
Summary Information

Call number: AC146
Repository: Princeton University. Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections
Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library.
Princeton University Archives.
65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size: 4.59 linear feet
four archival boxes, one 16.5" x 12" x 2" archival box, one 19" x 14.5" x 1.5" archival box, and one 10.5" x 8.5" x 1.25" archival box
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Joseph Edward Raycroft was Princeton University’s Chairman of the Department of Health and Physical Education. The Papers contain correspondence, writings, press-releases, reports, newspaper clippings, photographs, and memorabilia documenting Raycroft’s personal life and career. Also included are library catalog lists and other material related to Raycrofts Library of rare books and memorabilia
Location: This collection is stored onsite at the Mudd Manuscript Library.
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Known to Princetonians as the founding father of intramural sports at Princeton, Joseph E. Raycroft was born on November 15, 1867, in Williamstown, Vermont, to William Raycroft and Eliza Kelty. He studied at Worcester Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts, from 1888-1892, where he served as a physical training and athletics instructor while a student. He entered the University of Chicago with the first graduating class of 1896 and earned his M.D. from Rush Medical College in 1899. That same year he married Sarah Elizabeth Butler. They had two children: Myla and Chauncey W.

Throughout his undergraduate years and while studying for his medical degree, Raycroft taught classes for the University of Chicago's Department of Hygiene. He was promoted to an assistant professorship in 1899, to a full professorship in 1904, and for a period of twelve years was the University of Chicago’s medical director.

Raycroft became Princeton University’s chairman of health and physical education at the retirement of the first director, George Goldie in 1911. Raycroft held this post continuously until his retirement in 1936, when he was awarded emeritus status.

Raycroft made many important contributions to Princeton, including the development of a comprehensive student health program, the construction of the new Isabella McCosh Infirmary, and broadening the participation in intramural athletics to include some ninety per cent of Princeton’s student body. Before Raycroft’s arrival, Princeton athletics were considered a small part of a student’s life, and sports participation at Princeton was limited to the athletes on the University’s competitive intercollegiate teams. Raycroft’s fundamental goal was to encourage the average student to take part in these sports without forcing him to belong to the intercollegiate teams.

Raycroft applied the same philosophy to the training camp programs he established during the First World War. From 1917 to 1919, Raycroft served on the athletic division of the war department’s Committee on Training Camp Activities (also known as the Fosdick Commission) named after its chairman, Raymond B. Fosdick. The goal of the commission was to ensure that soldiers’ morale was kept high, whether they were stationed at home or abroad. It sponsored activities that promoted health, athletics, and recreation in order to "conserve the vitality of the men." Raycroft introduced boxing and various other competitive sports to replace long-used calisthenics drills.

Because of Raycroft’s success with creating and developing various sports for use in the training camps, his book Mass Physical Training was adopted as the official manual of physical training in the Army. (He later served as chairman of the International Sporting Club where he applied those rules developed in the camps for boxing to the development of New York state’s boxing laws.) Raycroft was said by many to head the largest athletic program in the world’s history with the largest coaching staff that was ever assembled. His training service continued into the Second World War, when he served on the Council of Physical Training program for navy air cadets.

In addition to his national and civic duties, Raycroft devoted his life to the development of a personal library of rare books, prints, and memorabilia in the fields of medicine and sports. In May 1944, the old University Gymnasium, with his library in it, was destroyed by fire. Personal friends, Princeton alumni, and other academic institutions and organizations came together to donate some 1500 volumes to replace Raycroft’s library. In 1948, Raycroft was honored with the opening of the Joseph E. Raycroft Library in Princeton’s Herbert Lowell Dillon Gymnasium.
Raycroft served on many committees and associations for the study of student health and mental well being, and intercollegiate athletics. He was a member of the 1932 and 1936 Olympic Committees and in the latter year accompanied the American Olympic team to Berlin as vice president of the American Olympic Association. In 1941, he became vice president for the American Sports Federation. He also served as president of the Eastern Intercollegiate Basketball League and chairman of the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s rules committee. He was a medical consultant for New Jersey’s Department of Institutions and Agencies, a member of the New Jersey’s Committee on Mental Hygiene, and the president of the Board of Managers of the New Jersey State Hospital for the Insane. In 1934, Dr. Raycroft received an honorary degree in physical education from Springfield College and was awarded a citation for public service by the University of Chicago in 1941. Dr. Raycroft died in Trenton, New Jersey, on September 30, 1955.

