

Alva Beatrice Maxey-Boyd Papers 2010/10

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Chicago Public Library: Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection

April 15, 2013

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Summary Information

Repository	Chicago Public Library: Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection
Title	Alva Beatrice Maxey-Boyd Papers,
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1932-1977
Date [inclusive]	1893-2003
Extent	15.25 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Alva Beatrice Maxey (1913-2009) was a social worker and educator. This collection is largely representative of Maxey's educational and work history, especially her time as a Professor of Sociology at Northeastern Illinois University and her work as the Community Organization Director for the Chicago Urban League in the 1950s. Also well represented is Maxey and Charles Boyd's battle to preserve their 2801 Prairie Avenue Mansion from a redevelopment project. The collection contains manuscripts authored by Maxey, certificates, diplomas, correspondence, official petitions, periodicals, and photographs, and is arranged into six series: biographical and family records, correspondence, Prairie Avenue Mansion preservation and restoration, manuscripts, and photographs.</p>

Biographical note

Alva Beatrice Maxey was born March 21, 1913 in Madison, Georgia to Charles Lincoln Maxey and Tena Beatrice Johnson-Maxey, who were both public school teachers and principals in the Atlanta area. Alva was the youngest of four children; her siblings were Chandos Maxey, Charles Maxey Jr., and Edwina Marie Maxey Austell. She attended Talladega College in Alabama from 1928-1932 where she was inducted into Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Chi Chapter and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. She then moved to Oberlin, Ohio to pursue her Master of Arts in Sociology, conferred in 1933, at Oberlin College. Maxey then attended Western Reserve University (name changed to Case Western Reserve in 1947) in Cleveland, Ohio from 1933-1935. She worked to finish her Master's thesis between 1935-1938 and received a Master's of Science in Social Administration. Alva Maxey moved to Chicago in the 1940s to work as a social worker. After World War II, she began work with the Chicago Urban League, where she was the Community Organization Director from 1950-1955. In that position, she planned, directed and supervised the Community Organization Department's programming. Its activities were aimed at stimulating and encouraging greater community participation and civic responsibility in African American communities through the formation of neighborhood Block Clubs.

After leaving her position with the Chicago Urban League, Maxey taught at Roosevelt University as an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department from 1955-1970. While she taught at Roosevelt, she regularly took courses at the University of Chicago from 1941-1965. Also during this period, Maxey moved to Canada for a short time while she pursued a doctoral degree at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. Her dissertation was entitled "A Probe into the Dimensionality of Race and Ethnic Stereotyping." Maxey received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1972. She then taught at Northeastern Illinois University from 1973-1982 as an Associate Professor of Sociology.

Maxey met Charles Wilson Turner Boyd in Chicago in the 1940s. Boyd worked at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station during World War II where he processed discharged sailors. Maxey and Boyd married June 27, 1945 in Waukegan, Illinois. After the war, Boyd attended Law School at DePaul University.

In 1948, Maxey and Boyd purchased a historic Queen Anne mansion, built for George E. Wood in 1885 and located at 2801 Prairie Avenue, in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. The previous owner, Ann Louise Wood Meadowcroft had not lived in the property for eighteen years and the house was in a state of decay. It took Maxey and Boyd four years to restore the house to its former grandeur.

In 1952 the Land Clearance Commission notified Maxey and Boyd that they wanted to obtain the house in order to expand the nearby Prairie Shores Apartments, a public housing complex, as part of a large-scale urban renewal project that had begun in 1946. Maxey and Boyd fought to save the house from demolition. Boyd was a practicing civil lawyer for the Chicago Sanitary Commission and knew the legal procedures necessary to deter the Land Clearance Commission. With the help of his legal knowledge, the couple was able to preserve their house; however, the surrounding lots on South Prairie Avenue were demolished.

