COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Melvil Dewey papers4078696

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appm

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
URL: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Dewey, Melvil, 1851-1931
Creator:	Dawe, Grosvenor, 1863-1948
Title:	Melvil Dewey papers
ID:	4078696
ID:	Ms Coll\Dewey, M
Date [inclusive]:	1870-1931
Physical Description:	68.5 linear feet 106 boxes, 73 pamphlet boxes
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

Melvil Dewey (1851–1931), born Melville Louis Kossuth Dewey, was an influential American librarian and educator, inventor of the Dewey Decimal system of library classification, a founding member of the American Library Association, and a chief librarian at Columbia University. His library supply and equipment company, Library Bureau, provided furnishings for many of the public libraries constructed by Andrew Carnegie's bequest at the turn of the 20th century, as well as filing supplies for business and government records management. Dewey was also a founder of the Lake Placid Club and an advocate for spelling reform and adoption of the metric system in the United States.

Although Dewey's contributions to the modern library are widely recognized, his legacy is marred by documented incidents of sexual harassment, racism, and antisemitism, as well as his support for eugenics. Under Dewey's leadership, the Lake Placid Club's official policies barred Black, Jewish, and other people from marginalized groups from membership. Dewey was also forced to step down from participating in the American Library Association following a series of incidents in which he sexually harassed prominent women librarians on an ALA-sponsored trip to Alaska. He corresponded extensively with the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America, and attended the Race Betterment Conference of 1913.

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Summary

The professional and personal correspondence, papers, and pamphlet collection of Melvil Dewey, relating to libraries, the American Library Association, library classification, the Lake Placid Club, Columbia College, the New York State Library, and spelling reform. Included are notes for and a typescript of Grosvenor Dawe's biography of Dewey.

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Arrangement

Selected materials cataloged; remainder arranged.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Replaced PDF with structured finding aid. cml/kws Box 100 and 100A inventory updated by CLB 2020-03-23 2023-05-10

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Dewey, Godfrey. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1943. Accession number--M-43.

Alternate Form Available

Diaries are on: microfilm.

Ownership and Custodial History

Gift of Godfrey Dewey, 1943-44; gift of Forest Press, 1987.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 06/--/89.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Readers must use microfilm copy for Box 35A journals, i.e. diaries, which are fragile.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

New York State Library School Records.Series III. Columbia University Libraries.

Librarians' Portraits Collection. Columbia University Libraries.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Spelling reform
- Classification, Dewey decimal
- Libraries -- United States
- Public libraries -- United States
- Classification -- Books
- Account books
- Biographies (literary works)
- Diaries
- Financial records
- indexes (reference sources)
- Notebooks
- Personnel records
- Photographs
- Reports
- Speeches (documents)
- Librarians
- Columbia College (New York, N.Y.)
- New York State Library
- American Library Association
- Lake Placid Club

Collection Inventory

Series I: Catalogued Correspondence	
Title/Description	**Instances**
Addams, Jane	box CC1
Ade, George	box CC1
Bacheller, Irving	box CC1
Beach, Rex	box CC1
Bell, Alexander Graham	box CC1
Bok, Edward	box CC1
Bowker, Richard Rogers	box CC1
Carnegie, Andrew	

	box CC1
Cortelyou, George Bruce	box CC1
Dreiser, Theodore	box CC1
Funck, Isaac Kaufman	box CC1
Gilman, Daniel Coit	box CC1
Hayes, Rutherford B.	box CC1
Ochs, Adolph Simon	box CC1
Rogers, Bruce	box CC1
Scott, Charles Payson Gurley	box CC1
Smith, Alfred E.	box CC1
Smith, Benjamin Eli	box CC1
Veblen, Thorstein	box CC1
Walcott, Charles Doolittle	box CC1
Washington, Booker T.	box CC1
Whittier, John Greenleaf	box CC1
Wright, Silas - appointment of Joel Dewey as colonel of the 55th Infantry Regiment of NY, 1844	mapcase 14-P-4

