

**WOMAN'S COLLEGE OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY,
RECORDS OF THE, 1872-1893**

Series 40/1

Boxes 1-2 (including one half-size and one ledger)

History

In 1873, under pressure from Northwestern University's new President, Dr. Charles Fowler, as well as from financial embarrassments, the Evanston College for Ladies, founded in 1869, ceded its property and management to Northwestern University. In exchange, the University assumed the College's debts and promised to include at least five women in the University's Board of Trustees. In June 1873 the Evanston College for Ladies became the Woman's College (also known as the College of Literature and Art) of Northwestern University. Frances E. Willard, a graduate of the Northwestern Female College, served as Dean of Women and Professor of Aesthetics. In June 1874 Sarah Rebecca Roland became Northwestern's first female graduate, although all graduates of the Evanston College for Ladies were considered alumnae of Northwestern University.

During the first year of the Woman's College, conflicts between President Fowler and Frances Willard over rules and disciplinary authority led to Willard's resignation in June 1874. Three months later European educated Ellen M. Soulé became Dean of Women and Professor of French at the University. Two years later she resigned her position in order to marry Henry S. Carhart, Professor of physics at Northwestern. Subsequently Amelia Sanford of Bloomington, IL took over as acting Dean for a year, after which Jane M. Bancroft, a graduate of Syracuse University, became Dean and Professor of French Language and Literature in 1877.

While the College, which housed Northwestern's Conservatory of Music, continued to offer fine arts and college preparatory programs, its main function was to provide meals, housing, and supervision to Northwestern University's female students. In 1875 the College expected University women to adhere to a strict schedule of meals, study, and sleep, and to request the Dean's permission before leaving town; however, in all other matters the College permitted University women to "be regulated by their own judgment, subject to counsel" so long as no "indiscretion" resulted. Female students who could not afford to pay for room and board at the Woman's College building had the option of living less expensively at the "College Cottage" subsidized by the College Aid Fund (Women's Educational Aid Association).

In 1892 Northwestern University faculty proposed to change the title of "Woman's College" to "Woman's Hall." The building finally was dubbed "Willard Hall" in 1901.

Description of the Series

The Records of the Woman's College of Northwestern University span from 1872 to 1893, with the bulk of the series dating from 1874 to 1886.

Arranged according to the administrative succession of the Woman's College, Correspondence files span from 1874 to 1886 and comprise mainly incoming correspondence relating to College students, events, and facilities. Ellen Soulé's correspondence (1874-1876) consists of incoming

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letters from students, parents, and Northwestern University President C. H. Fowler. Amelia Sanford's file also contains letters to Rev. and Mrs. S. G. Lathrop, who managed the College building, and appear to have taken on additional administrative responsibilities after Soulé's resignation. Dating from 1877 to 1890, Jane Bancroft's correspondence contains letters from parents, current and prospective students, and lecturers; as well as Medical School Dean N. S. Davis, University presidents Oliver Marcy and Joseph Cummings; and Dr. J. B. Chess, who awarded an annual Gold Medal for deportment to female students. Of particular interest are letters related to disciplinary matters (May 1878, January 1880) and conflict between the Woman's College Dean and the University administration involving an issue of room assignments (April-May 1880; December 1886). Overall the correspondence suggests that female students received close and individualized attention in the Woman's College.

Dating from 1873 to 1892, the reports and minutes consist of annual reports of the Woman's College Dean; some extracts concerning the Woman's College from the minutes of Northwestern University's Board of Trustees; and extracts from the minutes of Northwestern University faculty meetings.

Bulletins and circulars (1872-1893) documenting the College's mission, rules, and coursework include an 1872-1873 bulletin of the Conservatory of Music. Also included in this folder is a program from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition that lists the members of the World's Congress Auxiliary, including the Woman's Branch, and the members of the Department of Woman's Progress.

Compiled between 1881 and 1885, the history and biography album includes a historical sketch of the Evanston Ladies College and Woman's College, as well as photographs and handwritten biographical sketches of early Woman's College deans and students, including Frances Willard, Ellen Soule and Jane Bancroft.

Cross References

Records of the Northwestern Female College, 1855-1976 (Series 36/2)

Records of the Women's Educational Aid Association, 1871-2000 (Series 55/38)

Records of the Evanston College for Ladies, 1869-1933 (Series 39/1)

Northwestern University Woman's College Register, 1874, 1876-96 (Series 40/3)

Frances E. Willard Papers (Series 40/2)

Provenance: Unknown.

Restrictions: None.

Separations: None.

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Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Correspondence: Soulé, Ellen	1874-1876
	2	Correspondence: Sanford, Amelia	1876-1877
	3	Correspondence: Bancroft, Jane	1877-1878
	4	Correspondence: Bancroft, Jane	1879
	5	Correspondence: Bancroft, Jane	1880-1881
	6	Correspondence: Bancroft, Jane	1882-1883
	7	Correspondence: Bancroft, Jane	1884-1890
	8	Reports and Minutes	1873-1892
	9	Bulletins and Circulars	1872-1893
2	Bound scrapbook	History and biography	1881-1885