FINDING AID

Yosemite Conversation Club Collection
1934-1995

Prepared by
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National Park Service

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Yosemite Collection Number: 2032
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**HISTORY**

The Yosemite Conversation Club was organized on April 26, 1934 as a group of men (usually those in well-known positions within the Yosemite National Park and park concessions hierarchy) who gathered once a month for dinner and a lively discussion. Each meeting had a host who, originally was responsible for paying for each member’s dinner, although later that responsibility changed to providing wine for the meeting instead. There was also a reader for the evening, who wrote and presented an essay meant to spark discussion. These essays ranged in subject from worldly issues, war, and government to economics, education, and hobbies. Generally, topics of religion and partisan politics were avoided.

Conversation Club meetings were scheduled for the last Monday of each month, beginning with dinner, followed by a reading of the month’s essay, and ending with a discussion. For many years, dinner was held at the Ahwahnee, but moved for brief periods to the Yosemite Lodge, the Four Seasons Restaurant, and occasionally, Curry Village. On rare occasions, meetings were held at the houses of members. The typical number of members was 20 men, but this was amended several times, changing increasing to 25 or 30 members before changing back to a smaller enrollment number.

Notable members of the Conversation Club include several superintendents, as well as John Curry, Rusty Rust, Charley Proctor, Ed Hardy, Dr. Avery Strum, and many more.

The problem of dwindling membership began in the 1970’s and continued for the remainder of the life of the club. Meeting nights were moved from Monday nights to avoid televised broadcasts of Monday Night Football. The club was finally discontinued in 1995.
**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

Yosemite Conversation Club Collection  
1934-1995

**CATALOG NUMBER**  
YOSE  237673

**VOLUME**  
2.3 LF

**DESCRIPTION**  
The Conversation Club records are comprised of 2.3 linear feet of materials. The bulk of the collection is paper, although there are also 23 photographs from a photo album of the club. The materials cover a date range from the start of the club in 1934 to 1995. Materials include original and revised versions of the club’s Constitution and By-laws; retrospective papers written looking back on the club history; announcements for meetings and meeting minutes; membership lists; schedules of readers and hosts; correspondence and invitations to membership; and essays written by members to be presented at meetings. The photograph album is comprised of photographs from a club social in 1988. The largest part of the collection is comprised of the essays written for discussion at the club meetings.

**ORGANIZATION**  
The Conversation Club Collection is comprised of six series that reflect the types of materials, record function and their original arrangement. Series I: Constitutions and By-Laws, Series II: Club History, Series III: Administrative Records, Series IV: Correspondence, Series V: Essays, and Series VI: Photograph Album.

**PROVENANCE**  
The Yosemite Conversation Club Collection is comprised of three separate accessions: YOSE-061414, YOSE-07468, and YOSE-05506. The first accession, YOSE-061414 is .25 LF of Conversation Club materials donated by Keith Walklet in 1999 after he had left employment at the park. The second accession, YOSE-07468, was deposited in the Yosemite Research Library and accessioned to the archive in 2013. The final accession, YOSE-05506 was accessioned as part of the museum collection and transferred to the archives in 2013.
RESTRICTIONS

NO

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS
**HIERARCHY**

SERIES I. CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, 1934-1995

SERIES II. CLUB HISTORY, 1982-1992

SERIES III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS, 1934-1995

SERIES IV. CORRESPONDENCE, 1940-1989

SERIES V. ESSAYS, 1934-1995

SERIES VI. PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM, 1988
SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES I. CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, 1934-1995
.25 LF

This series contains versions of the Conversation Club Constitution and By-laws including the founding Constitution from the first meeting with the club founders’ signatures, and additional typed amendments from the club’s later years. Additional material includes copies of the Constitution and By-laws with subsequent amendments as well as memos sent to the club members with ideas for revisions to the By-laws.

This series is arranged chronologically.

