



Independence Seaport Museum

Guide to the West Philadelphia Boat Club Records

Creator: West Philadelphia Boat Club

Dates: 1871-1889, 1911-1917 (bulk 1871-1889)

Quantity: 5 volumes

Call Phrase: West Phila. Boat Club Records

Provenance: Donated by John J. Ervin. ISM numbers: 1984.082 and 1999.040

Processed by: Amy Braden

Historical note: The West Philadelphia Boat Club was organized on April 27, 1871 and incorporated in 1873. The club joined the Schuylkill Navy in 1875 and later changed its name to the Penn Athletic Club Rowing Association in 1924.

Scope and content: The minute books document discussions held during regular monthly club meetings about business such as the acquisition and naming of crew shells, club uniform specifications and the appointment of various committees. Entries log information on member status, include monthly treasury reports and record steps taken to construct the building located at #12 Boathouse Row. Often referring to correspondence and financial documents described as “on file,” the minute books serve to give the reader a broad picture of the activities of the club but not the specific details of its transactions. Of particular interest are transcriptions of three special meetings held to discipline members accused of “conduct unbecoming of gentlemen”—bringing women they had “picked up” into the boathouse.

Also included in the collection are 7 newspaper clippings pertaining to the club’s activities, 2 copies of its by-laws, copies of condolence letters issued to families of deceased members and letters circulated to recruit new members and solicit funds.