

NEWCOMB COLLEGE ARCHIVES
Newcomb Center for Research on Women
Tulane University
New Orleans, LA 70115
504/865-5238

INVENTORY OF THE RECORDS OF
NEWCOMB RELIEF UNIT
19 APRIL 1990

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Relief Unit, 1918-1919.

Records, 1918-1922.

.05 linear feet

Location: NCCROW: NAB-030.

Accession number: 90-0024.

RESTRICTIONS: None.

ORGANIZATION & ARRANGEMENT: Chronologically arranged.

FINDING AIDS: More complete inventory available in the repository.

PRESERVATION ACTION: Highly acidic papers placed in polyester folders. Clippings copied onto Ph-neutral paper.

PROVENANCE: Found in Associate Dean's files during processing 4/90.

SCOPE & CONTENT: These records span the years between 1918 and 1922, with the bulk of the material dating from July 1918 to July 1919. Included are correspondence, minutes, clippings, applications, and financial reports produced during the formation and operation of the Newcomb Relief Unit, as well as during the creation of the Relief Unit scholarship fund.

The Newcomb Relief Unit was one of several teams from women's colleges prepared by national organizations to go to Europe during World War I. Newcomb College joined Wellsley, Smith, and Vassar in the efforts to raise the \$20,000 needed to create a Relief Unit through the Red Cross. However, letters and telegrams to and from the Red Cross, the American Women's Hospital, and the YMCA clearly document the delays and frustrations the Unit underwent in this process, and how ultimately, after the Red Cross canceled at the last moment, the Unit served with the YMCA. The experiences of these eight women, stationed at different places throughout France and Italy, have been captured through their articulate letters sent back to Helen McLellan, the contact at Newcomb. While every woman's experience was different, most worked in canteens. Especially significant are the reports of Caroline Francis Richardson, leader of the group, and Anna Many, business manager. Also included here are the minutes of meetings creating the Newcomb Relief Unit Scholarship Fund with the \$6000 surplus funds.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The decision to form the Newcomb Relief Unit was made in early July 1918. Armed with the Red Cross guidelines of what a Unit should be, preparatory efforts of fund-raising, applicant screening, equipment procuring and paperwork shuffling began immediately. By the end of July, \$10,000 was raised, and \$20,000 by the end of September. The Unit faced constant delays and problems, including the Red Cross cancellation of all Unit movements to Europe at the last minute. However, through the initiative of Caroline Richardson, the Unit soon left for training at Barnard College, NY, and then onto France. There, the eight women were split into four groups and scattered over Europe, undertaking mainly canteen work. Their length of stay varied between 3 and 9 months. The \$6000 surplus of funds were used to establish a scholarship fund.

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Folder listing:

April - August 1918

August applications

September - November 1918

November 1918 issue of the Newcomb Arcade

December 1918

January - February 1919

March - June 1919

April 1920 - January 1922

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Chronology of events:

Spring 1918: Idea of Newcomb Unit seemed financially impossible, but still requested basic information on units from Committee on Public Information, Division on Women's War Work (April).

July 1918: Early in the month, in a casual conversation between Anna Many and Dr. Dinwiddle, then president of Tulane, the "impossible" unit is brought up. Dinwiddle, however, was enthusiastic about the idea, and advocated forming the Unit immediately. Dr. Dixon agreed, and the efforts began. The Red Cross accepted the unit soon thereafter, supplying the following guidelines: a ten member group consisting of a leader, business manager, doctor, nurse, dietitian, and social or agriculture workers; French speakers preferred; a total of \$20,000 dollars must be raised for the group. By the 22nd of the month, a Committee on Arrangements is formed, with ten captains each having ten helpers to begin fund raising. Mrs. Harry Denney is named treasurer and Ethel Perkins secretary. A "Mass Meeting" of Newcomb Alumnae and students is called on the 29th. Trinity College, North Carolina, writes, asking if Newcomb would like to take part in the formation of a Southern Women's Unit. Dixon replies that all of Newcomb's efforts are being directed toward the formation of her own Unit. \$10,000 is raised by the end of July.

