

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



The University Archives
and Records Center

A Guide to the
Office of the Recorder
Records, 1902 - 1960

2.25 Cubic ft.

UPA 9

Prepared by Amy Miller
November 2000

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PROVENANCE

This collection had constituted one of the core collections of the University Archives in 1945 and since then parts of it had been dispersed throughout various other collections. This collection was assembled in 2000.

ARRANGEMENT

There are ten series in this collection. The correspondence, discipline and housing records, lecture and concert series, recorders diary, and reports series have been arranged chronologically. The miscellaneous, student life, University history, World War I, and writings series have been arranged alphabetically.

AGENCY HISTORY

The Office of the Recorder of the University of Pennsylvania was created in 1912 for George E. Nitzsche, the University's publicity agent. Because Nitzsche was the only person to hold this position, the history of the Office is intertwined with his professional career.

George E. Nitzsche was born in 1874 and attended the University of Pennsylvania Law School from 1895 until 1898. In the summer of 1896, he worked as an administrative assistant to the Dean of the Law School. After graduation, Nitzsche became Bursar and Registrar of the Law School for six years. It was during this time that he worked closely with the Dean, William Draper Lewis, to promote the Law School's new building (now Silverman Hall). In 1901 he compiled and published the *Proceedings* of the dedication of the new Law School. This volume brought him to the attention of Provost Harrison and the Trustees. He became manager of the Bureau of Publicity in 1904. Nitzsche published a very popular pamphlet called the *Official Guide to the University of Pennsylvania* in 1904. A second "illustrated and greatly enlarged" edition was published in 1906. Nitzsche also founded the alumni publication *Old Penn* in November of 1902, which would later be renamed the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. This was an oversized, eight-page newspaper, which included two pages of "Advance Announcements" of University activities.

An ad hoc committee of the Trustees in 1912 decided to increase Nitzsche's salary and change his title from Publicity Agent to Recorder. The Recorder's Office was a source of general information and advice for students and the public, both academic and personal. The office published a weekly calendar of University events and promoted exhibits, musicals, conventions, etc. As Recorder, he created an extensive archive of material concerning the history of the University and its alumni, continued to publish University guide books, managed lecture and concert series, and made lists of the student body according to geographic location. Nitzsche kept records of boarding and apartment houses and straitened out disputes between students and landlords. He made many suggestions for the improvement of the University, such as creating schools of music and journalism, establishing a University press, making recordings of faculty members, and resuming the publication of a University Directory. He established the Memorial Library in 1907 which housed work by University alumni. He also created University display booths for various world expositions.

**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

Outside of the University, he was president of numerous civic and charitable institutions and was one of the original supporters of the Independence Mall project. Nitzsche staged Philadelphia's first open air opera at Franklin Field and managed other musical productions as well. He received decorations and honors from contributors ranging from Czechoslovakia and Italy to the Sons of the American Revolution and Ursinus College.

George E. Nitzsche died on July 28, 1961 and is survived by wife Elsa Koenig and daughters Elsa and Helma.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

These papers concern the duties and activities of the Office of the Recorder as filled by George E. Nitzsche. The correspondence series mostly includes requests for information and assistance as well as letters of thanks for his aid. The discipline and housing records contain minutes from the University Council on Welfare and Student Activities' sub-committee on housing, of which Nitzsche was chairman. The series concerning lectures and concerts contains publications and letters sent to Nitzsche about prospective speakers and performers as well as programs printed by the University. The Recorder's Diary is Nitzsche's calendar of University events and includes clippings. The reports series concerns the Press Bureau and his activities as Recorder. Among other things, the University history series contains much concerning Eadweard Muybridge, whose moving picture experiments at the University were extensively researched and documented by Nitzsche. His research into the role of the University and its students during World War I is included in that series. Information concerning University history, alumni, the Memorial Library, and Nitzsche's civic plans for improving Philadelphia are included in the writings series.

