

Guide to the Records of the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore MS 05

Finding aid prepared by Valerie Haas

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections
Title	The Records of the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1960-1980
Date [inclusive]	1947-1991
Extent	10.0 Linear feet 12 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Wine and Food Society consisted of leading Baltimore figures in the business, social, and gourmand world. The collection consists of ten boxes of administrative records, newsletters, correspondence, and illustrated menus of the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore. The bulk of the collection is the group of menus from general membership dinners dated 1947-1990. The collection comprises materials from the International Wine and Food Society, 1974-1984, the North American Wine and Food Society, 1974-1980, the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore Administrative Papers, 1960-1991, and the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore, 1947-1991.</p>

Preferred Citation

The Records of the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore, Special Collections, Enoch Pratt Free Library/
Maryland's State Library Resource Center.

Biographical/Historical

In the spring of 1945, the President of the International Wine and Food Society in London, Andre L. Simon, visited Baltimore. Mr. Simon was sent to the United States in the hopes of starting some foreign branches of the International Wine and Food Society. Mr. Simon was referred to Frederick Philip Stieff, a writer on wine and food for the Baltimore News American and son of Frederick Stieff, founder of the Stieff Piano Company. Stieff held a dinner at his home in Roland Park for Simon. After the dinner, Stieff approached his friend Henry Powell Hopkins and several others who he thought might be interested in forming a branch of the Wine and Food Society in Baltimore. They held another dinner at the home of Hopkins. The following gentlemen attended the dinner:

Frederick P. Stieff Wendell D. Allen William B. Banks J. Kemp Bartlett, Jr. James M. Hepbron Chase Ridgely Judge W. Cornwell Smith Dr. Maurice Sullivan Raymond S. Tompkins

This came to be known as the founding dinner of the Wine and Food Society. These 10 men (including Henry Powell Hopkins) were the original Board of Governors, with Frederick Stieff as President and Henry Hopkins as Secretary.

The first formal dinner was held on May 26, 1947 at the Belvedere Hotel and was of a Creole theme. Fifty men attended the dinner. One of the men, Dr. Sullivan, was originally from New Orleans and knew of a famous gourmet by the name of Edward T. Waldo. Mr. Waldo agreed to come to Baltimore and put on a dinner. The crawfish bisque was cooked in New Orleans and then flown to Baltimore. For many years, the dinners were held only at the Belvedere Hotel. There were only two dinners per year, spring and fall, and they were very elaborate formal affairs. The theme usually revolved around a particular city or country and the menus were large and decorative. Recipes and long descriptions of the chosen wines were included in the menus. The Assembly Room at the Belvedere was ornately decorated, even to include live swans and other animals at times.

Dinners included an orchestra and often entertainment, such as dancers native to the theme country. Many of the early dinners had a price tag of only \$7.50. Some of the food and wine were flown in from the theme country and many of the foreign embassies were consulted for menu covers, wines, recipes and entertainment. Ambassadors and their ladies were often invited, as well as the Governor of Maryland. Attendance was frequently over 200 people.

The nature and style of the Society's functions began to change in the 1970's. This was due largely to the establishment of many excellent restaurants in Baltimore. This, coupled with an ensuing decline in favor of both banquet food and drink, led the Society to have smaller events at a variety of restaurants. In November of 1981, the Society established a wine cellar. This assured a continuing supply of wine worthy of presentation at the Society affairs. The wine storage area was constructed in Cellar Master John McCormick's wine cellar.

Scope and Contents Note

The Wine and Food Society of Baltimore Papers spans the years 1947 to 1991, with the bulk of the collection from the 1960s and 1970s. Harold Williams donated the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore Papers in the 1990s to the Enoch Pratt Free Library. The Society was made up of leading Baltimore figures in the business, social, and gourmand world. Throughout his involvement in the Society, Williams served on the Board of Governors and as President. The papers reveal the creation and continued success of a social club focused on good food and good wine.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into four series:

I. International Wine and Food Society, 1974-1984

This is the parent organization to both the North American chapters as well as Baltimore's chapter. Included in this series are reports, accounts, and correspondence between various Wine and Food Societies.

II. North American Wine and Food Society, 1974-1980

Series two provides a look at the charter and by-laws of the North American Society, summaries of other societies in North America, and correspondence between the Baltimore society and the North American one.

III. Wine and Food Society of Baltimore Administrative Papers, 1960-1991

Series three is divided into four subseries. Subseries one details the history of the Baltimore Society. Subseries two is made up of the charter, articles, and by-laws of the Society. Subseries three consists of membership materials--applications, membership cards, proposed members, member lists, and correspondence. Subseries four is the Financial Papers of the Wine and Food Society that are further divided into dues, financial statements, and bills and budget issues. All materials in subseries four are arranged chronologically. Subseries five is the Officers and Boards of Governors' papers. This subseries is also further divided into the list of Board of Governors and Officers from 1970-1987 and the Board of Governors' Meetings and Dinners from 1970-1990. All materials are arranged chronologically.

IV. Wine and Food Society of Baltimore, 1947-1991

Series four constitutes the bulk of the collection. The materials are divided into seven subseries for organization purposes. Subseries one is the Schedule of Events from 1969 to 1989. All papers are

arranged chronologically. Subseries two are the Society's newsletters arranged chronologically from 1979 to 1990. Subseries three, General Membership Dinners, 1947-1990, is the largest section of the collection. It consists mostly of menus from various dinners and all are arranged chronologically. Subseries four are private dinners hosted by members of the Society. Subseries five is the oversized menus from the Board of Governors' Dinners (please see Series III for more information). The sixth subseries consists of trips that the Society offered its members from 1969 to 1992. The last subseries is devoted to the Wine Cellar.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections April 2003

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Accruals

No accruals are expected.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Harold Williams donated the Wine and Food Society of Baltimore Papers in the 1990s to the Enoch Pratt Free Library. The Society was made up of leading Baltimore figures in the business, social, and gourmand world. Throughout his involvement in the Society, Williams served on the Board of Governors and as President. The papers reveal the creation and continued success of a social club focused on good food and good wine.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Baltimore News-American.
- International Wine and Food Society.
- Wine and Food Society of Baltimore.

Genre(s)

- Administrative records
- Correspondence
- menus
- newsletters

Geographic Name(s)

- Baltimore (Md.)

Personal Name(s)

- Hopkins, Henry Powell
- Simon, Andre L., 1877-1970
- Stieff, Frederick Philip

Subject(s)

- Gastronomy
- Wine and wine making

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