

## THE ETHICAL HUMANIST SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

The Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago was established in 1882 as the Society for Ethical Culture of Chicago, an outgrowth of the ethical culture movement, founded by Felix Adler in New York in 1876. Ethical culture stressed the identification of religion with moral law and the application of this law to everyday life. In the preamble and statement of principles adopted by the Chicago Society, these emphases were made explicit:

As there are general laws governing physical life upon our obedience to which our physical health is dependent, so there are laws, as yet but imperfectly understood, underlying our moral and intellectual life, on which our moral and intellectual well-being depends. The study of these laws is of the highest importance...

Having constantly before us the spectacle of debasement and misery resulting from the violation of these laws, often through ignorance...we feel that a sacred duty rests upon us, while we seek to correct our own lives in whatever may be amiss, to do all within our power to raise our less fortunate fellow-men out of the sorrowful condition into which they have fallen.<sup>1</sup>

Following a series of lectures by Adler in Chicago in 1882, a group of men including Judge Henry Booth, Arthur B. Hosmer, and George C. Miln formed an executive committee to carry out preliminary organization of an ethical society. Although modeled after the New York City Society for Ethical Culture, the Chicago Society was an autonomous organization from its inception. Eventually the ethical societies in the U. S. formed a loosely federated association, the American Ethical Union. The Chicago Society was governed by an elected Board of Trustees, who were also responsible for selecting the Leader. The Leader was salaried, his duties including lecturing at the Sunday meetings, organizing the ethical classes, and directing the philanthropic activities. The members were expected to contribute toward the financial needs of the Society, but no dues were assessed. As the membership grew substantially, the usual ladies' and young people's associations developed.

In his opening lecture, April 1, 1883, William M. Salter, first Leader of the Chicago Society, defined the Society's purpose as "a nobler private and a juster social life."<sup>2</sup> One of his first efforts toward social welfare was the organization of the Relief Works, a group of public health nurses assigned to immigrant districts and supported by the Society. In 1888, the Society

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<sup>1</sup>Board of Trustees Minutes, October 26, 1882. Approved at the annual meeting of the Society, June 11, 1883.

<sup>2</sup>The Basis of the Ethical Movement... Chicago: Max Stern, 1883, p. 3. Emphasis in original. folder 12.

sponsored the first of a series of economic conferences between businessmen and workers; that same year a member, Joseph W. Errant, organized the Bureau of Justice to provide legal assistance for the poor. The Society also became involved with the settlement house movement. Salter promised Jane Addams and Ellen Starr his "unqualified support" when they called on him with plans for their "scheme" at Hull-House.<sup>3</sup> Residents of Hull-House and others prominent in the social welfare field were frequent guest speakers at the Sunday meetings and other lecture series. In January, 1898, Salter proposed the establishment of a "neighborhood guild" in the 7th Ward. A kindergarten and a modest settlement program of classes and charities was begun in March, 1898, at 135 W. 14th Street, under the direction of W. H. Noyes. Henry Booth House, named in honor of one of the founders of the Chicago Society, received its financial support from the Society for many years. At present it is formally independent, but several members of the Society sit on its Board.

The character and functioning of the Society have been in many ways a reflection of the personality and interests of the leaders. Salter, as discussed above, was deeply involved with social welfare work, maintaining close ties with Hull-House. Salter served from 1883-1892 and from 1897-1907, exerting tremendous influence on the formative years of the Society. The interim period 1893-1896 was filled by M. M. Mangasarian, who eventually left the ethical movement to form the Independent Religious Society. After Salter's retirement in 1907, the Society had no resident Leader for several years. A Board of Lecturers was created including Nathaniel Schmidt, Charles Zueblin, Jane Addams, and others. In 1913 Horace J. Bridges was named Leader. He served until 1944, and was active in the Chicago Urban League and various literary associations. His successor, A. Eustace Haydon, retired professor of comparative religion at the University of Chicago, assumed the platform duties in 1945 on the condition that all executive functions be performed by the Board of Trustees. Haydon was succeeded in 1956 by Rudolph W. Gilbert.