**Description**

The Joseph E. Raycroft papers document both Raycroft’s personal and professional activities, with the bulk of documentation focusing on Raycroft’s role in developing training camp activities for the army in World War I and the navy in World War II, as well as the fire that destroyed his personal library. Also included is material documenting Raycroft’s involvement in the 1932-1936 Olympic Committees. The records contain correspondence, manuscripts of lectures, notes, writings, printed material, press releases, photographs, and memorabilia.

Please see series descriptions in contents list for additional information about individual series.

**Access**

The collection is open for research use.

**Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information**

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**Custodial History**
The Raycroft Papers were previously held in the Raycroft Library, which was dismantled in August or September 1972. Trophies and related material associated with Princeton athletics were given to the athletic department.

Provenance and Acquisition

The Joseph E. Raycroft Papers, including various medals, memorabilia, and photographs were received by Firestone Library, Manuscript Division around September, 1972.

Appraisal

Appraisal has been conducted in accordance with Mudd Manuscript Library guidelines.

Related Materials

The Raymond B. Fosdick Papers (MC#55) correspondence contains a small amount of letters relating to Raycroft’s affiliation with the Commission on Training Camp Activities.

The Offprint Collection (AC#121) contains articles written by Joseph E. Raycroft in Box 40, Folder 31.

The Joseph E. Raycroft faculty file includes information about Raycroft during his tenure at Princeton University.

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Joseph Raycroft Papers, Box and Folder Number; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Works Cited

The faculty file of Joseph E. Raycroft and Alexander Leitch’s A Princeton Companion were consulted during the preparation of the biographical note.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Rosalba Varallo with the assistance of Page Dykstra '06 in May 2005. Finding aid written by Rosalba Varallo in May 2005.

Encoding


Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.
• Fosdick, Raymond Blaine, 1883-
• Raycroft, Joseph Edward, 1867-
• Princeton University--Athletics.
• Princeton University--Library-Raycroft Collection.
• United States--Army--Physical Training.
• United States.--War Department--Commission on Training Camp Activities (Army Dept.).
• United States.--War Department--Commission on Training Camp Activities (Navy Dept.).
• Book collecting--New Jersey--Princeton--20th century.
• College sports--United States--History--20th century.
• Exercise--Health aspects--United States.
• Military training camps--United States--20th century.
• Olympic Games--(1st--1896--Athens, Greece).
• Olympic Games (10th : 1932 : Los Angeles, Calif.)
• Olympic Games (11th : 1936 : Berlin, Germany)
• Physical education and training--Health aspects--United States.
• Physical education and training--Standards.
• Physical fitness--Government policy--United States.
• Physical fitness--Handbooks, manuals, etc.
• Rare books--Collectors and collecting--New Jersey--Princeton--20th century.
• Correspondence.
• Memorabilia.
• Pamphlets
• Photographs.
• Reports.
• Princeton University
Series 1: Biographical, 1888-1953

Size: 0.834 linear feet
Size: 2 Boxes

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by topic and chronologically within each folder. Topics within this series are organized into three categories: personal correspondence, professional career, and writings.

Description: The Biographical series contains correspondence, memoranda, lecture notes, printed material, press releases, reports, and other material relating to Raycroft's career as an instructor in the physical education department at the University of Chicago and his position as chairman of the Health and Physical Education Department at Princeton University. This series also includes material documenting Raycroft's role as president of the Board of Managers of the New Jersey State Hospital for the Insane, as well as his involvement in various associations and committees, including his membership in the 1932 and 1936 American Olympic Committees. Also included in this series is a copy of the earliest radiograph (x-ray) used for medical diagnosis taken in 1897 by Raycroft and Professor Michelson, as well as written reports on physical education within high schools and universities and the development of intramural athletics at Princeton University. Lecture notes on topics such as Using and Misusing our Minds, A Paying Investment and a lecture syllabus on hygiene in schools can be found in the writings section. Various printed material such as the Boston YMCA gymnasium manuals, notes, and pamphlets on recommended weekly exercises and instructions for those exercises also be found in the writings section. Photographs and memorabilia relating to the Olympics may be found in series 4.