SERIES II. CLUB HISTORY, 1982-1992
.1 LF (4 Folders)

This series includes documents related to the history of the Conversation Club, including retrospective papers written by club members for the 300th and 600th meeting, as well as a history of the club written by Ed Hardy in 1982.

This series is arranged chronologically.

SERIES III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS, 1934-1995
.5 LF

The Conversation Club Administrative Records consist of meeting materials, financial records and receipts for club dinners. Folders with a title of “Meeting Materials” contain typed meeting minutes as well as other materials such as attendance or membership lists, announcements, schedules, and reader and hosts lists. Folders marked “Meeting Minutes” only contain minutes without other materials. Most materials are typed however; this series also includes some handwritten notes taken during meetings.

This series is arranged chronologically.

SERIES IV. CORRESPONDENCE, 1940-1989
.25 LF

This series is comprised of correspondence among current members as well as between current and past members. Also included are invitations to potential members to join in meetings or club membership; and membership resignation letters.

This series is arranged chronologically.

SERIES V. ESSAYS, 1934-1995
1.0 LF
This series contains essays written by members for presentation and discussion at club meetings. Each meeting included an essay written and presented by a member on a topic that interested them with a discussion of the topic continuing for the duration of the meeting. Some essays include supplemental materials, such as blueprints, or copies of newspaper articles. The essays span the years from 1934-1995, with the bulk occurring from the early years of the club. The essays were given to the club after each meeting and stored with the rest of the club’s materials, which were then given to the Yosemite Research Library and later transferred to the archive.

This series is arranged chronologically.

**SERIES VI. PHOTO ALBUM, 1988**

.2 LF (23 Photographs)

This series is comprised of 23 photographs from a photograph album of the Conversation Club, the only photographs in the collection. The photographs were taken at the Club Social on July 5, 1988, which was held at the Ed Hardy’s Hazel Green Lodge. The photographs depict a number of men socializing and eating dinner. The photographs are not annotated with names.

This series is arranged in the original order that the photographs were in, in the original photo album.
FILE UNIT DESCRIPTIONS/CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I: CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, 1934-1995

Series I: BOX 1

Folder 0001. Constitution and By-Laws with Typed Amendments, 1934-1955
*Founding Constitution*
Folder 0002. Constitution and By-Laws, 1937 August

Folder 0003. Constitution and By-Laws, 1941 October 6

Folder 0004. Constitution and By-Laws, 1969

Folder 0005. Copy of Constitution and By-Laws Sent to Members for Revision, 1970 August 26

Folder 0006. Constitution and By-Laws, 1975

Folder 0007. Constitution and By-Laws with Written Revisions, 1975

Folder 0008. Constitution and By-Laws, Circa 1977

Folder 0009. Constitution and By-Laws, Circa 1979

Folder 0010. Proposed Amendment to Constitution, 1980 May

Folder 0011. Revision of Constitution and By-Laws by By-Laws Committee, 1988 March 10

Folder 0012. Constitution and By-Laws, 1988

Folder 0013. Recommendation of By-Laws Committee, Revised Constitution and By-Laws, 1988

Folder 0014. Report- Vice President Position by By-Laws Committee, 1989

Folder 0015. Revised Constitution and By-Laws, 1995 March

Folder 0016. Constitution and By-Laws, Undated

Folder 0017. Question Regarding Constitution Procedures, Undated

SERIES II: CLUB HISTORY, 1982-1992
Series II: BOX 1

Folder 0001. Essay List, History by Ed Hardy, Ed Hardy Correspondence, 1982

Folder 0002. Yosemite Conversation Club 600th Meeting: A Retrospective by Frank Dean, 1992 October 5

Folder 0003. Notes on Club History [Ed Hardy?], Undated

Folder 0004. List of Essays with Note from Derrick Votelka to Keith Walklett, Undated

SERIES III: ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS, 1934-1995

Series III: BOX 1

Folder 0001. Membership Materials (Attendance, Readers, Officer Lists), 1934-1968

Folder 0002. Meeting Minutes of Organizational Meeting and Eight Subsequent Meetings, 1934 April-1935 March

