



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 217

South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan
Committee
Records

1917-1919

4 boxes, 1 vol., 1.4 lin. feet

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Abstract

Corinne Keen Freeman (b. 1869) was the chairperson of the South Philadelphia Women's Committee, a local branch of the National Woman's Liberty Loan Committee that was organized in 1917 under the auspices of the national War Loan Organization. During World War I, the War Loan Organization oversaw the sales and publicity of Liberty Loans, which enabled the United States government to finance various aspects of the war by borrowing money on interest from the American people. The South Philadelphia Women's Committee was composed of several smaller committees that targeted specific groups within the community for loan subscriptions. The committee's headquarters was located at 329 South Broad Street. During the period of 1917 to 1919 there were four Liberty Loan drives and a final Victory Loan drive.

The materials in this collection consist of Corinne Keen Freeman's correspondence, the administrative papers of the South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee, printed materials, ephemera, and photographs from the fourth Liberty Loan drive in 1918 and the final Victory Loan drive in 1919. The correspondence in the collection provides a descriptive account of the activities of the Women's Committee, while ward and committee reports offer a quantitative record of their loan sales within the South Philadelphia community. Ephemera and several photographs of Corinne Keen Freeman and the members of the South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee are also included in the collection.

Background note

In lieu of levying high taxes to finance World War I, the Liberty Loan campaign was initiated in 1917 to allow the U.S. Treasury Department to borrow money from the American people through a series of bond issues. Two-thirds of the war's funds were obtained in this way; the money was applied to loans for U.S. Allies, to the equipping and maintaining of the army and navy, and to the construction of ships for the emergency fleet. As secretary of the treasury, William Gibbs McAdoo was the directing head of all Liberty Loan work for the first four loans; Carter Glass, his successor, directed the fifth. Under McAdoo's direction and the supervision of R.C. Leffingwell,

assistant secretary of the treasury, the War Loan Organization, composed of the sales, publicity and speaking branches, carried on the active work of the campaigns. Lewis B. Franklin was the executive director of the War Loan Organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C., and was succeeded by John H. Mason of Philadelphia in 1919.

The National Woman's Liberty Loan Committee was organized in May 1917. Mrs. Eleanor Randolph McAdoo, wife of Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, and daughter of President Wilson, was appointed chairwoman. Subcommittees were formed with one representative responsible for organizing and educating women and one representative responsible for reporting to the respective Federal Reserve District. Mrs. Frank J. Mulhauser was Pennsylvania's state chairperson and Miss Clara Middleton was appointed Philadelphia's Federal Reserve chairperson. During the first Liberty Loan the work of the women's committees was limited to general publicity for war finance among women, but during the second campaign the committees were able to improve upon established women's war support organizations throughout the country (namely the various state units of the Woman's Committee of the National Council of Defense) and were more actively involved in the raising of funds. By the close of the third loan there was a woman chairperson for almost every county in the United States and for practically every township and precinct.

The chairperson of the South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee was Corinne Keen Freeman (b. 1869), wife of physician Walter Jackson Freeman and daughter of renowned neurosurgeon William Williams Keen (b. 1837). The Women's Committee shared its headquarters with the Men's Committee at 329 South Broad Street and was composed of several smaller, more specific committees that targeted different demographics within the South Philadelphia community. These included the schools committee, the theatres committee (which conducted loan drives throughout neighborhood theatre houses), and several committees created around religious and ethnic affiliations. The colored committee was divided into districts with a chairwoman who worked in association with the white chairwoman of her district.

Neoclassical statues of winged women were installed throughout the city, both to remind Philadelphians of the loan drives and in some cases to indicate where loan subscriptions could be purchased. In South Philadelphia, a statue was installed on Broad Street between Federal and Wharton, and a booth (of over one hundred installed throughout the city) was also set up there to accept subscriptions, which were managed in conjunction with the Federal Trust Company located at Broad and Federal Streets. The Mummies were also involved in public awareness campaigns for the Liberty Loan and participated in publicity events throughout the city.

On the heels of the third Liberty Loan campaign, during which the women of Philadelphia led every women's committee in the United States in total funds raised, fourth Liberty Loan drive began on September 28, 1918. Over 200,000 people gathered for a celebratory parade at Willow Grove Park that featured John Philip Sousa. Just days after the parade, 635 new cases of "Spanish influenza" were reported. Churches, schools, and theaters were ordered closed, along with all places of "public amusement." Despite this portentous beginning, the fourth Liberty Loan drive, which ran from

September 28 to October 19, 1918, raised the largest amount of any of the campaigns, a total of \$6,992,927,100 nationally. Philadelphia contributed \$598,763,650, while the entire state of Pennsylvania subscribed for a total of \$812,217,400. The fifth and final loan campaign, the Victory Liberty Loan, began April 22, 1919. Philadelphia raised a total of \$422,756,100 and the state of Pennsylvania, \$564,173,200.