### Personal Correspondence, 1911-1950

**General, 1911-1950**

<table>
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<td>1940-1943</td>
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<td>1946-1947</td>
<td>5 Folder: 5</td>
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<td>1948-1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garrett, Robert, 1912-1950</td>
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### Professional Career, 1892-1953

**Certificates, Clippings, and Diplomas, 1898-1952**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1898-1952</td>
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</tbody>
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**Chicago, University of, 1892-1953**

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<td>1892-1953</td>
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</table>
Series 2: Library, 1924-1953, 1992

Size: 0.417 linear feet

Size: 1 Box

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by topic chronologically within each folder.

Description: The Library series consists of general correspondence, newspaper clippings, catalog lists, and press-releases about Raycroft’s Library as well as condolence letters sent to him after the 1944 fire that destroyed the library. Donations made by friends of Raycroft, Princeton alumni, academic institutions, and associations which helped rebuild Raycroft’s library in Dillon Gym are documented in the series. Of note is a letter written by Robert Garrett documenting his donation of memorabilia from the first Olympics including two 'original' discuses to the Raycroft collection. Also of interest is material related to photostat copies of the William Yarrow mural produced for the walls outside the restored Raycroft library in Dillon Gymnasium. (The photostat copies can be found in series 4.) Some correspondence regarding the fire can be located in the correspondence section of series 1.

Catalog Lists, 1942-1950

- 1924-1941
- 1942-1943
- 1944
- 1945-1946
- 1947-1953

Correspondence, 1924-1953

- 1924-1941
- 1942-1943
- 1944
- 1945-1946
- 1947-1953
Series 3: Physical Education during Wartime, 1917-1944

Size: 417 linear feet

Size: 1 Box

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by topic and chronologically within each folder.

Description: The Physical Education During Wartime series contains correspondence, memoranda, pamphlets, journals, and reports related to Raycroft’s service on the war department’s Commission on Training Camp Activities during World War I. After the armistice was signed, both Raycroft and Raymond Fosdick were directed by Secretary of War Newton Baker to survey the morale of the American Expeditionary Forces in France and to compare it to the morale of British, German, and Japanese soldiers. Also of note is the report written by Fosdick on the problem of prostitution for the American Expeditionary Forces. The adoption of Raycroft’s Mass Physical Training as the United States Army’s official manual of physical training is also documented in this series, as is Raycroft’s role on the Council of Physical Training’s program for navy air cadets during World War II.

Preparations for Military Service, 1917-1944

General, 1917-1942

1917-1918

1919

1920-1923

1939-1940

1941-1942

Britain, Germany, and Japan, 1942-1944

Camp Benning, Georgia, 1918-1942

Series 4: Photographs and Memorabilia, 1911-1952

Size: 2.92 linear feet

Size: 3 Boxes

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by topic.

Description: The Photographs and Memorabilia series contains tourist photographs of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, including images of Adolph Hitler and American athlete Jesse Owens with German athlete Lutz Long. The series also includes the 1936 Berlin Olympic medal worn by Raycroft during the games, postcards of the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, and various photographs of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Memorabilia including photostats of William Yarrow’s Mural located in Dillon Gymnasium, a metal plaque presented to Dr. Raycroft for
outstanding service by the University of Chicago, and a photo album of the Athens Olympics in 1896 which was given to the Raycroft Library by Charles Caldwell in 1950, is also present in the series.

Photographs, 1896-1952

- Individuals, 1911-1938
  - American Olympic Committee in Tokyo, Japan, 1938
  - Executive Committee of the American Olympic Association, 1938
  - Unidentified, 1911
- Berlin Olympics, 1936
- Helsinki Olympics, 1952
- Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia, 1920-1942
- Olympic Village, Undetermined Location, undated
- Raycroft, Joseph E., Building, New Jersey State Hospital, Trenton, 1945
- Ritchie, Willie, Autographed Photograph, 1942
- Yarrow, William, Photostats of Mural, 1935

Memorabilia, 1910-1936

- Berlin Olympic Pin, 1936
- Plaque (given by Minor "L" Men of 1910 to 1911), 1911, 1910, 1911