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Series II: Subject Files

Title/Description	Instances
Adirondack Civic League	box 1
Albany Civic League **Scope and Contents** 2 folders	box 1
Alfred University	box 1
American Library Association (ALA)	
Conferences, 1876-1884 **Scope and Contents** 4 folders	box 1
Conferences, 1885-1892	box 2
Conference, 1893	box 3

Conferences, 1894-1897	box 4
Conference, 1898	box 5
Conferences, 1899-1904	box 6
Conferences, 1905-1931	box 7
Correspondence--Miscellaneous, 1905-1931	box 7
Melvil Dewey--Notes in Shorthand	box 8
Forms	box 8
Finances	box 8
Headquarters	box 8
Histories	box 8
Legislation	box 8
Library Extension	box 8
Miscellaneous	box 8
Presidents	box 8
Publications	
General--ALA Catalog	box 8
American Library Institute	box 9
Publicity	box 9
Publishing Section (2 folders), 1887-1895, 1906 **Scope and Contents** 2 folders	box 9
Retirement Specimens	
Amherst College	
Correspondence	box 10
Miscellaneous **Scope and Contents** 2 folders	box 10
Billboards	box 10
Birth Control	box 10
Calendar Reform	box 10
Chautauqua	
Annual Reports--Finance	box 11

Memos and Reports	box 12
Classification	box 12
Decimal	
Correspondence	box 12
Correspondence	box 13
Proof Sheets	box 13
Reprints	box 14
Classified Material	box 14
022.34-	box 14
022.4-023.9	box 15
025-029	box 16
400-655	box 17
Columbia College Library	box 18
Columbia College School of Library Economy	box 19
Dewey, Annie	
Correspondence	box 19
Correspondence	box 20
A-F	box 20
G-Rowley	box 20A
Rothery-Miscellaneous	box 21
Death	
Biographical Notes, Appreciation, Memorials	box 22
Condolences	box 22
Godfrey Family Affairs	box 22
Miscellaneous	box 22
Reading	box 22
Shorthand Notes	box 22
Speeches and Writings	box 23
Dewey, Godfrey	
Correspondence	box 23
Writings	box 23
Dewey, Melvil	box 23

Account Books	box 97
Account Books	box 98
Account Books	box 99
Autobiographical Notes	box 23
Biography	
Mss. Of	box 24
Mss. Of	box 24A
Copyright--Correspondence	box 25
Decimal Classification--Libraries Foreign	box 26
Libraries Special--Spelling Reform	box 27
State Library Association	box 28
Biographies of	box 104
Books from library	box 103
Cancelled Checks	box 96
Clippings	box 28
Clippings	box 29
Correspondence, 1876-1877	box 29
Abbott-Butler, N.M.	box 30
Caltell-Dye	box 30A
Eastman-Gunther	box 31
Haase-Jordan	box 31A
Kappa-Nye	box 32
0-R	box 33
S	box 33A
T-Z	box 34
Death	box 35
Diaries	box 35A

Existence and Location of Copies:
Existence and Location of Copies

Diaries are fragile. Reader should use microfilm copy.

Diplomas--Encyclopedia Articles	box 36
80th Birthday Celebration--Letters of Congratulations to	box 95

Scope and Contents

2 bound volumes and 1 folder

European Trips--Publicity	box 37
Library Bureau--Director's Records	box 100
Memorabilia of Melvil & Annie Dewey	box 105
Miscellaneous Papers	
A-Ed Administration; Administration Clippings, Scrapbooks; Administration--Handbooks; Administration--Library Supplies; Routines; Administration Papers by Cutter, Dewey, Poole; Advertising; Book Rarities; Classification; Editing and Printing.	box 92
En-H Encyclopedias; Ethics; Filters, Fire Protection, Thermometers, Turbine Wheels; Finance Accounts, Payrolls, Forms; Finance - Accounts, Book-keeping; Health--Sanitation.	box 93
I-S Journalism; Indexes and Indexing; Library Economy--Miscellaneous; Loans, Travelling Libraries; Mnemonics; Notes and Notetaking; Peace; Reference Works and Reader's Services; Religion, Church; Sex.	box 94
Notebooks	box 99
Personal Letterbooks, 1989 July 5--1894 July 2	box 91
Personal Letterbooks, 1894 July 2-1895 November 5	box 91
Personal Letterbooks, 1895 November 25-1897 March 3	box 91
Speeches, Family Correspondence, etc.	box 38
Efficiency	
Correspondence	box 39
Reports	box 40
Home Economics	
Correspondence--A-M	box 41
Correspondence--N-Z	box 42
Miscellaneous Pamphlets	box 43
Lake Placid Club--Florida	
Aims--Equipment	box 44
Finance--Publicity	box 45
Real Estate	box 46
Lake Placid Club--New York	