Folder 0003. Meeting Minutes, 1936 January-1940 December

Folder 0004. Financial Statements, 1937-1974

Folder 0005. Meeting Minutes, 1941 January-1946 January

Folder 0006. Meeting Materials, 1946 February-1950 December

Folder 0007. Meeting Minutes, 1951 January-1955 November

Folder 0008. Meeting Minutes, 1956 January-1960 November

Folder 0009. Meeting Minutes, 1961 January-1965 November

Folder 0010. Meeting Minutes, 1966 January-1967 November

Folder 0011. Meeting Minutes, 1968

Folder 0012. Meeting Materials, 1969

Folder 0013. Meeting Minutes, 1970

Folder 0014. Meeting Schedule and Reader, Host Lists, 1970-1975
Folder 0015. Meeting Minutes, 1971
Folder 0016. Meeting Materials, 1972
Folder 0017. Meeting Materials, 1973
Folder 0018. Meeting Materials, 1974
Folder 0019. Meeting Materials, 1975
Folder 0020. Meeting Materials, 1976
Folder 0023. Meeting Announcement, Schedule, and Member List, 1981
Folder 0024. Meeting Materials, 1987
Folder 0025. Meeting Materials, 1988
Folder 0026. Membership Lists, Circa 1988
Folder 0027. Membership Lists and Meeting Schedules, 1988-1989
Folder 0028. Meeting Materials, 1989
Folder 0029. Meeting Minutes, 1989-1990
Folder 0030. Membership Lists and Meeting Schedules, 1989-1990
Folder 0031. Meeting Materials, 1990
Folder 0032. Meeting Materials, 1991
Folder 0033. Meeting Minutes, 1991
Folder 0034. Meeting Materials, 1992
Folder 0035. Meeting Materials, 1992
Folder 0036. Member Lists, 1992
Folder 0037. Meeting Schedules, 1992-1994
Folder 0038. Meeting Announcements, 1993
Folder 0039. Meeting Materials, 1993
Folder 0040. Meeting Announcements, 1994
Folder 0041. Meeting Minutes, 1994
Folder 0042. Ahwahnee Dinner Receipts, 1994
Folder 0043. Event Order: Electric Business Meeting, 1995 March 15
Folder 0044. Ahwahnee Guest Settlements, 1995
Folder 0045. Meeting Materials, 1995
Folder 0046. Ahwahnee Dinner Receipts, 1995
Folder 0047. Concessions Contract and Receipts, 1995
Folder 0048. Attendance Sheets, Circa 1995
Folder 0049. Membership Lists, Undated
Folder 0050. Example of Meeting Notice Cards, Undated

**SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE, 1940-1989**

**Series IV: BOX 1**

Folder 0001. Letters of Resignation From Membership, 1940-1977

Folder 0002. Correspondence Between Alice Oliver and Stanley Joseph and Wendell Otter, 1941

Folder 0003. Correspondence: Letters Between Harold Ouiment and Hazel Thomson, 1944 May

Folder 0004. Correspondence: Condolence Letters and Responses, 1944-1950

Folder 0005. Invitations and Responses Regarding the 200th Meeting on September 21, 1953, 1953

Folder 0006. Correspondence: Letters Between Henry Berrey and Hazel Thomson, 1953
Folder 0007. Correspondence: Invitations to Membership and Responses, 1953-1988

Folder 0008. Correspondence: Letter from Stuart Cross to Gene Ewing Informing Him of His Election to Club President, 1961 January 9

Folder 0009. Correspondence From Charles A. Woessner Regarding Attendance at Meetings, 1961

Folder 0010. Correspondence Regarding Location of Conversation Club Collection, 1961-1962

Folder 0011. Correspondence: Report to Members by Membership Committee, 1962 July 13

Folder 0012. Correspondence: Memo From the 300th Meeting Programming Committee to Club, 1962 July 17

Folder 0013. Invitations and Responses Regarding the 300th Meeting on October 29, 1962, 1962