The Society for Ethical Culture legally changed its name to the Chicago Ethical Society in 1911 and to the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago in 1969. These changes were essentially semantic-attempts to restate the essential concept of the Society in a contemporary idiom. The ethical societies (American Ethical Union, N. Y., N. Y.) and the humanist societies (American Humanist Association, San Francisco) are affiliated at the international level as the International Humanist and Ethical Union, with headquarters in Utrecht, Netherlands. The Chicago Society offices are located in the Fine Arts Building, 410 S. Michigan Avenue; the present Leader is Harold J. Quigley.

The Ethical Humanist Society Papers, 1882-1956, include records from the founding of the Society until the end of A. Eustace Haydon's leadership. The papers were deposited in December, 1970; additional deposits will be made as files are retired. The collection comprises 8 ft. of material including constitution and by-laws, annual and committee reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence, legal and financial records, membership lists, speeches, photographs, newsletters, clippings, programs, and miscellaneous published

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<sup>3</sup>Jane Addams to Mary Linn, February 26, 1889, Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Quoted in John C. Farrell, Beloved Lady, Johns Hopkins Press, 1967, p. 53.

material pertaining to the ethical culture movement in Chicago and elsewhere and to the activities of the Society in social welfare. The records include two basic chronological series: minutes of the Board of Directors' and annual meetings, 1882-1916, 1925-1933, 1938-1956; and general files, 1882-1956. The general files are arranged in folders dated according to the lecture season, which runs from October to June. Remaining material is grouped into two categories: Addresses (arranged by speaker, chronologically thereunder), and miscellaneous (subject-classified, alphabetically).

The Ethical Humanist Society Papers are filed under the following titles:

#### I. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Board of Trustees, October 5, 1882 - November 10, 1892
2. Board of Trustees, December 14, 1892 - January 14, 1903
3. Board of Trustees, January 21, 1903 - December 16, 1916
4. Board of Trustees, October 2, 1925 - December 6, 1933
5. Board of Trustees, January 5, 1938 - December 3, 1941
6. Board of Trustees, January 21, 1942 - December 19, 1945
7. Board of Trustees, January 6, 1946 - December 17, 1947
8. Board of Trustees, January 22, 1948 - December 17, 1951
9. Board of Trustees, January 7, 1952 - December 6, 1954
10. Board of Trustees, January 3, 1955 - July 7, 1956

#### II. CHRONOLOGICAL FILES

11. Preamble and Constitution, 1882
12. 1882-1883 Season: September - June: General files (*Salter lectures*)
13. 1883-1884 Season: September - June: General files
14. 1884-1885 Season: October - May: General files
15. 1885-1886 Season: October - May: General files
16. 1886-1887 Season: November - June: General files
17. 1887-1888 Season: November - May: General files
18. 1888-1889 Season: October - May: General files
19. 1889-1890 Season: October - May: General files
20. 1890-1891 Season: October - May: General files
21. 1891-1892 Season: November - June: General files
22. 1892-1893 Season: ? - June: General files
23. 1893-1894 Season: August - June: General files
24. 1894-1895 Season: ? - May: General files
25. 1895-1896 Season: ? - May: General files
26. 1896-1897 Season: October - May: General files
27. 1897-1898 Season: October - June: General files
28. 1898-1899 Season: October - April: General files
29. 1899-1900 Season: October - May: General files
30. 1900-1901 Season: October - June: General files
31. 1901-1902 Season: October - May: General files
32. 1902-1903 Season: October - May: General files
33. 1903-1904 Season: October - April: General files
34. 1904-1905 Season: October - May: General files

