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# Guide to the Calliopean Society, Yale College, Records

RU 857



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

July 2007

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
mssa.assist@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** RU 857

**CREATOR:** Calliopean Society (Yale College)

**TITLE:** Calliopean Society, Yale College, records

**DATES:** 1819-1855

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 4.27 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The records consist of correspondence, constitution, meeting minutes, library records, reports, income and expense reports, orations, and exhibition records documenting the activities and operations of the Calliopean Society.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ru.0857>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ru.0857>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession 2011-A-032, gift of Lynn University Library.

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### Preferred Citation

Calliopean Society, Yale College, Records (RU 857). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

The Calliopean Society of Yale College was founded in 1819, after the resignation of dissatisfied members of the Linonian Society. Although the details of the founding are obscure, a group of Southerners left Linonia, presumably angered by the demeanor of the newly elected Northern Linonian President. The group adopted the name Calliope, and established itself as the only organization at Yale dedicated to offering gentlemanly fraternity. Reaction to the founding was harsh, with Linonia immediately expelling the Calliopeans from membership and only allowing them to be reelected to membership with a two-thirds majority vote. From 1819 to 1853, Calliope, though smaller than the two major debating societies, Linonia and Brothers-in-Unity, had a strong fraternal element, which helped it to survive, often as a haven for Southerners.

Calliopeans met weekly to participate in debates, oratorical displays, and dramatic performances. In addition to these member meetings, the Society offered talent exhibitions to members of the Yale community consisting of musical and dramatic acts. The Society newsletter, *The Mirror*, provided members a chance to publish poetry and stories.

Like other societies at that time, Calliope prided itself on its library, which, by the time of its dissolution, contained nearly six thousand volumes. The Calliopean librarian maintained thorough records of the texts available. Indeed, because of the large number of volumes, Calliope had little room to store them. While the College offered a solution to the problem by allocating space to Linonia, Brothers, and Calliope in a newly built Alumni Hall in 1853, the Society had already dissolved by a vote of the members, by that time.

The reasons why the Society dissolved are not clear, but in 1853, a Committee was established within Calliope to decide upon the way in which the group would cease to exist. After much debate, the Calliopean Society was disbanded.

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## Scope and Contents

The records of the Calliopean Society document its history through minutes of meetings, legal documents, catalogs of members, librarians' records, and financial records. In addition to meeting minutes, 1819-1853, the bound volumes also contain revised constitutions and histories of the Society. Minutes of the last several weeks were written on single sheets of paper and are filed in a separate folder. Additional copies of revised constitutions and bylaws are found in separately bound volumes.

Librarians' records, 1830-1851, consist of catalogs of books, reports on acquisitions of new books, and circulation records.

Financial records, 1819 to 1855, document purchases, membership fines, and summaries of income and expenses.

Correspondence, 1837-1852, by the officers documents relations between the Society and Yale.

Exhibition records, 1820-1835, detail the dramatic, poetic, and oratorical activities of the Society.

The addition consists of one oration from 1825.

Additional documentation of the Society can be found in published material cataloged as Yeg5 C1L.

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## General note

Forms part of Yale Record Group 40 (YRG 40), Records of Yale clubs, societies and organizations.

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## Arrangement

The records are arranged alphabetically by type of material.

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## Collection Contents

### Records

b. 1, f. 1	Business papers	1835-1855
	Catalogues of members	
b. 1, f. 2	1819-1829	1819-1829
b. 1, f. 3	1819-1852	1819-1852
b. 1, f. 4	Catalogue of books	1830, 1837
b. 1, f. 5	Censor's report	1841
b. 1, f. 6	Clerk's reports	1834, undated
b. 1, f. 7	Collector's reports	1829-1837
	Constitution	
b. 2, f. 8	Revised draft	1835
	Revised, with by-laws	
b. 2, f. 9	1849	1849
b. 2, f. 10	1851	1851
b. 2, f. 11	Constitution and minutes of meetings, numbers 1-644 See also: <a href="#">Minutes of meetings, boxes 7-8, folders 31-38</a>	1819-1838
b. 2, f. 12	Correspondence	1837-1852
	Debate questions	
b. 3, f. 13	Meeting nos. 644-814	1838
b. 3, f. 14	Meeting nos. 815-1082	1843
b. 3, f. 15	Meeting nos. 1084-1097	1852
b. 3, f. 16	Exhibitions	1820-1835
	General committee reports	
b. 3, f. 17	1828-1835	1828-1835
b. 3, f. 18	1836-1841	1836-1841
	Ledgers	
b. 3, f. 19	1825-1829	1825-1829
b. 4, f. 20	1829-1833	1829-1833
b. 4, f. 21	1833-1838	1833-1838

## Ledgers (continued)

b. 5, f. 22	1838-1841	1838-1841
b. 5, f. 23	1841-1850	1841-1850
b. 6, f. 24	1845-1848	1845-1848
	1850 See: <a href="#">Ledger (oversize), box 11</a>	1850
b. 6, f. 25	Librarian's account books	
	Librarian's reports	
b. 6, f. 26	1836-1842	1836-1842
b. 6, f. 27	1843-1851, undated	1843-1851, undated
b. 7, f. 28	1847-1849	1847-1849
b. 7, f. 29	Lists of members	1840-1855
b. 7, f. 30	Literary pieces	1837-1838, undated
	Minutes of meetings	
b. 7, f. 31	Numbers 132-292	1823-1827
b. 7, f. 32	Numbers 293-446	1827-1832
b. 7, f. 33	Numbers 447-549	1832-1838
b. 8, f. 34	Numbers 644-731	1838-1840
b. 8, f. 35	Numbers 644-946	1838-1847
b. 8, f. 36	Numbers 732-827	1840-1843
b. 8, f. 37	Numbers 828-962	1843-1847
b. 8, f. 38	Miscellaneous minutes	1852, undated
b. 9, f. 39	Receipt books	1819-1828, 1839-1852
b. 9, f. 40 - 44	Receipts	1819-1853, undated
b. 9, f. 45	Secretary's reports	1819-1842
b. 10, f. 46	Treasurer's book	1842-1852
b. 10, f. 47 - 48	Treasurer's reports	1820-1850
b. 11	Ledger (oversize)	1850

## **Accession 2011-A-032: Additional Material, 1825**

- b.1 "Oration on Columbia and Her Hero with a Valedictory to be delivered before the Calliopean Society of Yale College by Basil Duke of Kentucky, New Haven, 1825."
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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

College students -- Societies, etc.  
Debates and debating  
Literature -- Societies, etc.

### **Corporate Bodies**

Calliopean Society (Yale College)  
Yale College (1718-1887) -- Societies, etc.  
Yale College (1718-1887) -- Students