Folder 0014. Correspondence: Letters Between Hil Oehlmann and Gordon Glass, 1964

Folder 0015. Invitations and Responses Regarding March 25, 1968 Meeting, 1968 March

Folder 0016. Declining Attendance Memo, 1970 August 11

Folder 0017. Correspondence: Invitations to Meetings, 1974-1975

Folder 0018. Letter from Charley Proctor to Ed Hardy, 1982 July 28
From document packet sent to Ed Hardy by Charley Proctor
Folder 0019. Response Letters to Ed Hardy Regarding Conversation Club Materials, 1982

Folder 0020. Correspondence: Thank You Card from Mono Lake Committee to Conversation Club, 1989

Folder 0021. Obituaries of Sterling Cramer and Doug Whiteside, 1995

Folder 0022. Schedule of Meeting and Proposed Changes to Constitution from Keith Walklett, 1995 February 28

Folder 0023. Miscellaneous Notes, Undated

Folder 0024. Correspondence Regarding Meeting Times, Undated
Folder 0025. Invitation to Meeting, Undated

Folder 0026. Note About Catholic Chaplain Membership During World War Two, Undated

SERIES V: ESSAYS, 1934-1995

Series V: BOX 1

Folder 0001. The Problem of God - A Philosophical Study by James Asa White, 1934 May

Folder 0002. The Armament Industry by H. Oelmann, 1934 June

Folder 0003. Gentling a Congressman, 1934 October

Folder 0004. The Status on Chemical Warfare by Russell C. White, 1934 November

Folder 0005. State Medicine by Hartley G. Dewey, 1934 December

Folder 0006. The Challenge to Our Economic Organization by H.S. Shilko, 1935 January 31


Folder 0008. American Youth Problems by M.E. Beatty, 1935 March

Folder 0009. Honesty by Mr. Oliver, 1935 May

Folder 0010. Government Ownership and Operation of Public Utilities by R. Sprinkel, 1935 September 25

Folder 0011. Ethiopian Problem by Col. C.G. Thomson, 1936 January 10

Folder 0012. Trial of Facts of Law by H.H. Hass, 1936 March 3

Folder 0013. The Townsend Plan by. J. Wosky, 1936 March 27

Folder 0014. Roots of Conflict in Europe by H. Oehlmann, 1936 April 22


Folder 0016. The Psychology of Religion by James Asa White, 1936 December 4

Folder 0018. The Stimulation Power of Advertising by W. Otler, 1937 February 11

Folder 0019. Personality Education Introductory Statement by James Asa White, 1937 March 17

Folder 0020. The Supreme Court Issue by M.E. Beatty, 1937 April 15

Folder 0021. Civilization at the Crossroads by Mr. Oliver, 1937 August 3

Folder 0022. A Consideration of the Venereal Disease Campaign by Hartley G. Dewey, 1937 October 11

Folder 0023. Should the United States Cease to Protect the Lives and Properties of its National Outside of its Own Territory in the Case of Foreign Wars? By R. Sprinkel, 1937 October 25

Folder 0024. United States Immigration Policies by C.A. Harwell, 1937 November

Folder 0025. Limitations of the Law by H.H. Hass, 1938 February 28

Folder 0026. Progress of Man by James Cole, 1938 March 28

Folder 0027. The War in Spain by H. Oehlmann, 1938 April 25


Folder 0029. Forrests and Civilization by Mr. Merriam, 1938 June 27

Folder 0030. The Myth of the Separation of Powers in a Democratic State, 1938 July 25

Folder 0031. What Industry Has Meant to the United States by Wm. Herbert Carr, 1938 October 31

Folder 0032. Our Labor Problem by Avery E. Strum, MD, 1938 November 28

Folder 0033. Tariff Highlights by H.S. Shilko, 1939 January 30

Folder 0034. Mnemonics by E.M. Hilton, 1939 February

Folder 0035. In Defense of Outdoor Advertising in Rural Areas by Wendell H. Otter, 1939 March 27