August 1918: The New Orleans Association of Commerce approves Newcomb for solicitation from local businesses. The Units of Wellsley, Smith, and Vassar respond to enquiries for information about their own experiences to differing degrees. Clippings from the period note a shortage of funds and a high number of applications for membership in the Unit. On the 21st, a list of members and alternates is made, but this is to be further changed.

September 1918: On the 19th, it's noted that their expectation is to depart in November. The needed \$20,000 is raised by the 23rd, while the group starts to get an idea of what equipment is needed. Then, on the 24th, the doctor that has agreed to go with the Unit backs out; she is going with another group from Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, fund raising continues, with Shampoo Day on the 28th, when several barbers donate their profits to the Unit.

October 1918: The month of October is occupied with trying to get another doctor. The Red Cross refuses to allow a higher salary for the physician, which might enhance recruitment, but advises them to contact Mrs. Conger at the American Women's Hospital for help in locating someone. With her help, they make an agreement with Dr. Poage from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Armistice: 11 November 1918

November 1918: This month is marked with more fund-raising, and waiting, in readiness, for orders to depart. However, on the 26th, Dr. Poage writes, warning them that she has heard that the Red Cross was canceling all Units going abroad since the Armistice.

December 1918: By the 4th, the Unit receives the official notification of cancellation. Dismayed but undaunted, Caroline Richardson immediately writes both the American Women's Hospital

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

and the YMCA to offer the services of their Unit. Both organizations communicated their acceptance of the prepared Unit within days. But, as the YMCA promised swift induction, their offer was accepted for the following individuals: Nettie Barnwell of Memphis, Edith Dupre of Lafayette, Celeste Eshleman of New Orleans, Edna Danziger of New Orleans, Anna Many of New Orleans, Marion Monroe of New Orleans, Mary Palfrey of New Orleans, and Caroline Richardson of New Orleans. A doctor was not required by the YMCA. Caroline Richardson remarks in her letter of acceptance to the YMCA, "...frankly, if we cannot work for others, we must work for ourselves."

On the 15th, the Unit departs for New York, and Barnard College, where a training conference is being held from December 18th to 24th. The schedule there, according to Caroline Richardson, was grueling, rising at 7:45, a heavy breakfast, an hour and a half of vigorous exercise, lectures, tours, canteen work, and interviews until bed at ten p.m.

January 1919: On the 8th the group sets sail on the Carmania, landing in France on the 23rd. The group is scattered, Dupre and Many going to Rome; Monroe and Eshleman to St. Nazaire and later Vannes; Palfrey, Barnwell, and Danziger to Brest; and Richardson given a high post in Paris, later (March) moved to the countryside near Beaune, and the American E.F. University. Dupre later (July) requests and receives orders to go to Foyer des Soldats, France.

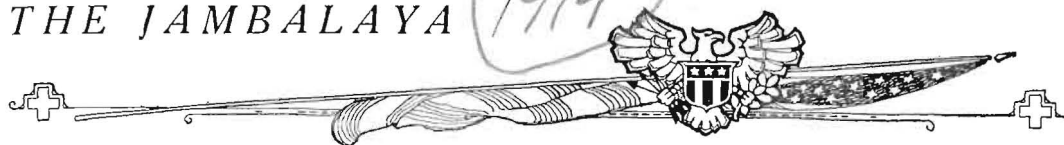
February - June 1919: 9 letters from various members of the Unit to Mrs. McLellan, the contact at home.

April 1920: The YMCA sends a final accounting of the time spent by each member of the group.

1921 & 1922: A scholarship is established, using the \$6000 surplus of the funds collected for the Relief Unit.

