



Altrusa Club of Nashville Records, 1917-1990

Collection Summary

Title: Altrusa Club of Nashville Records

Summary: A collection of administrative records, minutes and proceedings, printed materials, and scrapbooks documenting the history of the Altrusa Club of Nashville with dates between 1917 and 1990. Bulk dates: 1930-1985.

Physical Description: 20 boxes, plus 12 oversize boxes; 26.1 linear feet.

Language: English

Stack Location: Archives II

Repository: Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Historical Note:

The organization currently known as Altrusa International, Inc. was first established on April 11, 1917 by Dr. Alfred Durham. With America's entry into World War I, more and women began joining the workforce, which created a need for women's civic organizations. Dr. Durham founded the Altrusa Institute in Nashville, Tennessee, and then began organizing clubs in Louisville, Kentucky, Dayton, Ohio, and Indianapolis, Indiana.

After moving to Indianapolis, Dr. Durham met Mamie L. Bass, a partner in her brother's architectural firm and later the first national president of Altrusa. Mamie L. Bass envisioned a higher purpose for the Altrusa Institute, and held the first convention in Indianapolis in 1918, where Altrusa became a classified service organization for women. A year later, the Altrusa Institute became the National Association of Altrusa Clubs.

The Altrusa Club was originally the first national organization for business and professional women, which worked for women's rights to work, opportunities for advancement, and equal pay for equal services, as well as providing vocational guidance for girls and women. By the year 1927, Altrusa had

organized 60 clubs in the United States. The organization became Altrusa International in 1935 with the establishment of the first club outside of the United States in Mexico City. Since then, Altrusa clubs have been established in Puerto Rico, Chile, Ecuador, India, Korea, Ireland, Great Britain, New Zealand, and a number of other countries.

Altrusa International is made up of executive representatives of all varieties of business and professional women workers. The Altrusa Club of Nashville currently works to make local communities better through leadership partnership, and service, and by undertaking a variety of services, literacy, fundraising, and international projects each year. In the past, they have collaborated with institutions such as the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, FiftyForward, and other non-profit organizations.

Scope and Contents of the Collection:

This collection contains administrative records, historical materials, meeting minutes, printed materials, and scrapbooks that document the history of the Altrusa Club of Nashville. The materials range between the organization's beginnings in 1917 up until 1990, with bulk dates between 1930 and 1985. The collection includes 20 boxes of documents, ledgers, and minute books, as well as 12 oversize boxes containing scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings documenting the activities of the Altrusa Club of Nashville from 1922 to 1985. A large portion of the collection consists of meeting minutes and conference proceedings. This collection provides a record of the first national organization for business and professional women in the United States, and documents its beginnings and activities within Nashville.

Index Terms:

Subjects:

Altrusa International
Clubwomen.
Organizations.
Women.
Women--Societies and clubs.
Women's clubs

Related Collections:

Anita Williams Papers
Cable Club Collection
Centennial Club Collection

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged alphabetically in four series: Administrative Records, Minutes & Proceedings, Printed Materials, and Scrapbooks.

The *Administrative Records* series is further divided into six subseries: *correspondence*, which contains general correspondence regarding day-to-day activities of the club; *financial*, which contains records of deposits and expenditures, bank statements, receipts, and tax returns; *historical*, which contains essays, artifacts, clippings, and other materials relating to the history of the Altrusa club; *membership*, which includes ledgers listing club members, yearbooks, and nominations for the Mamie L. Bass Award; *policies*, which contains member manuals and handbooks; and *reports*, which contains annual reports of various officers and committees of the Altrusa Club of Nashville.

Minutes & Proceedings contains minute books and records of proceedings of annual meetings and conferences, and is further divided into three subseries: *Board of Directors*, *Conferences*, and *Nashville Chapter*. *Board of Directors* contains meeting minutes from 1919 to 1983. The *Conferences* subseries contains the minutes and proceedings of all annual conferences for District Three (later District Four) from 1930 to 1987, with the exception of 1944, during which year no conference was held. The *Nashville Chapter* subseries includes monthly and annual meeting proceedings of the Altrusa Club of Nashville from 1917 to 1977.

The *Printed Materials* series contains awards and certificates presented to the Altrusa Club of Nashville, as well as publications including newsletters, songs of Altrusa, and a collection of four skits about the history of the club entitled, "Danger: Women at Work."

The *Scrapbooks* series contains scrapbooks of photographs and newspaper clippings relating to the activities of the Altrusa Club of Nashville, dating between 1922 and 1985.

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Administrative Information:

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Provenance: Donated to Metro Archives by the Altrusa Club of Nashville.

Processing Information: Processed by Kelley Sirko, November 2022.

Accruals: Further additions are expected.