Churches	box 46
Club Store--Contracts	box 47
Correspondence	box 48
Correspondence	box 49
Director's reports, 1927	box 49
Director's reports, 1928-	box 50
Equipment, 1898	box 50
Equipment, 1899	box 51
Finance, 1910	box 51
Finance, 1912	box 52
Financial Reports, 1931	box 52
Finances [Stocks and Bonds]	box 53
Membership	box 53
Miscellaneous	box 54
Publicity	
Club Notes	box 54
Club Notes	box 55
Club Notes	box 56
Staff Bulletin	box 56
Real Estate	box 57
Real Estate	box 58
Social Activities	box 58
Sports--Water Supply	box 59
Lake Placid Club--Riversea	box 60
Libraries	
Foreign	box 60
Public	box 61
Library	box 64
Library Bureau, 1888	box 61
Library Bureau, 1889-1897	box 62
Library Bureau, 1898-1904	box 63
Library Bureau, 1905	box 64

Library Bureau Directors' Records, 1888-1900	box 100
Library Bureau Stockholders' Records, 1888-1899	box 100
Library Bureau Special Bulletins (salesman's bulletins), 1903-1910 Physical Description: 3 folders	box 100
Library Journal--Library Schools--Miscellaneous	box 65
Metric System	box 66
Associations--Correspondence	box 66
Miscellaneous--Speeches	box 67
Meter-Diagram with Metric and English Scales, Tables of Weights, Measures, Etc. A. & T. W. Stanley, New Britain, Conn.; and 1 wooden metric and imperial ruler, undated	box 100A
Miscellaneous--New York State Conservation	box 68
New York State Legislature	box 69
New York State Librarian	box 69
New York State Librarian	box 70
New York State Library	box 70
Clippings	box 70
Correspondence--Fire	box 71
New York State Library--New York State Library Association--Miscellaneous	box 72
New York State Library School	box 73
New York State University	box 73
"A"--Forums	box 73
Home Education	box 74
Regents, 1889-1894	box 74
Regents 1895, 1895	box 75
Regents undated, undated	box 76
Reports	box 77
Photographs	box 101
Pictures	box 78
Melvil Dewey	box 78
Miscellaneous	box 79
Miscellaneous	box 80

Quotations	box 81
Readers and Writers Economy Company	box 81
Seymour, May	
Correspondence to M.S. Sharp,	box 81
Miscellaneous Papers	box 81
Sharp, Katherine L.	
Death, Estate, etc.	box 81
Materials	box 102
Miscellaneous	box 81
Shorthand	box 82
Shorthand	box 83
Simplified Spelling	box 83
Correspondence, 1874-1891	box 83
Correspondence, 1892-1903	box 84
Correspondence, 1904-1913	box 85
Correspondence, 1914-1931	box 86
Simplified Spelling Board	box 86
Spelling Reform	box 87
Association--International Language	box 87
Publicity	box 88
Publicity	box 89
Robert Pierce--Letterbook, 1895 March-April	box 90
Wellesley College	box 89

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Series III: Pamphlets

Title/Description	Instances
P-1--Amherst College Publication	box 106
P-2--Birth Control	box 106
P-2--Calendar Reform	box 106
P-3--Chautauqua	box 106
P-4--Chautauqua	box 106