35. 1905-1906 Season: August - June: General files
36. 1906-1907 Season: September - May: General files
37. 1907-1908 Season: September - May: General files
38. 1908-1909 Season: September - May: General files
39. 1909-1910 Season: September - May: General files
40. 1910-1911 Season: July - May: General files
41. 1911-1912 Season: September - April: General files
42. 1912-1913 Season: July - April: General files
43. 1913-1914 Season: July - May: General files
44. 1914-1915 Season: September - June: General files
45. 1915-1916 Season: July - June: General files
46. 1916-1917 Season: August - June: General files
47. 1917-1918 Season: July- June: General files
48. 1918-1919 Season: Annual Reports
49. 1918-1919 Season: Board of Trustees
50. 1918-1919 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
51. 1918-1919 Season: Finance Committee
52. 1918-1919 Season: Henry Booth House
53. 1918-1919 Season: Membership
54. 1918-1919 Season: Newsletter, vol. 17, Nos. 1, 3
55. 1918-1919 Season: Treasurer's Reports
56. 1918-1919 Season: Young Peoples' Association
57. 1919-1920 Season: American Ethical Union
58. 1919-1920 Season: Annual Reports
59. 1919-1920 Season: Board of Trustees
60. 1919-1920 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
61. 1919-1920 Season: Finance Committee
62. 1919-1920 Season: Housing Committee
63. 1919-1920 Season: Membership
64. 1919-1920 Season: Newsletter, Vol, 17, No. 4; Vol. 18, No. 1
65. 1919-1920 Season: Treasurer's Reports
66. 1920-1921 Season: American Ethical Union
67. 1920-1921 Season: Annual Reports
68. 1920-1921 Season: Board of Trustees
69. 1920-1921 Season: Finance Committee
70. 1920-1921 Season: Henry Booth House
71. 1920-1921 Season: Membership
72. 1920-1921 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 18, Nos. 6, 7; Vol. 19, Nos. 1, 3, 4
73. 1920-1921 Season: Treasurer's Reports
74. 1921-1922 Season: American Ethical Union
75. 1921-1922 Season: Annual Reports
76. 1921-1922 Season: Board of Trustees
77. 1921-1922 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
78. 1921-1922 Season: Henry Booth House
79. 1921-1922 Season: Housing
80. 1921-1922 Season: Membership
81. 1921-1922 Season: Men's Group
82. 1921-1922 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 19, Nos. 5, 6; Vol. 20, Nos. 1, 2
83. 1921-1922 Season: Salter, William M.
84. 1921-1922 Season: Treasurer's Reports

85. 1922-1923 Season: American Ethical Union
86. 1922-1923 Season: Annual Reports
87. 1922-1923 Season: Board of Trustees
88. 1922-1923 Season: Finance Committee
89. 1922-1923 Season: Fortieth Anniversary
90. 1922-1923 Season: Henry Booth House
91. 1922-1923 Season: Membership
92. 1922-1923 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 20, No. 4
93. 1922-1923 Season: Treasurer's Report
94. 1923-1924 Season: Annual Reports
95. 1923-1924 Season: Board of Trustees
96. 1923-1924 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
97. 1923-1924 Season: Henry Booth House
98. 1923-1924 Season: Membership
99. 1923-1924 Season: Treasurer's Report
100. 1924-1925 Season: American Ethical Union
101. 1924-1925 Season: Annual Reports
102. 1924-1925 Season: Board of Trustees
103. 1924-1925 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
104. 1924-1925 Season: Finance Committee
105. 1924-1925 Season: Housing
106. 1924-1925 Season: Henry Booth House
107. 1924-1925 Season: Membership
108. 1924-1925 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 22, Nos., 1-3, 78
109. 1924-1925 Season: Treasurer's Report
110. 1925-1926 Season: Annual Report
111. 1925-1926 Season: Board of Trustees
112. 1925-1926 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-3, 5-8
113. 1925-1926 Season: Treasurer's Report
114. 1926-1927 Season: American Ethical Union
115. 1926-1927 Season: Annual Reports
116. 1926-1927 Season: Board of Trustees
117. 1926-1927 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
118. 1926-1927 Season: Finance Committee
119. 1926-1927 Season: Membership
120. 1926-1927 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 24, Nos. 2-8
121. 1926-1927 Season: Treasurer's Report
122. 1927-1928 Season: Annual Report
123. 1927-1928 Season: Board of Trustees
124. 1927-1928 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 25, Nos. 1, 3-8
125. 1927-1928 Season: Treasurer's Report
126. 1928-1929 Season: Annual Report
127. 1928-1929 Season: Board of Trustees
128. 1928-1929 Season: Housing
129. 1928-1929 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 26, Nos. 1-3, 5-8
130. 1928-1929 Season: Treasurer's Report
131. 1929-1930 Season: Annual Report
132. 1929-1930 Season: Board of Trustees
133. 1929-1930 Season: Membership
134. 1929-1930 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 27, Nos. 2, 7, 8
135. 1929-1930 Season: Programs
136. 1929-1930 Season: Treasurer's Reports