After retiring from teaching in 1982, Maxey's hobby became the continued restoration and preservation of her Prairie Avenue home, which she undertook with renewed vigor after Charles Boyd's death in 1990. In October 2003 she gave a speech about the preservation of her Prairie Avenue mansion before Chicago's Landmarks Commission. The Wood-Maxey-Boyd house was designated a city landmark later that year. Maxey continued to devote her time to preserving the house until her death on February 3, 2009.

Scope and Contents note

The Alva Beatrice Maxey Papers are largely representative of Maxey's educational and work history, especially her work as a Professor of Sociology at Northeastern Illinois University. Also well represented is Alva Maxey and Charles Boyd's battle to preserve their 2801 Prairie Avenue mansion from a redevelopment project. The collection is arranged into six series: Biographical and Family Records; Correspondence; Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration; Manuscripts; Memorabilia; and Photographs. The collection contains manuscripts authored by Maxey, certificates, diplomas, correspondence, official petitions, periodicals, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Chicago Public Library: Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection April 15, 2013

Restrictions

None

Processing Information note

Processed by CLIR funded Black Metropolis Research Consortium "Color Curtain Processing Project."
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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

CHA Video Project, Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collections Chicago Urban League Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago - Special Collections and University Archives Edward Holmgren Papers, Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collections Tina Beatrice Maxey Photographs, Atlanta History Center, http://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/store/Advanced_Search.aspx?c=472

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Chicago, Ill.

Personal Name(s)

- Boyd, Charles
- Maxey, Beatrice, Alva
- Maxey, Lincoln, Charles

Subject(s)

- Chicago Urban League, Block Clubs Movement
- Oberlin college.
- Talladega College

Collection Inventory

Series I. Biographical and Family Records, 1896-1996

Scope and Contents note

This series documents Alva B. Maxey's educational, employment history, personal research, and documents pertaining to Charles Boyd and her immediate family. The series is arranged into five subseries: Educational History; Employment records; Personal interest research; Charles Boyd Biographical Papers; and Family Records. The materials largely consist of certificates, notes, correspondence, payment records, and periodicals.

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Charles, Boyd

Subseries 1. Educational History, 1923-1977

Scope and Contents note

Educational History includes diplomas, correspondence, transcripts, religious certificates, and notes regarding Maxey's education at Talladega College, Oberlin College, Redeeming Church of Christ, a church on 69th Street and S. Harper Avenue in the South Shore neighborhood; Western Reserve University, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Chicago. The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

Box**Folder**

Subseries 2. Employment Records,

Alva B. Maxey, Admittance to High School Certificate (See oversize Box 7), 1923	1	1
Talladega College Diploma, 1932	1	2
Talladega College Programs and Certificates, 1932, undated	1	3
Oberlin College Masters of Arts Diploma, 1933	1	4
Oberlin College Completion of Master's Degree, 1933	1	5
"Committee of Wives and Sweethearts of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity" Newspaper Clipping, circa 1937	1	6
Western Reserve University Commencement Program and Ticket, 1938	1	7
University of Saskatchewan Dissertation Notes and Records, 1946-1972, undated	1	8
University of Chicago Transcripts, 1967	1	9
University of Saskatchewan Correspondence, 1971-1976	1	10
University of Saskatchewan Doctor of Philosophy Diploma, 1972	1	11
Redeeming Church of Christ Certificates, 1977	1	12
Subseries 2. Employment Records, 1951-1982		

Subseries 3. Personal Interest Research,**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries documents Maxey's employment with the Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs and her teaching career as Professor of Sociology at Northeastern Illinois University. Also included is general information on higher education in Chicago. The bulk of the materials concerns Maxey's time at Northeastern Illinois, and includes correspondence, notes, and formal appeals. Although she taught at Roosevelt for a significantly longer period of time, it is not well represented in this collection. The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