NEWCOMB COLLEGE ARCHIVES
Newcomb Center for Research on Women
Tulane University
New Orleans, LA 70115
504/865-5238

INVENTORY OF THE RECORDS OF
NEWCOMB RELIEF UNIT
19 APRIL 1990



The Newcomb Relief Unit



WHEN, during the spring of 1918, occasional alumnae and students wished aloud that Newcomb might be represented in war work in some definite and individual way, those who heard them echoed the wish, little dreaming that the winter of 1919 would find a unit organized and financed by the College, actively at work in Italy and in France. And those of us who worked to send that unit abroad sometimes wonder if we are not still dreaming.

To Dr. Dinwiddie, the President of the University, goes the credit for first suggesting that our vague wishes might actually be realized. It was in June that he took up the matter with the Alumnae President, Miss Anna Many. Members of the Alumnae were consulted, and waxed enthusiastic at once. And the Red Cross gladly accepted the offer of a self-financed unit of some ten members to do reconstruction work in devastated France. In July the first meeting was held, team captains were appointed, and work was actively begun. At the end of August it was possible to report that cash and pledges were enough to justify our belief that the unit was an accomplished fact. There were few very large contributions, either from the Alumnae themselves, or from outsiders; but the response was overwhelmingly cordial and overwhelmingly generous, and we can say that the Newcomb Unit is really a Newcomb Unit, supported, not by a few people, but by the great body of Alumnae and students of the College.

Applications for service, as might be expected, poured in, and the task of selection was a difficult one. In reaching a decision as to the constitution of the Unit, many things were considered: good health and endurance, a definite training in things likely to be of service, a knowledge of French, and—though it was never the first consideration—the amount of money the applicant could herself supply. Originally ten members were selected—circumstances later compelled one or two withdrawals and substitutions, and the list now stands: Caroline Richardson, '95, director; Anna Many, '07, business manager; Edna Danziger, '07; Celeste Eshleman, '06; Mary Palfrey, '09; Edith Dupre, '00; Marion Monroc, '10, and Nettie Barnwell, '09.

The Unit members began their training at once, and they learned everything, from first aid to auto-mechanics; from agricultural theories to cooking. They were vaccinated and inoculated. They read and talked French. And they provided themselves with all things that kindly friends suggested as necessary for one about to go overseas.

Then came the armistice, and a few days after the armistice came the announcement from the Red Cross that it could send no more units for service abroad. The Newcomb Unit forthwith made application to the Y. M. C. A. authorities, and was accepted at once, and on the night of December 15, they left for New York. There, so their stories go, they worked from seven in the morning until all hours of the night, filling in gaps in their education, as it were, and, between times, doing canteen work to get their hands in. And they passed more physical examinations.

On the eighth of January they sailed aboard the *Carmania*, with a motor corps unit, and units from Wellesley and Bryn Mawr. Mrs. George R. Vincent, of Chicago, was the head of the four units, and Newcomb is more than proud that Anna Many was business manager and Miss Caroline Richardson was one of the heads of the party. It lends assurance to what one of the Unit wrote, that Newcomb has never been so advertised in its life.

As yet we have only the barest outlines of what happened after that. We know that the stay in England was brief, that Paris was reached late in January, and that the Unit was at once split up and put to work. Edith Dupre and Anna Many are in Rome; Celeste Eshleman and Marion Monroe are in St. Nazaire; Mollie Palfrey, Nettie Barnwell and Edna Danziger are doing canteen work in Brest; and Caroline Richardson is on special duty in Paris.

And because these things are so, we of Newcomb feel that we are doing as a body, our share in bringing peace and sanity back to a war-torn world, and we are grateful to those of us who had the vision and the courage to dream the dream that all of us have been given the opportunity to realize.

NY Times June 16, 1919

Red Cross Contributes to Fund for Women's Hospital Units.

