

# **Abracadabra Club of Washington, DC Records**

## **An inventory of Abracadabra Club of Washington, DC at DC Public Library**

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on September 27, 2018.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Stage

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Administrative Information .....	4
Controlled Access Headings .....	5
Collection Inventory .....	5
Series 1: Meeting Minutes, 1893-1996 .....	5
Series 2: Yearbooks, 1896-1989 .....	7
Series 3: Photographs, 1966-1995, No Date .....	8
Series 4: Biographical Files, 1907-1999 .....	9
Series 5: Financial Records, 1940-1996 .....	10
Series 6: Ephemera, 1934-1986, No Date .....	10

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Stage
<b>Title:</b>	Abracadabra Club of Washington, DC Records
<b>ID:</b>	062
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1893-1999
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 linear feet;18 boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Biographical / Historical

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Twelve members of the Metropolitan Presbyterian Church established the Abracadabra Club in 1893 as a literary society for Washington, DC. The original name of the club was "The Fortnightly Club of Capitol Hill." After two years, the members discovered that another club already had the same name, so in 1894 they changed it to "Abracadabra."

From its inception, the membership was limited to thirty members with an equal number of men and women. In December of 1893, it is interesting to note that the Club decided, "the number of ladies had exceeded the number of men, so that it was voted that no more ladies should be admitted unless accompanied by a gentleman, 'though the gentleman need not belong to her.'" By 1907 the limit had been raised to 50 members. For most of the Club's existence, the membership stayed at or below 50. Over the years, however, membership began to decline and in 2003 the Abracadabra Club disbanded.

The membership adhered to the same meeting procedures throughout the club's existence. Meetings consisted of a roll call with a response from each member (each response was based on a topic chosen for the meeting), a paper on a subject of interest to the speaker, and "a reading in lighter vein, and a period of sociability in conjunction with the inevitable cooks." Paper topics varied greatly, as did the membership. Membership included "doctors, lawyers, scholastics, scientists, travelers and gardeners," among others.

The Club's most notable member was Dr. Charles Greeley Abbot (a member since 1897), scientist, inventor and Head of the Smithsonian Institution from 1928-1944. He also served a term as President

of the Abracadabra Club in 1902. Dr. Abbot presented many papers at club meetings which most often covered the latest scientific discoveries/research. His passion was the study of solar energy. However, Dr. Abbot presented papers on other subjects as well, including: "The Eclipse of 1900," "What Civilization Owes the Arabs," "Resume of the Louisiana Purchase," "The Travels of Marco Polo," and "Fifty-five Years With Abracadabra," among others. Dr. Abbot remained a member of the Abracadabra Club until he died in 1973.

The purpose of the Abracadabra Club was to provide its membership with an outlet of discussion for its scholarly, political and personal interests. This continued throughout the Club's life. In 2003, the Abracadabra Club met for a final time.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents

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The records consist of meeting minutes, attendance records, financial records, correspondence, clippings, pamphlets, photographs and yearbooks, all related to the activities of the Abracadabra Club and its members. The collection also contains two gavels and a block used to call meetings to order. The records reflect the intellectual interests of the members of the Club and cover a wide variety of topics spanning over a century of time. The collection is divided into six (6) Series: I. Meeting Minutes; II. Yearbooks; III Photographs; IV. Biographical Files; V. Financial Records; and VI Ephemera.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Stage

### Custodial History

The records of the Abracadabra Club of Washington, DC were donated to the Archives in 2003 by Thomas H. Bramel, last President of the Club. The records were gathered and created by the Club's officers and members from 1893-2000.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Controlled Access Headings

- Literature
- Societies and clubs
- Associations, institutions, etc

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1: Meeting Minutes, 1893-1996

#### Scope and Contents

This series consists of the meeting minutes and related records of the Abracadabra Club. The records are contained in five (5) bound volumes and three (3) 5.0" legal size archives storage boxes of loose materials. It includes transcriptions of speeches, minutes, attendance records, correspondence, pamphlets, membership lists (1893-1937), clippings and treasurer's reports. Meeting Minutes for 1982-1984 are missing. There are also indices to these records in the series. Correspondence and speeches related to bound materials are also in this series.