P-5--Classified Pamphlets (D.C)	box 107
P-5--010-020	box 107
P-6--021-022	box 107
P-7--023-025	box 107
P-8--026-100	box 108
P-9--300-374	box 108
P-10--620-630	box 108
P-11--376-613.12	box 109
P-12--613.2-616	box 109
P-13--640-653	box 109
P-14--654-970	box 110
P-15--Columbia College Pamphlets	box 110
P-16--Dewey, Melvil	box 110
P-16--Speeches, Articles, Letters to Editors, etc.	box 110
P-17--Columbia College Pamphlets	box 111
P-18--Dewey, Annie-Obituary	box 111
P-18--Dewey, Melvil-Obituary	box 111
P-18--Seymour, May-Obituary	box 111
P-19--Dewey-Melvil	box 111
P-19--Biography—Advertising [with related letters]	box 111
P-20--Efficiency	box 111
P-20--Advertising	box 111
P-21--Notes, Lists, Rules and Clippings	box 111
P-22--Pamphlets	box 112
P-23--Pamphlets	box 112
P-24--Pamphlets	box 113
P-25--Pamphlets	box 113
P-26--Pamphlets	box 113
P-27--Periodicals	box 114
P-28--Home Economics	box 115
P-28--Advertising and Pamphlets	box 114
P-29--Efficiency	box 114

P-29--Periodicals	box 114
P-30--Periodicals	box 114
P-31--Home Economics	box 115
P-31--Clippings and Periodicals	box 115
P-32--Lectures and Schools	box 115
P-33--Library Periodicals	box 116
P-34--Library Pamphlets	box 116
P-35--Lake Placid Club	box 117
P-35--Pamphlets	box 117
P-36--Libraries	box 117
P-36--Pamphlets	box 117
P-37--Library Bureau	box 117
P-37--Publications	box 117
P-38--Pamphlets	box 118
P-39--Metric System	box 119
P-39--Pamphlets	box 119
P-40--Pamphlets	box 118
P-41--Pamphlets	box 119
P-42--Pamphlets and Publications	box 119
P-43--Miscellaneous Pamphlets and Publications	box 119
P-44--New York State University Pamphlets	box 120
P-45--New York State University	box 120
P-45--Pamphlets	box 120
P-46--Pamphlets	box 121
P-47--Pamphlets	box 121
P-48--Pamphlets	box 121
P-49--Pamphlets	box 122
P-50--Pamphlets	box 122
P-51--Publications	box 122
P-52--Sharpe, Katharine L.	box 123
P-52--Pamphlets	box 123
P-53--New York State Library School	box 123

P-53--Publications and Forum	box 123
P-54--Prohibition	box 123
P-54--Pamphlets and Clippings	box 123
P-55--Shorthand	box 124
P-55--Cards	box 124
P-56--Shorthand	box 124
P-56--Notebooks	box 124
P-57--Notebooks	box 124
P-58--Notebooks and Journals	box 125
P-59--Notebooks	box 125
P-60--Notebooks and Cards	box 125
P-61--Pamphlets, Clippings etc.	box 125
P-62--Spelling Reforms	box 126
P-62--Pamphlets	box 126
P-63--Pamphlets	box 126
P-64--Pamphlets	box 126
P-65--Pamphlets	box 127
P-66--Pamphlets	box 127
P-67--Pamphlets and Periodicals	box 127
P-68--Periodicals and Articles	box 128
P-69--Periodicals	box 128
P-70--Periodicals	box 128
P-71--Spelling Reform--International Language	box 129
P-71--Pamphlets	box 129
P-72--Pamphlets	box 129
P-73--Tobacco	box 129
P-73--Pamphlets	box 129
P-74--Pamphlets, Clippings	box 130
P-74--Duplicates of items in the collection	box 130
P-75--Pamphlets, Clippings	box 131
P-75--Duplicates of items in the collection	box 131
P-76--Lake Placid, printed materials	box 132

P-77--Lake Placid, printed materials	box 133
P-78--Lake Placid, printed materials	box 134
P-79--Lake Placid, printed materials and photographs	box 135
P-79A--Photographs, card file box	box 136
P-80--Lake Placid, printed materials	box 137

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