

Brown, Mary Spalding. "Annual Report of the Recording Secretary of the Chicago Woman's Club Year Ending March 14, 1891." Chicago History Museum. Chicago Woman's Club Records. Box 1, Folder 12.

"The annual meeting marks the close of the fifteenth year in the life of the C.W.C., and its steadily increasing membership testifies to its extended power and influence for good.

One of the most important activities of the Club within the year, which indeed is of a national character, is the memorial to President Harrison, remonstrating against the dismissal of women from public offices in order that their places might be filled by voters.

This action was taken in March a year ago, upon the removal by the Collector of Internal Revenue, of three women from offices which they had filled long and faithfully. The petition which was of a most dignified character, standing for principle and untinged by personal or political bias was presented to the President by four members of the Club, with the gratifying result that the Collector was instructed to dismiss no more women at present.

Another work, which, recommended by the Board, has had the sanction through its various committees is the Bill, now pending before the Legislature at Springfield, for the better government of the Charitable Institutions of Cook County, to the end that they shall be taken out of politics and put under the care of a properly constituted Board.

Some of the prominent organizations of the City are in Cooperation with the Club in this matter.

Since the annual meeting of last year the Board of Boys Industrial School at Glenwood has proposed to the club, that in recognition of the very substantial aid given by the members, the club should have the honor and credit of the erection of the school building rather than of the cottage as at first planned.

This met the approval of the Board, and now a slab of Tennessee Marble in the Entrance Hall of the beautiful School Building at Glenwood is inscribed with the words, "Erected by the Chicago Women's Club."

In April, Mrs. Ormiston Chant of London lectured under the auspices of the club, for the benefit of the Industrial School, and the proceeds were used toward the furnishing of the School Building, since that time, individual members had also contributed to the work.

We were asked last spring to send delegates to the meeting of the General Federation of Women's Clubs held in New York, to which we responded by a written report of the work of the Club, and an invitation to the association of Women's Clubs to hold its next biennial meeting in Chicago, the club pledging itself to the entertainment of the delegates at that time, which invitation has been accepted.

A petition for more women upon the School Board has been circulated during the year by members of the Club and presented to the Mayor, which has resulted in the appointment of one more woman to serve on the Board.

An innovation has been introduced in the year's calendar, by printing in addition to the personal names of married ladies, their husband's names as well, thus securing uniformity and easier identification.

During the year fifty two new members have been elected (although not all of these have formally accepted as yet) and we have added one honorary member, Mrs. E.L. Marean whose active connection with us has been severed by her removal from the city.

This rapid increase of the club membership has made it necessary to amend our constitution by requiring three persons to propose a new member, instead of one as formerly, and no member may propose but one candidate a year.

Another change has been made in the Constitutions which, however, does not go into effect until March 1892 which is an amendment to Art V. Sec 2, whereby the initiation fee shall be \$15.00 and the annual dues \$10.00.

The benevolent work of the Club has been actively carried on during the year, under the management of its several committees, which will be reported by their respective chairmen.

The policy of the Club as to what constitutes its public work has been outlined by our President, and by the vote of the Club, \$1000 has been placed as the disposition of the Board for the furtherance of the public work of the Club.

The committees on new rooms have presented reports as to location and cost of rooms suitable for club use, but the matter has been laid over for future action until the expiration of our present lease.

Our forth Wednesday meetings have continued to be valuable features in the life of the club, being usually given to a discussion upon the work or policy of the club, and to the furtherance of necessary improvements and reforms of both city and national importance.

Amidst the active work of the Club, our social life has figured pleasantly. In addition to one evening social, we have had the honor of entertaining Mrs. Chant of London and Miss Harriet Hosmer, both of whom addressed the club most delightfully. It was the wish of the Club to entertain Mrs. Livermorn, but on account of other engagements she was unable to accept our invitation.

Mrs. Isabella Beecher Hooker honored one of our regular meetings with a short address. The Rev. Herbert Welsh lectured before Club members and their friends, upon the Indian Question, and Prof F. B. Danborn of Concord addressed the Club upon the Philosophy of Philanthropy.

We have given the use of our Club rooms to the National Collegiate Alumnae for their Convention, and to our sister society for Physical Culture, also for a meeting of the Nurses' association of the city.

Many pleasant memories crowd upon us with the thought of the year's work, but we have not escaped our full share of sorrow, for our membership has been sadly invaded and we have been called upon to mourn valued friends and members in the deaths of

Mrs. Samuel Willard Mrs. O.W. Richardson

`` Franklin H. Head `` A.C. Bartlett

`` Jo Swisshelm Allen `` A.R. Sabin

And our second Vice Prest. Mrs. W.O. Carpenter

Letters of Condolence have been sent to the bereaved families by the corresponding Sec'y.

After one of our inspiring papers looking to the active work and broader intelligence of women, a resolve was taken which marks a step in advance in the practical influence of our Club life, viz: that one afternoon during the year shall be devoted to the discussion of National Politics, one to Municipal Affairs, and one to the Law as it affects the family.

No one can be identified with or interested in the active life of this Club even for a short year without realizing the great possibilities of the power and influence for the future.

The fact that all its members do not appreciate or estimate truly its worth as a broadening factor in the line of women, is apparent in the fact that our average attendance numbers only a little more than one third of our membership, but that its influence and value is respected by many members whose other duties and interests detain them from regular attendance, is attested by the functional payment of the dues, its phenomenal growth, and the ardent pride with which even these infrequent attendants speak of their membership in the Club.

The Chicago Women's Club has now attained nearly a half thousand members and if we continue to grow, the time is not far distant, when it is not vain to prophecy, that a respectable Club home shall be ours, where we shall delight to pay recognition and respect to noble and distinguished women from all over the world.

The 19th Century woman is outgrowing her old environment she has burst the Chrysalis of tradition and ignorance and is beginning to try her strength independently – to think and act for herself and to use her influence to form a more elevated public sentiment. And the Chicago Women's Club is one of the helpful instruments toward the attainment of a broader view and nobler womanhood.

*Emphasis Added