	Box	Folder
Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs Publication and Program, 1951-1956	1	13
Roosevelt University Information Booklet, 1957	1	14
Educational Philosophy and Master Plan for the Chicago City College, 1968	1	15
Northeastern Illinois, Appeal for Tenure, 1975-1982	1	16
Northeastern Illinois, Board Roster, undated	1	17
Northeastern Illinois, Employment Records, 1973-1979	1	18
Northeastern Illinois, Internal Correspondence and Memoranda, 1975-1980, undated	1	19
Northeastern Illinois, Student Newspaper, 1975	1	20

Subseries 3. Personal Interest Research, 1943-1980

Subseries 3. Personal Interest Research,

Scope and Contents note

Personal Interest Research consists of newspaper articles and periodicals collected by Maxey. Though an array of topics is covered, Chicago neighborhood history is makes up a bulk of the materials. The subseries is arranged by publication title.

	Box	Folder
Adult Leadership, 1953	2	1
An Ebony Picture Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968	2	2
Bronzeville: The Past and the Promise, undated	2	3
Chicago (See oversized box 6), 1967, 1969	2	4
The Chicago Book, 1949	2	5
Chicago History, 1980	2	6
Chicago Review (See oversized box 7), 1955	2	7
Chicago Sun-Times (See oversized box 6), 1962	2	8
Club 13 – Club Malibu Card, undated	2	9
Ebony (See oversized box 6), 1967-1970	2	10
The Fennville Herald, 1968	2	11

Subseries 4. Charles Boyd Biographical Records,

Holiday (See oversized box 6), 1963	2	12
The Ohio State University Monthly, 1970	2	13
The Peachite, 1943	2	14
Reader, 1972	2	15
Time, undated	2	16
The University of Chicago Magazine, 1967	2	17
Special Interest Newspaper Clippings (See oversized box 6), 1963, undated	2	18

Subseries 4. Charles Boyd Biographical Records, 1915-1995**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries documents the life of Maxey's husband, Charles Boyd. It consists of certificates, papers relating to Boyd's education at Ohio State University and DePaul University's Law School, as well as his employment as a lawyer and real estate broker. This subseries is arranged alphabetically.

	Box	Folder
Charles Boyd certificates, 1915-1976	2	19
Charles Boyd educational records, 1946-1949	2	20

Subseries 5. Family Records,

Charles Boyd employment history, 1987, undated	2	21
Love Letter from Boyd to Maxey, 1983	2	22
Marriage License, Charles Boyd and Alva Maxey, 1945	2	23
Alva Maxey and Charles Boyd Biographical Sketch, 1995	2	24

Subseries 5. Family Records, 1896-1996**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries consists of materials regarding Alva Maxey's family, especially Alva's father, Charles Lincoln Maxey; mother Tena Beatrice Maxey; and brother, Charles L. Maxey, Jr. Included are education and employment certificates, funeral programs, and census records. The subseries is arranged alphabetically.

	Box	Folder
Charles L. Maxey, Attorney's Certificate (See oversized box 7), 1909	2	25
Charles L. Maxey, Indiana Supreme Court Certificate (See oversized box 7), 1909	2	26
Charles L. Maxey, Teacher's Certificate (See oversized box 7), 1927	2	27
Funeral program for Charles L. Maxey, Jr., 1984	2	28
Funeral program for E. Marie Maxey Austell, 1985	2	29

Series II. Correspondence,

Maxey Family Records, 1896-1996, undated	2	30
M. R. Austell, Obituary, undated	2	31
Funeral program for Tena Beatrice Maxey, 1971	2	32
Tena Beatrice Maxey, Teacher's Certificate (See oversized box 7), 1929	2	33

Series II. Correspondence, 1929-1979**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains Alva Maxey's correspondence with her mother, Tena Beatrice Maxey, as well as other cards and notes not related to her education or work.

	Box	Folder
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Correspondence, 1929-1979	2	34
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Series III. Manuscripts, 1933-2002**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains works written by Alva Maxey, including her University of Saskatchewan dissertation, her Oberlin College Master's thesis, and materials created for an exhibit about the Prairie Avenue Mansion, which include mounted newspaper articles and photographs. The exhibit material in box 5 may have been related to "The Story of Alva Beatrice Maxey Boyd," a lecture at the Glessner House Museum (1800 S. Prairie Avenue in Chicago), presented on February 25, 2007, in honor of Black History Month. This series is arranged chronologically, with the exhibit materials last.