Title/Description	Instances	
Minutes (Bound Volume), 1893-1913	Box 1	Folder 1
Minutes (Bound Volume), 1913-1918	Box 2	Folder 1
Minutes (Bound Volume), 1918-1926	Box 2	Folder 2
Minutes (Bound Volume), 1926-1933	Box 3	Folder 1
Minutes (Bound Volume), 1933-1938	Box 3	Folder 2
Related Correspondence (with no Minutes), 1925-1926	Box 4	Folder 1
Speech/Report (with no Minutes), 1935-1936	Box 4	Folder 2
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 3
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 4
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 5
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 6
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 7
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 8
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 9
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 10
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 11

Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 12
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 13
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 14
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 15
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 16
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 17
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 18
Minutes, 1938-1955	Box 4	Folder 19
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 1
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 2
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 3
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 4
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 5
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 6
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 7
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 8
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 9
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 10
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 11
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 12
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 13
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 14
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 15
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 16
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 17
Minutes, 1955-1972	Box 5	Folder 18
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 1
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 2
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 3
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 4
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 5
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 6

Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 7
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 8
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 9
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 10
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 11
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 12
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 13
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 14
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 15
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 16
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 17
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 18
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 19
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 20
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 21
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 22
Minutes, 1972-1996	Box 6	Folder 23
Index of Papers/Speeches/Reports, Undated	Box 6	Folder 24
Index of Roll Call Responses, Undated	Box 6	Folder 25
Membership List, 1893-1937	Box 6	Folder 26

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Yearbooks, 1896-1989

### Scope and Contents

This series consists of the yearbooks published by the Abracadabra Club and distributed at the annual meeting each year. They are housed in eight (8) archival storage boxes in chronological order. The yearbooks contain information stating the Officers and membership of the club. They also list the date of each meeting, the names of the hosts/ hostesses, speakers, and the titles of their talks. Some yearbooks contain copies of the Club's Constitution and list the names of past Presidents and memorials to members who have passed away. Yearbooks for 1935-1936 are missing.

Title/Description	Instances	
Untitled, 1896-1923	Box 8	Folder 1
Untitled, 1930-1940	Box 9	Folder 1
Untitled, 1940-1950		

	Box 10	Folder 1
Untitled, 1950-1960	Box 11	Folder 1

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 3: Photographs, 1966-1995, No Date

### Scope and Contents

This series contains photographs of various events held by the Abracadabra Club and the members attending the events. All of the photographs are in color.

Title/Description	Instances	
Dr. Abbot and Mrs. Odom, May 1966	Box 15	Folder 1
Dr. Abbot and Mrs. Odom, May 1966	Box 15	Folder 2
Brian - Mr. Burton and Mr. Moyer, May 1966	Box 15	Folder 3
Unknown, May 1966	Box 15	Folder 4
Dr. Abbot and Mr. Baker, December 1968	Box 15	Folder 5
Christmas Tree, December 1968	Box 15	Folder 6
Floral Arrangement, December 1968	Box 15	Folder 7
Mr. and Mrs. Howard and Mr. Moyers, March 1970	Box 15	Folder 8
Mr. and Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Moyers, March 1970	Box 15	Folder 9
Dr. and Mrs. Abbot - Dr. Abbot's 100th Birthday, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 10
Dr. and Mrs. Abbot - Dr. Abbot's 100th Birthday, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 11
Cynthia Brooker and Betty Tibbott, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 12
Dr. Verne Chatelain and Helen Bailey, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 13
Negatives, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 14
Negatives, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 15
Negatives, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 16
Negatives, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 17
Negatives, April 1972	Box 15	Folder 18
Helen and Paul Howard - Wedding Fete, March 1975	Box 15	Folder 19
Gordon and Elva Webner, December 1986	Box 15	Folder 20
W. Elwood Baker - 98th Birthday, November 1987	Box 15	Folder 21
Mr. Baker - Mrs. West - Mrs. Chatelain and Mrs. Wallman, December 1987	Box 15	Folder 22