Folder 0036. Mental Measures by Lou Garrison, 1939 May 1
Folder 0037. Advertising as a Social Farce by Stan Plumb, 1939 May 31

Folder 0038. The Way Out by James M. Oliver, 1939 July

Folder 0039. The Crisis Phobia by James Asa White, 1939 August 18

Folder 0040. The Role of Education in Occupational Adjustment by Lowell T. Bondshu, 1939 October 30

Folder 0041. General Semantics by R. Sprinkel, 1939 December 4

Series V: BOX 2

Folder 0042. The Business Point of View on the Labor Problem, 1940 January

Folder 0043. Some Problems Confronting the United States as Noted on My 13,000 Mile Drive, October, November, and December 1939, 1940 February 26

Folder 0044. The Problem of Peace by H. Oehlmann, 1940 April

Folder 0045. The Railroad Problem in the United States, 1940 May 27

Folder 0046. Social Medicine by Avery E. Strum, MD, 1940 September 30

Folder 0047. The Transition of California from Spanish Colony to American State, 1940 July

Folder 0048. The Chain Store and Mass Distribution by Wm. Herbert Carr, 1940 October 28

Folder 0049. A Brief View of Plastics by Charley Proctor, 1941 January-February

Folder 0050. Congress Looks at the Great Outdoors by H. Oehlmann, 1951 October


Folder 0052. Why No Wilderness Bill? By H. Oehlmann, 1963 November 25

Folder 0053. Some Notes on Golf by Charley Proctor, 1964

Folder 0054. Trans - Pacific Yacht Racing by John F. curry, 1966 March 28

Folder 0055. Through the Great City by Charley Proctor, 1967 September 25

Folder 0056. Economics of the 60's and the Death of a Dollar by Avery E. Strum, MD, 1969 August
Folder 0057. Freedom and the Law by H. Oehlmann, 1969 September 29

Folder 0058. To Provoke Conversation on Education by Lawrence C. Hadley, 1969 December 1


Folder 0060. Excerpts from Marquis James' Book the Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston by Coyt Houston Hackett, 1970 March 2

Folder 0061. Essay Prepared for Reading to Yosemite Conversation Club on August 31, 1970 by Charles A. Woessner, 1970 August 31

Folder 0062. The Patrol Officer in the Fourth Amendment by Leland J. Shackelton, 1973 October

Folder 0063. The Philosophy of Leisure by John J. Krisko II, 1974 November 25

Folder 0064. Exercise and Aging by Ed Hardy, 1977 April 25

Folder 0065. The Farmer's Dilemma by F.B. Elliot, 1978 July 31

Folder 0066. The Relationship Between Water and Energy Use and Conservation by Tom Williams, 1979 January 29

Folder 0067. Dealing with Disability by Len McKenzie, 1979 August 29

Folder 0068. How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years by James N. Wurgler, MD, 1979 September 25

Folder 0069. Black Holes by Ed Hardy, 1979 November 6

Folder 0070. Heating With Solar Energy by Jan W. van Wagendonk, 1980 February 5


Folder 0072. Balanced Budget - Tax Limination, 1985 August 6

Folder 0073. World Peace as a Result of Evolution by Jim Little, 1985 June 4

Folder 0074. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey, 1994

Folder 0075. The Internet - The Ultimate Conversation Club, Circa 1994
Folder 0076. The Grand Canyon: Before and After, Undated

Folder 0077. The Hero in Myth and its Implications for Today, Undated

Folder 0078. Mt. Everest, Undated

Folder 0079. The Battle of Leyte Gulf, Undated


Folder 0081. The Changing American Character by Charley Proctor, Undated
  *From Document Packet Sent to Ed Hardy by Charley Proctor*

Folder 0082. The Voyage of the Beagle, Undated

**SERIES VI: PHOTO ALBUM, 1988**

**Series I: BOX 1**

Conversation Club Photo Album, 1988 July 5
  *23 color photographs from social at Ed Hardy's Hazel Green Lodge*