Scope & content

The materials in this collection detail the efforts of the South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee during the fourth Liberty Loan drive and the final Victory Liberty Loan drive. The correspondence, written primarily to and from Corinne Keen Freeman, offers descriptive accounts of the group's activities, while the administrative materials, which include a number of statistical reports, provide a more quantitative record. The administrative materials also provide a picture of the organization of the committee and include the titles of the various subcommittees and the names of their leaders. The printed materials include propaganda pamphlets published for and by the Liberty Loan committee, in addition to government published reports and newspaper clippings that tracked the progress of the Philadelphia Liberty Loan drive. Invitations, certificates, photographs, and ephemera are also included in the collection.

Overview of arrangement

Series I	Correspondence, 1918-1919	8 folders
Series II	Administrative, 1918-1919, n.d.	17 folders
Series III	Printed materials, 1917-1919, n.d.	11 folders, 1 vol.
Series IV	Ephemera and photographs, 1917-1918, n.d.	3 folders, 1 box

Series description

Series 1. Correspondence, 1918-1919 (Box 1)

The eight folders of incoming and outgoing letters in this series are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the correspondent. Most letters from Corinne Keen Freeman express gratitude to various people involved in the Liberty Loan campaigns or discuss different projects, most especially the loan subscription booths that were installed at various locations in South Philadelphia and the subscription campaign throughout Philadelphia theaters. Many incoming letters congratulate Mrs. Walter Jackson Freeman on her work as chairwoman, as in a May 7, 1918, letter from the general manager of the Philadelphia Record, which had attached to it an article from the same paper reporting the Women's Committee's remarkable achievement that year. The general manager wrote, "Every Philadelphian must have thrilled with pride this morning upon learning that the Women's Committee of this city led the entire Nation in the amount raised for the Loan." A noteworthy incoming letter dated August 1919 from Mary Cowdery, assistant treasurer of the Philadelphia Association for the Protection of Colored Women, has attached to it a

history of the work done by the colored committee during the fourth Liberty Loan campaign.

Series 2. Administrative, 1918-1919, n.d. (Boxes 1-2)

The ten folders of ward reports and daily reports indicate the number and amount of loan subscriptions collected in various wards of South Philadelphia by various committee chairpersons during the period of October 1918 to May 1919, which spanned the fourth Liberty Loan drive and the final Victory Loan drive. The spreadsheets indicate the names of the committee chairs who oversaw the subscription collections and the names and addresses of the subscribers.

Two folders contain memoranda related to specific loan campaign committees, such as the schools committee, theatres committee, and various ethnic and religious group committees. "War chest delinquents" is a folder of ambiguous numerical data presented in spreadsheet form for the fifth through fifteenth wards of center city Philadelphia.

This series also includes three small volumes. A small engagements book from March through May of an unknown year primarily contains lists of people's names that are crossed out. Locations in Philadelphia and the Jersey shore, listed with a time and date, are written on only four of the pages in a small unlabeled notebook. Addresses and phone numbers for various people and organizations primarily in Philadelphia are contained within the small black book labeled "Addresses."

Series 3. Printed materials, 1917-1919, n.d. (Boxes 2-3)

This series consists of a total of eleven folders of printed materials, which include War Department extracts from general orders and bulletins, Third Federal Reserve District reports, and Treasury Department reports. Also included is a folder of music composed in honor of the Liberty Loan and several issues of *The Liberty Line*, which was published by the government to encourage the sale of war bonds. Two miscellaneous folders contain many small pamphlets related to the Liberty Loan campaign, including "Effective selling arguments for [the] loan," "Slogans for [the] Liberty Loan campaign," and "Women In War Finance." One pamphlet, "Hints to Liberty Loan Workers," includes the following advice: "Smile! Smile if it hurts!! If you come in with a long face, the prospect will wonder who's dead!" and also instructs that:

While you are primarily selling Bonds it is your duty as an American to stamp out all forms of arguments which will injure the total sales. Any attack on the Government or the Liberty Bond campaign is an attack on you, and should be reported AT ONCE to your captain.

One folder contains newspaper clippings that chart the progress of the Philadelphia Liberty Loan drives and congratulate the women's committee for their fine work, most especially during the third campaign, as in the following excerpt from an undated article from an unknown source:

With more than fifty million dollars to their credit they may fairly say that they have shown an organizing and business ability quite equal to that of men. Only ignorance

or prejudice can now contend that women are not fitted to fill any sphere of public duty. They can do, and are doing everything for their country except actual fighting. Indeed, with the Russian women as an example, who would say that they might not in case of necessity do even that?