137. 1930-1931 Season: October - April
138. 1931-1932 Season: October - April
139. 1932-1933 Season: Annual Report
140. 1932-1933 Season: Board of Trustees
141. 1932-1933 Season: Humanist Manifesto
142. 1932-1933 Season: Newsletter, Vol. 30, Nos. 1-3, 5, 8
143. 1932-1933 Season: Programs
144. 1933-1934 Season: American Ethical Union
145. 1933-1934 Season: Percy H. Arden
146. 1933-1934 Season: Henry Booth House
147. 1933-1934 Season: Newsletters and Programs
148. 1933-1934 Season: Treasurer's Reports
149. 1934-1935 Season: December - April
150. 1935-1936 Season: November - July
151. 1936-1937 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Anniversary
152. 1936-1937 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Anniversary - Scrapbook
153. 1936-1937 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Anniversary - Correspondence Sponsors'
154. 1936-1937 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Anniversary Dinner
155. 1936-1937 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Correspondence
156. 1936-1937 Season: Miscellaneous
157. 1936-1937 Season: Publications
158. 1936-1937 Season: Women's Club History
159. 1937-1938 Season: January - March
160. 1938-1939 Season: December - May
161. 1939-1940 Season: September - August
162. 1939-1940 Season: Finance Committee
163. 1940-1941 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Correspondence - Aug., 1940 - March, 1941
164. 1940-1941 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Correspondence - April, 1941 - Aug., 1941
165. 1940-1941 Season: Finance Committee
166. 1940-1941 Season: Miscellaneous
167. 1941-1942 Season: Board of Trustees
168. 1941-1942 Season: Bridges, Horace J.
169. 1941-1942 Season: Miscellaneous
170. 1942-1943 Season: Finance Committee
171. 1943-1944 Season: Finance Committee
172. 1944-1945 Season: Finance Committee
173. 1945-1946 Season: Finance Committee
174. 1945-1946 Season: Public Affairs Council
175. 1945-1946 Season: Miscellaneous
176. 1946-1947 Season: Finance Committee
177. 1946-1947 Season: Miscellaneous
178. 1946-1947 Season: Programs
179. 1946-1947 Season: Public Affairs Council
180. 1947-1948 Season: Finance Committee
181. 1947-1948 Season: Henry Booth House
182. 1947-1948 Season: Press Releases
183. 1947-1948 Season: Programs and Newsletters
184. 1948-1949 Season: American Ethical Union

185. 1948-1949 Season: Annual Report  
 186. 1948-1949 Season: Finance Committee  
 187. 1948-1949 Season: Newsletter  
 188. 1948-1949 Season: Press Releases  
 189. 1948-1949 Season: Miscellaneous  
 190. 1949-1950 Season: American Ethical Union  
 191. 1949-1950 Season: Annual Report  
 192. 1949-1950 Season: Finance Committee  
 193. 1949-1950 Season: Haydon, A. Eustace  
 194. 1940-1950 Season: Membership  
 195. 1940-1950 Season: Miscellaneous  
 196. 1940-1950 Season: Newsletter  
 197. 1940-1950 Season: Press Releases  
 198. 1940-1950 Season: Public Affairs Council  
 199. 1949-1950 Season: Radio Broadcasts  
 200. 1949-1950 Season: Young Adults Fellowship  
 201. 1950-1951 Season: American Ethical Union  
 202. 1950-1951 Season: Annual Report  
 203. 1950-1951 Season: Board of Trustees  
 204. 1950-1951 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Pension Fund  
 205. 1950-1951 Season: Finance Committee  
 206. 1950-1951 Season: Haydon, A. Eustace  
 207. 1950-1951 Season: Henry Booth House  
 208. 1950-1951 Season: Institutes  
 209. 1950-1951 Season: Membership  
 210. 1950-1951 Season: Memorial and Friendship Fund  
 211. 1950-1951 Season: Miscellaneous  
 212. 1950-1951 Season: Newsletter  
 213. 1950-1951 Season: Platform Committee  
 214. 1950-1951 Season: Programs  
 215. 1950-1951 Season: Public Affairs Council  
 216. 1950-1951 Season: Publicity  
 217. 1950-1951 Season: Radio Broadcast  
 218. 1950-1951 Season: Radio Broadcast - Transcripts  
 219. 1950-1951 Season: Women's Club  
 220. 1950-1951 Season: Young Adults  
 221. 1951-1952 Season: American Ethical Union  
 222. 1951-1952 Season: Bridges, Horace J. - Pension  
 223. 1951-1952 Season: Finance Committee  
 224. 1951-1952 Season: Haydon, A. Eustace  
 225. 1951-1952 Season: Institute  
 226. 1951-1952 Season: Membership  
 227. 1951-1952 Season: Miscellaneous  
 228. 1951-1952 Season: Newsletter  
 229. 1951-1952 Season: Platform Committee  
 230. 1951-1952 Season: Programs  
 231. 1951-1952 Season: Publicity  
 232. 1951-1952 Season: Radio Broadcasts - Correspondence  
 233. 1951-1952 Season: Senior Citizens Hobby Center  
 234. 1951-1952 Season: 75th Anniversary