Announcement of a gift of \$65,000 from the American Red Cross to the American Women's Hospitals toward the fund of \$250,000, now being raised to send additional units of women doctors, dentists, nurses, and motor drivers to Serbia and Palestine, was made yesterday. According to Mrs. Charlotte M. Conger, Executive Secretary of the American Women's Hospitals, who effected an affiliation between the two organizations more than a year ago, the present gift will be applied toward the expenses of the units which will sail for Serbia this month in response to appeals received from Serbian authorities and from American women already at work there.

The gift, which includes medical and surgical supplies as well as money, will be formally accepted at today's session of the Medical Women's National Association convention at Atlantic City, where a report will be made on the overseas work of the American Women's Hospitals, which comprises nearly all the 6,500 women physicians of the United States. Dr. Mary M. Crawford of New York, chairman of the Executive Board, will describe the conditions of famine and pestilence abroad, and Mrs. Conger will report on the executive and volunteer work at national headquarters in New York and also throughout the country.

The committees on dentistry, home service, finance, and volunteer aid to men in the service will also present reports. Dr. Etta Gray, of Los Angeles, will be inducted as president of the national association by Dr. Angenette Parry, of New York, the retiring president.

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Relief Unit, 1918-1919.

Records, 1918-1922.

.05 linear feet

Location: NCCROW: NAB-030.

Accession number: 90-0024.

RESTRICTIONS: None.

ORGANIZATION & ARRANGEMENT: Chronologically arranged.

FINDING AIDS: More complete inventory available in the repository.

PRESERVATION ACTION: Highly acidic papers placed in polyester folders. Clippings copied onto Ph-neutral paper.

PROVENANCE: Found in Associate Dean's files during processing 4/90.

SCOPE & CONTENT: These records span the years between 1918 and 1922, with the bulk of the material dating from July 1918 to July 1919. Included are correspondence, minutes, clippings, applications, and financial reports produced during the formation and operation of the Newcomb Relief Unit, as well as during the creation of the Relief Unit scholarship fund.

The Newcomb Relief Unit was one of several teams from women's colleges prepared by national organizations to go to Europe during World War I. Newcomb College joined Wellsley, Smith, and Vassar in the efforts to raise the \$20,000 needed to create a Relief Unit through the Red Cross. However, letters and telegrams to and from the Red Cross, the American Women's Hospital, and the YMCA clearly document the delays and frustrations the Unit underwent in this process, and how ultimately, after the Red Cross canceled at the last moment, the Unit served with the YMCA. The experiences of these eight women, stationed at different places throughout France and Italy, have been captured through their articulate letters sent back to Helen McLellan, the contact at Newcomb. While every woman's experience was different, most worked in canteens. Especially significant are the reports of Caroline Francis Richardson, leader of the group, and Anna Many, business manager. Also included here are the minutes of meetings creating the Newcomb Relief Unit Scholarship Fund with the \$6000 surplus funds.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The decision to form the Newcomb Relief Unit was made in early July 1918. Armed with the Red Cross guidelines of what a Unit should be, preparatory efforts of fund-raising, applicant screening, equipment procuring and paperwork shuffling began immediately. By the end of July, \$10,000 was raised, and \$20,000 by the end of September. The Unit faced constant delays and problems, including the Red Cross cancellation of all Unit movements to Europe at the last minute. However, through the initiative of Caroline Richardson, the Unit soon left for training at Barnard College, NY, and then onto France. There, the eight women were split into four groups and scattered over Europe, undertaking mainly canteen work. Their length of stay varied between 3 and 9 months. The \$6000 surplus of funds were used to establish a scholarship fund.

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Folder listing:

April - August 1918

August applications

September - November 1918

November 1918 issue of the Newcomb Arcade

December 1918

January - February 1919

March - June 1919

April 1920 - January 1922

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

Chronology of events:

Spring 1918: Idea of Newcomb Unit seemed financially impossible, but still requested basic information on units from Committee on Public Information, Division on Women's War Work (April).

