



120 Academy Street, Trenton, N.J. 08608
609-392-7188 * www.trentonlib.org

Collection 9
Leisure Hour School Records

By Laura M. Poll
April 2019

History

The Carpenter Lecture Course Committee was created in December 1937 to discuss the creation of an adults' education program in Trenton. In March 1938, a new committee was formed called the Council of the Leisure Hour School. Backers were prominent business, professional and social Trentonians, and many of the teachers were prominent in their fields, including several Princeton University professors. Classes met in the evenings at Trenton High School, and were non-credit, non-homework, non-testing, and non-graded. They were of educational as well as recreational value, and included such courses as Lip Reading, Personal Charm for Ladies, Cultural English, Social Dancing, Photography, Bridge, Sewing, Creative Writing, Problems of Democracy, and Knowing Your Pet.

In early 1942, there were discussions about offering National Defense courses such as War Mathematics, Air Raid Wardens, Cryptography, and Map Reading. In October 1942, it was voted to suspend classes for the "duration of the war."

The school resumed in June 1946. After March 1947, it was decided to change the name to the Adult School of Trenton – A Community Project. It ceased sometime after 1959.

Scope and Content Notes

The bulk of this collection contains minutes which document the creation and operation of the Leisure Hour School. Also included are course catalogs and suggested reading lists.

This collection will be of interest to those researching adult continuing education in Trenton at the end of the Depression, during World War 2, and into the 1950s.

Series Description:

Series 1. Minutes, 1937-1956

This series includes minutes that begin with the Carpenter Lecture Course Committee in December 1937, and continue through its existence as the Leisure Hour School and then the Adult School of Trenton. The executive board met monthly and discussed the operation of the school, including suggestions for and cancelling of courses and teacher salaries. Annual meeting minutes are also included and filed chronologically with the executive committee minutes. There is a gap from July 1943 to June 1946 when the school went on hiatus due to World War 2. While the minutes in this collection end in August 1956, the school continued for several years afterwards.

At the end of the minutes (folder 4) are the lists of the executive committee board members, 1940-1955.

Series 2. Course Catalogs, 1938-1959

This series includes course catalogs, which contain information such as fees, course descriptions and schedules. Registration could be done at the high school, Traver's Book Store and "All Public Libraries." There are no catalogs for 1943-1945 when the school was on hiatus due to World War 2. At the back of the catalogs are board member names and partnering organizations.

Series 3. Reading Lists, 1938-1949

This series includes suggested reading for courses. The books were listed as being available at the Trenton Free Public Library.

Series 4. Newspapers, 1939

This series contains two copies of "Leisure Hour News", dated 3 April 1939. It is marked as Vol. I No.1, and was edited by the "Spectator" staff of the Trenton High School. It contains articles about popular classes, upcoming sessions, poems, school news, and "Snooping Spy." It is unknown if the newspapers continued as a regular publication.

Container List

Box 1, Folder 1	Minutes (1937-1939)
Folder 2	Minutes (1940-1943)
Folder 3	Minutes (1946-1950)
Folder 4	Minutes (1951-1956)
Folder 5	Course Catalogs (1938-1942)
Folder 6	Course Catalogs (1946-1951)
Folder 7	Course Catalogs (1952-1959)
Folder 8	Reading Lists (1938-1940)
Folder 9	Reading Lists (1941-1949)
Folder 10	Leisure Hour News (1939)

Provenance

Unknown, but assumed to have come from the long-time secretary, Minerva Litt Kaplan via Howard L. Hughes (Trenton Free Public Library director) who was also active on the board with his wife.