The photographs that Nitzsche collected of University buildings and events now form the majority of the photo collection of the University Archives (UPX 12). The writings that formed

**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

the Memorial Library of the Publications of the University of Pennsylvania and Her Sons now form the publications section of the University Archives.

**Office of the Recorder
Records, 1902 - 1960**

UPA 9

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INVENTORY

Correspondence

Box 1	FF 1	1904-1909
	FF 2	1910-1919
	FF 3	1920
	FF 4	1921
	FF 5	1922
	FF 6	1923
	FF 7	1924
	FF 8	1926
	FF 9	1926-1927
	FF 10	1928
	FF 11	1928-1935
	FF 12	1936-1941
	FF 13	1952, 1954
	FF 14	n.d.

Discipline and Housing Records

	FF 15	1924-1926
	FF 16	1927-1928

**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

Discipline and Housing Records (cont.)

Box 1 FF 17 1929-1931

Lecture and Concert Series

Correspondence, programs, reviews

FF 18 1937, (1)
FF 19 1937, (2)
FF 20 1937, (3)
FF 21 1938, (1)
FF 22 1938, (2)
FF 23 1939, (1)
FF 24 1939, (2)
FF 25 1940, (1)
FF 26 1940, (2)
FF 27 1940, (3)
FF 28 c. 1940, (1)
FF 29 c. 1940, (2)

Box 2 FF 1 1941

Programs

FF 2 1915-1922
FF 3 1923-1925
FF 4 1926-1927
FF 5 1928-1944

FF 6 General
FF 7 Clarence Darrow Autograph, 1933
FF 8 Television photoelectric cell

**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

Recorder's Diary

Box 2	FF 9	1922
	FF 10	1923
	FF 11	1924
	FF 12	1925
	FF 13	1926
	FF 14	1927
	FF 15	1928

Reports

FF 16	1902-1904
FF 17	c. 1909
FF 18	1910-1912
FF 19	1914-1915
FF 20	1921-1926

Student Life

Band

FF 21	History (1), 1939
FF 22	History (2), 1939
FF 22	Committee on Greek drama, 1903, 1915
FF 23	Fraternities

University History

FF 24	Radio Show Questions
FF 25	List of relics, historical notes
	Muybridge Correspondence

**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

University History

Muybridge

Correspondence (cont.)

Box 2	FF 26	1915-1929
	FF 27	1936-1951
	FF 28	Janet Leigh, 1930, 1950-1956

Lectures

	FF 29	1917-1919
	FF 30	1939
	FF 31	Pan American Association Meeting, 1951
	FF 32	Semi-Centennial Celebration, 1951
	FF 33	Undated

Writings and Articles

	FF 34	"The Art of Moving Pictures had Birth at University of Pennsylvania," 1912-1913
	FF 35	"Evolution of Moving Pictures," 1916-1917
	FF 36	"The Muybridge Moving Pictures Experiments at the University of Pennsylvania," 1928-1929
Box 3	FF 1	"Philadelphia: Birthplace of Moving Pictures," 1950
	FF 2	"Pennsylvania Pioneering in the Movies," 1951

World War I

Clippings

	FF 3	Base Hospital #20
	FF 4	General

Lists

	FF 5	Faculty and students
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**Office of the Recorder Records
UPA 9
Inventory**

World War I

Lists (cont.)

Box 3	FF 6	Fraternities
	FF 7	Law school
	FF 8	Photoprints
		Published Material
	FF 9	American University Union in Europe
	FF 10	Blank forms
	FF 11	Programs, circulars
	FF 12	Speeches
	FF 13	Writings
		University during War
	FF 14	(1)
	FF 15	(2)

Writings

Book reviews

	FF 16	Manuscripts
		Essays
	FF 17	Manuscripts
	FF 18	Published, 1910-1960
	FF 19	Published, n.d.
		Newspaper articles
	FF 20	Published, n.d.