



Russell Sage Foundation records

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Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator:	Russell Sage Foundation
Title:	Russell Sage Foundation records
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Biographical / Historical

The Russell Sage Foundation was established in 1907 by Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (1828-1918) as a memorial to her late husband, Russell Sage, the railroad magnate and Wall Street financier. Mrs. Sage's original gift for the Foundation of \$10 million was increased in 1918 with a bequest of \$5 million.

The mission of the Russell Sage Foundation is the "improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America." Mrs. Sage placed no restrictions on how this mission was to be fulfilled. She wished the scope of the Russell Sage Foundation to be national, but also requested that special attention be paid to New York City and its environs.

The Russell Sage Foundation received the largest single gift made by Mrs. Sage but she dispensed a total of \$35 million between 1907 and her death in 1918. She made most of her contributions in the traditional manner of responding to individual solicitations on a case-by-case basis. Some institutions received a single large gift while others received, for several years, regular gifts of lesser amounts. Mrs. Sage also expressed her support of many organizations, mostly local, in a more symbolic way through gifts of \$100 or less, lifetime memberships, or annual patronages.

Between 1907 and 1946, the Russell Sage Foundation focused its attention on improving the quality of living by exposing social problems and proposing and sponsoring practical solutions for those problems. The results of its investigations and field studies were presented in books, pamphlets and articles published by the Russell Sage Foundation.

During this time the Foundation was organized by departments based on fields of research. Included among these departments were Charity Organization, Industrial Studies, Recreation, Surveys and Exhibits, and Statistics. The areas of study included, but were not limited to, public welfare, labor and industrial relations, regional planning, penology, child welfare, and the social work profession. The Russell Sage Foundation also supported existing social agencies and helped establish new agencies to serve previously neglected social concerns.

In 1948, due to declining financial investments and the gradual attrition of its staff, the Russell Sage Foundation underwent a philosophical and structural reorganization. It shifted its focus to basic research in the social and behavioral sciences and the strengthening of social welfare methodology. Structurally, it discontinued its specialized departments and created a coordinated central staff of professional personnel. Much of the work could then be carried out by individuals hired temporarily for specific projects. The Russell Sage Foundation presently continues in this role.

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Scope and Contents

The Russell Sage Foundation records consist of correspondence, office files and officer's papers, reports, grant proposals, publications, photographs, and some digital media materials documenting the Foundation's activities during the years 1879-2010, with the bulk of the material from 1907-2000.

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Arrangement

The Russell Sage Foundation records is comprised of multiple collections. The main body of the records (presented in FA015) is organized in three subgroups, each comprised of multiple series. The subgroups and associated accessions are representative solely of when the materials were transferred to and processed by RAC, and do not imply an original order of the records. Records are further arranged primarily by record type. Additional finding aids are created as records are processed and open for research.

Russell Sage Foundation records (FA015)

Russell Sage Foundation records, Office of the President, Eric Wanner papers, Record Group 1 (FA764)

Russell Sage Foundation records, Publications (FA086)

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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archive@rockarch.org

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