- 235. 1952-1953 Season: American Ethical Union
- 236. 1952-1953 Season: Board of Trustees
- 237. 1952-1953 Season: Finance Committee
- 238. 1952-1953 Season: Membership
- 239. 1952-1953 Season: Miscellaneous
- 240. 1952-1953 Season: Newsletter
- 241. 1952-1953 Season: Platform Committee
- 242. 1952-1953 Season: Programs
- 243. 1952-1953 Season: Women's Club
- 244. 1952-1953 Season: Young Adults
- 245. 1953-1954 Season: American Ethical Union
- 246. 1953-1954 Season: Finance Committee
- 247. 1953-1954 Season: Haydon, A. Eustace
- 248. 1953-1954 Season: Henry Booth House
- 249. 1953-1954 Season: Membership
- 250. 1953-1954 Season: Miscellaneous
- 251. 1953-1954 Season: Newsletter
- 252. 1953-1954 Season: Programs
- 253. 1953-1954 Season: Public Affairs Council
- 254. 1954-1955 Season: American Ethical Society
- 255. 1954-1955 Season: Board of Trustees
- 256. 1954-1955 Season: Finance Committee
- 257. 1954-1955 Season: Henry Booth House
- 258. 1954-1955 Season: Membership
- 259. 1954-1955 Season: Miscellaneous
- 260. 1954-1955 Season: Newsletter
- 261. 1954-1955 Season: Programs
- 262. 1954-1955 Season: Women's Club
- 263. 1955-1956 Season: American Ethical Union
- 264. 1955-1956 Season: Board of Trustees
- 265. 1955-1956 Season: Children's Sunday Assembly
- 266. 1955-1956 Season: Finance Committee
- 267. 1955-1956 Season: Leadership Committee
- 268. 1955-1956 Season: Membership
- 269. 1955-1956 Season: Newsletter
- 270. 1955-1956 Season: Programs
- 271. 1955-1956 Season: Public Affairs Council

### III. ADDRESSES

- 272. Bridges, Horace J. - Addresses; March, 1936 - May, 1940
- 273. Bridges, Horace J. - Addresses; October, 1940 - October, 1944
- 274. Haydon, A. Eustace: Addresses, November, 1945 - May, 1946
- 275. Haydon, A. Eustace: Addresses, October, 1946 - March, 1948
- 276. Haydon, A. Eustace: Addresses, October, 1948 - May, 1949
- 277. Haydon, A. Eustace: Addresses, October, 1949 - April, 1954
- 278. Haydon, A. Eustace: Addresses, Miscellaneous, 1948 - 1952
- 279. Haydon, Edward: Addresses, January - December, 1948
- 280. Mangasarian, M. M.: Lectures (published), 1912-1915, 1919-1920
- 281. Muzzey, David Saville: Addresses, October, 1940 - April, 1941

- 282. Muzzey, David Saville: Addresses, October, 1941 - April, 1943
- 283. Muzzey, David Saville: Addresses, December, 1943 - April, 1945
- 284. Addresses and Pamphlets - Miscellaneous, 1940 - 1956

IV. MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS

- 285. American Ethical Union - Constitution
- 286. Bridges, Horace J. - Engagement books, 1916-1919; 1923-1927
- 287. Bridges, Horace J. - Engagement books, 1928, 1930-34; 1936-40
- 288. Bridges, Horace J. - Photographs, c. 1922
- 289. Cashbook, 1896 - 1904
- 290. Membership roster, 1919 - 1934

*Virginia Stewart*  
*July 1, 1971*