayo - Address
 f. 17 Lucile Spaulding - Radio Address
 f. 18-19 Notes pertaining to sailors; assorted papers

Box 8 f. 1 Reminiscences by sailors regarding their World War II experiences
 f. 2 Estate of Albert E. Wright

Series VI. Printed Material (Box 8)

The Printed Material (c1922-1961, .4 linear ft.) consists of an assortment of printed material by and about the BAC including articles, the BAC Newsletter, the BAC Review and leaflets.

- Box 8 f. 3 Articles
- f. 4 BAC Bulletins
- f. 5 BAC Newsletter
- f. 7-9 BAC Review 1923-1952
- f. 10 Leaflets
- f. 11 Duplicates

Series VII. Logbooks (Boxes 9-14)

The Logbooks (1921-1960, 2 linear ft.) are a daily record of the cadets who visited the BAC. These logbooks contain short reminiscences of the experiences of the cadets while on shore leave in New York City. A few photographs are attached to the cadets' statements.

- Box 9 1923-1932
- Box 10 1933-1938 February
- Box 11 1938 February - 1943 October
- Box 12 1943 October - 1946
- Box 13 1948-1955
- Box 14 1955-1960

Series VIII. Registers (Boxes 15-20)

The Registers (1921-1960, 2 linear ft.) contain the signatures of over 12,100 cadets who visited the BAC.

- Box 15 1921-1924
- Box 16 1929-1933
- Box 17 1933-1942
- Box 18 1942-1950
- Box 19 1947-1960
- Box 20 1947-1960
- Box 21 Scrapbook

Series IX. Photographs (Boxes 21-29)

The photographs and the photograph albums (2 linear ft.) are pictures of the sailors who visited the BAC. The pictures were mainly taken aboard ships; however, there are also pictures of some of the sailors' families and their hometowns. There are also a few photographs of dances and tea parties held at the BAC and of the unveiling of the plaque honoring the late Mrs. Lucile Spaulding. The remainder of the section consists of graphic material (sketches and a World War II poster).

Box 21	BAC Dances BAC Sitting Room BAC Tea Parties Various shots of individuals Unveiling of plaque honoring Spaulding Views of Southampton, England HMS Conway Unidentified ship Assorted views of Japan, 1953 Miscellaneous photographs World War II Poster Graphics - sketches
Boxes 22-24	Photographs of sailors n.d.
Box 25	Photo albums of sailors 1946-1952
Box 26	1953
Box 27	1955-1956
Box 28	1957-1958
Box 29	1959