July 1918: Early in the month, in a casual conversation between Anna Many and Dr. Dinwiddle, then president of Tulane, the "impossible" unit is brought up. Dinwiddle, however, was enthusiastic about the idea, and advocated forming the Unit immediately. Dr. Dixon agreed, and the efforts began. The Red Cross accepted the unit soon thereafter, supplying the following guidelines: a ten member group consisting of a leader, business manager, doctor, nurse, dietitian, and social or agriculture workers; French speakers preferred; a total of \$20,000 dollars must be raised for the group. By the 22nd of the month, a Committee on Arrangements is formed, with ten captains each having ten helpers to begin fund raising. Mrs. Harry Dennery is named treasurer and Ethel Perkins secretary. A "Mass Meeting" of Newcomb Alumnae and students is called on the 29th. Trinity College, North Carolina, writes, asking if Newcomb would like to take part in the formation of a Southern Women's Unit. Dixon replies that all of Newcomb's efforts are being directed toward the formation of her own Unit. \$10,000 is raised by the end of July.

August 1918: The New Orleans Association of Commerce approves Newcomb for solicitation from local businesses. The Units of Wellsley, Smith, and Vassar respond to enquiries for information about their own experiences to differing degrees. Clippings from the period note a shortage of funds and a high number of applications for membership in the Unit. On the 21st, a list of members and alternates is made, but this is to be further changed.

September 1918: On the 19th, it's noted that their expectation is to depart in November. The needed \$20,000 is raised by the 23rd, while the group starts to get an idea of what equipment is needed. Then, on the 24th, the doctor that has agreed to go with the Unit backs out; she is going with another group from Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, fund raising continues, with Shampoo Day on the 28th, when several barbers donate their profits to the Unit.

October 1918: The month of October is occupied with trying to get another doctor. The Red Cross refuses to allow a higher salary for the physician, which might enhance recruitment, but advises them to contact Mrs. Conger at the American Women's Hospital for help in locating someone. With her help, they make an agreement with Dr. Poage from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Armistice: 11 November 1918

November 1918: This month is marked with more fund-raising, and waiting, in readiness, for orders to depart. However, on the 26th, Dr. Poage writes, warning them that she has heard that the Red Cross was canceling all Units going abroad since the Armistice.

December 1918: By the 4th, the Unit receives the official notification of cancellation. Dismayed but undaunted, Caroline Richardson immediately writes both the American Women's Hospital

Newcomb Relief Unit, 1918-1919, Records

and the YMCA to offer the services of their Unit. Both organizations communicated their acceptance of the prepared Unit within days. But, as the YMCA promised swift induction, their offer was accepted for the following individuals: Nettie Barnwell of Memphis, Edith Dupre of Lafayette, Celeste Eshleman of New Orleans, Edna Danziger of New Orleans, Anna Many of New Orleans, Marion Monroe of New Orleans, Mary Palfrey of New Orleans, and Caroline Richardson of New Orleans. A doctor was not required by the YMCA. Caroline Richardson remarks in her letter of acceptance to the YMCA, "...frankly, if we cannot work for others, we must work for ourselves."

On the 15th, the Unit departs for New York, and Barnard College, where a training conference is being held from December 18th to 24th. The schedule there, according to Caroline Richardson, was grueling, rising at 7:45, a heavy breakfast, an hour and a half of vigorous exercise, lectures, tours, canteen work, and interviews until bed at ten p.m.

January 1919: On the 8th the group sets sail on the Carmania, landing in France on the 23rd. The group is scattered, Dupre and Many going to Rome; Monroe and Eshleman to St. Nazaire and later Vannes; Palfrey, Barnwell, and Danziger to Brest; and Richardson given a high post in Paris, later (March) moved to the countryside near Beaune, and the American E.F. University. Dupre later (July) requests and receives orders to go to Foyer des Soldats, France.

February - June 1919: 9 letters from various members of the Unit to Mrs. McLellan, the contact at home.

April 1920: The YMCA sends a final accounting of the time spent by each member of the group.

1921 & 1922: A scholarship is established, using the \$6000 surplus of the funds collected for the Relief Unit.