Also included in this series is *The Story of the Liberty Loans*, subtitled *Being a Record of the Volunteer Liberty Loan Army, Its Personnel, Mobilization and Methods, How America at Home Backed Her Armies and Allies in the World War*, written by Labert St. Clair and published in 1919. It includes a history of the Liberty Loan campaign and many full page color images of Liberty Loan propaganda posters.

Series 4. Ephemera and photographs, 1917-1918, n.d. (Boxes 3-4)

Invitations to various Liberty Loan-related events, a 1918 seating list for a fourth Liberty Loan celebratory dinner, two certificates (one from the secretary of the treasury and the other from the city of Philadelphia) acknowledging Corinne Keen Freeman's service in the Liberty Loan campaigns, a National War Savings Committee ribbon, and a "Chairman" nametag for the Women's Liberty Loan Committee comprise the ephemera in this series.

There are two 8"x10" group photographs of the women of the South Philadelphia committee posed in front of their headquarters at 329 South Broad Street and in front of the Rush library at Broad and Christian Streets. The remaining three photographs consist of two photographs (1-8"x10" and 1-3"x5") of Corinne Keen Freeman posed in front of headquarters and one 3"x5" photograph of the front window of the committee's headquarters with women visible inside.

Separation report

None.

Bibliography

Clark, Ida Clyde. "The Liberty Loan" in *American Women and the World War*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918.

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/comment/Clarke/Clarke09.htm> (accessed 15 July 2004).

PBS. "The American Experience: Influenza 1918, Philadelphia."

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/sfeature/philadel.html> (accessed 9 July 2004).

Subjects

Liberty bonds – Pennsylvania – Philadelphia

South Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pa.) – Theatres – 20th century

South Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pa.) – Women's societies and clubs – 20th century

Women civic leaders – Pennsylvania – Philadelphia – 20th century

Women in community organization – Pennsylvania – Philadelphia – 20th century

World War, 1914-1918 – Finance – United States

World War, 1914-1918 – Patriotic music

World War, 1914-1918 – Propaganda

Freeman, Corinne Keen, b. 1869

Philadelphia New Year Shooters and Mummers Association – 20th century

South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee

United States. Military – Fund raising – 20th century

Administrative Information

Restrictions

None.

Acquisition information

Gift of Mrs. Duncan Graham Foster, 1933.

Alternative format

None.

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], South Philadelphia Women's Liberty Loan Committee Records (Collection 217), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Processing note

A note found in the collection indicated that an "autographed copy of Victory Liberty Loan" had been removed to the Society's medium portrait collection. This item, however, could not be located.

Processing made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Box and folder listing

Series 1. Correspondence

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Correspondence, A-B	1919	1	1
Correspondence, C-E	1919	1	2
Correspondence, F-G	1919	1	3
Correspondence, H-K	1919	1	4
Correspondence, L-M	1919	1	5
Correspondence, N-Q	1919	1	6
Correspondence, R-S	1918-1919	1	7
Correspondence, T-Z	1919	1	8

Series 2. Administrative

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Ward reports (Fifth district)	April 1919	1	9
Daily reports (South Phila. district)	Oct. 1918	1	10
Daily reports (South Phila. district)	Oct. 1918	1	11
Daily reports (colored committee)	1919, n.d.	1	12
Daily reports	April 1919	2	1
Daily reports	May 1-7, 1919	2	2
Daily reports	May 8-17, 1919	2	3
Oversized tabulation charts	1918, n.d.	Flat file 1	
Final report	n.d.	2	4
Miscellaneous reports	1918-1919, n.d.	2	5
School committee	1919, n.d.	2	6
Various committees	1918, n.d.	2	7
War chest delinquents	Dec. 1918	2	8
Notebook	n.d.	2	9
Address book	n.d.	2	10
Engagements book	n.d.	2	11
Miscellaneous	1918, n.d.	2	12

Series 3. Printed materials

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
<i>The Story of the Liberty Loans</i>	1919	vol. 1	
Newspaper clippings	1919, n.d.	2	13
Music	n.d.	2	14
Selective service	1918-1919	3	1
War Dept. extracts from general orders and bulletins	1918	3	2
War Dept. extracts from general orders and bulletins	1918	3	3
Third Federal Reserve District reports	1918-1919	3	4
<i>Report: Fourth Liberty Loan Foreign Language Division</i>	1918	3	5
Treasury Dept. reports	1917-1918	3	6
<i>The Liberty Line</i>	1918-1919	Flat file 2	
Oversized printed materials	1918, n.d.	Flat file 3	
Miscellaneous	1918-1919, n.d.	3	7-8

Series 4. Ephemera and photographs

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Invitations and certificates	1917-1918, n.d.	3	9
Seating list	1918	Flat file 2	
Photographs	n.d.	3	10
Ribbons and buttons	n.d.	4	