



The New York Public Library
New York Public Library Archives

Guide to the

Webster Branch records

1904-2001

MssArc RG8 5884

Summary

Creator: New York Public Library. Webster Branch

Title: Webster Branch records

Date: 1904-2001

Size: 6 linear feet (15 boxes)

Source: Transferred from Webster Branch Library.

Abstract: Reports, correspondence, accession books, financial records, news clippings and administrative files documenting operations of Webster Branch of The New York Public Library.

Conditions Governing Access:

Boxes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 closed to research.

Preferred citation: Webster Branch Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled Jim Moske; machine readable finding aid created by FAKER.

Related Materials:

Free Circulating Libraries Records. New York Public Library Archives.

Creator History

The Webster Branch of the New York Public Library traces its origins to the Webster Free Library, founded by the East Side House settlement in 1894. Rising costs and reductions in City funds eventually forced the settlement to ask the New York Public Library to absorb the work of the library. This consolidation took effect on January 1, 1904 with the understanding that NYPL would construct a

new library with funds drawn from Andrew Carnegie's gift of \$5.2 million to build libraries in New York City.

NYPL identified a site a few blocks from the original library, and in January 1905 the City of New York purchased the land from Marie Alice Haag for \$15,000. Babb, Cook & Willard were selected as the architects, and they designed a three-story, limestone building in the Classical Revival style. Construction costs totaled \$73,763. Opening exercises for the new building, located at 78th Street and York Avenue, were held on October 24, 1906, and books began to circulate the next day.

Until World War II, the area around the Webster Branch had a large immigrant population from Central and Eastern Europe. Many of these were Bohemians (as the Czech population of the neighborhood was then called), and the branch was sometimes referred to as the "Bohemian Branch." The Webster Free Library had offered readers a small Czech language collection, and NYPL expanded this service by creating a Czechoslovak Department on the third floor of the building. The Library also hosted cultural programs for the Bohemian community, including a Slavia Club that presented lectures and musical events, and English language classes taught by YMCA staff. For many years Czech books and programs were considered the core service of the branch, and attracted users from across the city. The effort was so successful that in 1927 the Czechoslovak Consul General presented medals and decorations to four NYPL librarians for their support of the collection. After some disruptions during World War II, the Czech collection was strengthened through gifts and foreign buying trips by staff. In 1957 most foreign language collections, including Czech books, were consolidated at the new Donnell Library Center. Czech music scores were transferred at that time to the Music Library. Only a small collection of Czech books remained at the Webster Branch.

During the 1960s-1990s the social composition of the Upper East Side changed, and the Webster Branch shifted its focus to serve the library needs of a diverse user community.

Scope and Content Note

Reports, correspondence, accession books, financial records, news clippings and administrative files documenting operations of Webster Branch of The New York Public Library.

Key Terms

Subjects

Branch libraries -- New York (State) -- New York
Libraries -- New York (State) -- New York
Public libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

Names

New York Public Library. Webster Branch

Container List

Webster Branch Records 1904-2001

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- b. 1 f. 2 Annual Reports - Branch Librarian 1938-1981
- b. 1 f. 3 Annual Reports - Adult Services 1950-1952
- b. 1 f. 4 Annual Reports - Czechoslovak Department 1939-1952
- b. 1 f. 5 Annual Reports - Readers' Adviser 1940-1950
- b. 1 f. 6 Annual Reports - School and Reference 1941-1951, n.d
- b. 1 f. 7 Annual Reports - Young Adult Services 1968-1969
- b. 1 f. 8 Book Sale Poster n.d.
- b. 1 f. 9 Brochure 1975
- b. 1 f. 10 Cagney, James n.d.
- b. 1 f. 11 Civil Defense Certificate 1965
- b. 1 f. 12 Correspondence 1939-1969
- b. 1 f. 13 Exhibit - Flight 1942
- b. 1 f. 14-16 50th Anniversary 1956
- b. 1 f. 17 Gaillard, Edwin W. - time sheet 1905
- b. 1 f. 18 Guest Sheet 1952
- b. 4 f. 1 Incident Reports 1973-1981
Closed to research
- b. 1 f. 19 Jacob, Herbert. Survey of Webster ca. 1934
- b. 1 f. 20 Neighborhood Population 1940
- b. 1 f. 21 New York City Board of Education 1984
- b. 1 f. 22 New York State Library School 1907
- b. 1 f. 23 News clippings n.d.
- b. 1 f. 24 Newsclippings - Czech Government Honors n.d.
- b. 1 f. 25 Opening invitations and program 1906
- b. 1 f. 26 Osten, Margaret. "The Webster Branch of the New York Public Library: A Project Report," Columbia University thesis June 1952
- b. 1 f. 27 "Over the Counter" 1942-1946
- b. 1 f. 28 Program on Bohemian Art 1909
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- b. 1 f. 31 Salary Requisitions 1942-1949
- b. 1 f. 32 Wentworth, Margaret. Poems n.d.
- b. 2 f. 1 Accessions #14,901-19,900 1904-1906
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- b. 2 f. 3 Accessions #24,901-29,900 1907-1908
- b. 2 f. 4 Accessions #29,901-34,900 1908-1910
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 - b. 4 Adult Registration 1914-1920
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- b. 4 f. 2-6 Adult Registration 1932-1945
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- b. 10 f. 1 Children's Room Circulation 1966-1970
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- b. 10 f. 3 Children's Room Miscellaneous Statistics 1908-1913
- b. 11 f. 1 Czechoslovak Department - Circulation Statistics 1954-1957
- b. 11 f. 2 Czechoslovak Department - Correspondence 1946-1952
- b. 11 f. 3 Czechoslovak Department Accessions #1-1779 n.d.
- b. 11 f. 4 Czechoslovak Department - Czechoslovakia Book Donation 1948
- b. 11 f. 5 Czechoslovak Department - Gambrill, Winifred. "History of the Czechoslovak Department" 1939
- b. 11 f. 6 Czechoslovak Department - Inventory 1932-1935
- b. 11 f. 7 Czechoslovak Department - Invitation n.d.
- b. 11 f. 8 Czechoslovak Department - Matica Slovenska - Receipt for Books 1937
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- b. 12 f. 1 Cash Book 1966-1971
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- b. 14 f. 1 Circulation - Adult Photocharging 1970-1976

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