Mrs. Korgen - Mrs. Tibbott and Mrs. Gettens, December 1987	Box 15	Folder 23
Mr. West and Mr. Wollman, December 1987	Box 15	Folder 24
Dr. and Mrs. Chatelain, March 1988	Box 15	Folder 25
Rebecca Hayes - Virginia Garber and Mrs. Gettens, March 1988	Box 15	Folder 26
Mrs. Tibbott, March 1988	Box 15	Folder 27
Mr. and Mrs. West and Mrs. Chatelain, May 1988	Box 15	Folder 28
Shirley Wilhelm and Brian Grimes, May 1988	Box 15	Folder 29
W. Elwood Baker - 100th Birthday, November 1989	Box 15	Folder 30
W. Elwood Baker and Mrs. Gettens, April 1990	Box 15	Folder 31
Dr. and Mrs. Chatelain, April 1990	Box 15	Folder 32
Katharine Gettens and Helen Howard, December 1994	Box 15	Folder 33
Katharine Gettens and Helen Howard, December 1994	Box 15	Folder 34
Tom and Jody Bramel and Betty Tibbott, October 1995	Box 15	Folder 35
Bob Tibbott, October 1995	Box 15	Folder 36
Dr. and Mrs. Abbot, Undated	Box 15	Folder 37
Moyer's House, Undated	Box 15	Folder 38
Moyer's House, Undated	Box 15	Folder 39
Moyer's House, Undated	Box 15	Folder 40
Moyer's House, Undated	Box 15	Folder 41

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 4: Biographical Files, 1907-1999

### Scope and Contents

This series consists of items related to the specific members of the Abracadabra Club. The materials are primarily newspaper clippings and, obituary notices. Notable figures include Dr. Charles G. Abbot, past club President and former Head of the Smithsonian Institution.

Title/Description	Instances	
Dr. Charles G. Abbot, 1907-1973	Box 16	Folder 1
Dr. Charles G. Abbot - Scrapbook, 1928-1967	Box 16	Folder 2
R. B. Branstead, 1973	Box 16	Folder 3
Dr. Verne E. Chatelain, 1986	Box 16	Folder 4
Katharine Covella Gettens, 1997	Box 16	Folder 5

Lois W. Howard, 1973	Box 16	Folder 6
Helen Day Moyer, 1984	Box 16	Folder 7
Obituary Scrapbook, 1906-1967	Box 16	Folder 8
Edward E. Odom, 1978	Box 16	Folder 9
Anita French Sanderson, 1984	Box 16	Folder 10
Gladys Harlow West, 1999	Box 16	Folder 11

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Financial Records, 1940-1996

### Scope and Contents

This series consists of the financial records generated by the Abracadabra Club. They include receipt books and treasurer's records. They are housed in one (1) small archival storage shoebox.

Title/Description	Instances	
Receipt Book, 1942-1945	Box 17	Folder 1
Receipt Book, 1945-1947	Box 17	Folder 2
Receipt Book, 1948-1950	Box 17	Folder 3
Treasurer's Book, 1940-1961	Box 17	Folder 4
Treasurer's Book, 1970-1996	Box 17	Folder 5

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 6: Ephemera, 1934-1986, No Date

### Scope and Contents

This series consists of two (2) gavels and a block housed in one (1) flat storage box, holiday greetings, publications, directions to meetings, sheet music and various other ephemera.

Title/Description	Instances	
Dr. Charles G. Abbot's Publications, 1940-1966	Box 16	Folder 1
Club Song, Undated	Box 16	Folder 2
Christmas Carols, 1941-1983	Box 16	Folder 3
Holiday Greetings, 1968-1986	Box 16	Folder 4
Miscellaneous, 1934-1980	Box 16	Folder 5
Travel Instructions, Undated	Box 16	Folder 6

Addresses/Speeches/Presentations, Undated

	Box 16	Folder 7
Addresses/Speeches/Presentations, Undated	Box 17	Folder 1
Two (2) Gavels and One (1) Block, Undated	Box 18	Folder 1

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)