	Box	Folder
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Series IV. Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration,

The Life of the Negro Group in Oberlin, 1933	3	1
The Block Club Movement in Chicago, 1957	3	2
“A Probe into the Dimensionality of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping,” 1971	3	3
Stereotyping and the Myth of Race, 1975	3	4
The Grand Dame of Prairie Avenue, 2002	3	5

**Series IV. Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration, 1893-2003, bulk 1950-1970
(Bulk, 1950-1970)**

Scope and Contents note

This series highlights Maxey and Boyd’s efforts to save their home on Prairie Avenue from a Chicago Housing Authority redevelopment project. It documents the couple’s research on the history of the home, correspondence with the Wood family (descendants of the first owner George E. Wood), appeals to various Chicago courts, petitions to save the house, and newspaper and periodical articles about Maxey and Boyd’s efforts. The bulk of the materials are from the 1950s and 1960s.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence. William F. Wood, 1893, 1907-1914	4	1
Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration, 1946-1953	4	2
Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration, 1953-2003	4	3

Series V. Memorabilia,

Prairie Avenue Mansion Preservation and Restoration petitions, undated	4	4
Newspaper clippings. Chicago American, 1962	4	5
Newspaper clippings. Chicago Daily, 1962	4	6
Newspaper clippings. Chicago Journal, 2003; 2005	4	7
Newspaper clippings. Chicago Reader, 2003	4	8
Newspaper clippings. Chicago Sun-Times, (See also Oversized Box 6) 1962-1970	4	9
Newspaper clippings. Chicago Tribune, 1996	4	10
Newspaper clippings, 1962-1973	4	11

Series V. Memorabilia, 1915-2003**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains mounted photographs of an exhibit that was presented at the Prairie Avenue mansion in 2007.

	Box	Folder
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Exhibit Material, 1933-1996, undated	5	N/A
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Series VI. Photographs, 1915-2003

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

Scope and Contents note

This series contains photographs documenting Maxey's personal and public life. It is split into two subseries: Family Photographs and Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs Photographs. The photographs in Box 11 seem to have been part of an exhibit.

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

	Box	Folder
Alva Maxey with mother and siblings, Alva Maxey with mother and siblings, c. 1915	8	1
Alva Maxey in class photos, 1919, undated	8	2
Charles Lincoln Maxey, Photograph by Hood Studio, circa 1930s	8	3
Alva Maxey, 1940	8	4
Calumet Avenue Improvement Club, 1940	8	5
Boyd's Law office, 1949, 1950	8	6
Maxey and Boyd's helpers, 1953	8	7
Cousin Aida and her husband, 1959	8	8
House at 439 E 45th Place, c. 1960s	8	9
Maxey, Boyd and Mary in Abingdon, Virginia, 1973	8	10

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

2801 S. Prairie Avenue mansion, 1998	8	11
Alva Maxey with her mother, undated	8	12
Edyth Marie Maxey Austell, undated	8	13
Charles Lincoln Maxey, undated	8	14
Teena Beatrice Maxey, undated	8	15
Teena Beatrice Maxey, undated	8	16
Family group photo, undated	8	17
Alva Maxey, undated	8	18
Alva Maxey, undated	8	19
Alva Maxey, 1972	8	20
Charles Maxey at graduation, undated	8	21
Maxey and Boyd, undated	8	22
Not yet identified, undated	8	23
Alva Maxey, undated	8	24

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

Charles Maxey, Photograph by Bloom Studio, undated	8	25
Charles Maxey, Photograph by Bloom Studio, undated	8	26
Charles Maxey, undated	8	27
Alva Maxey and family, undated	8	28
Portrait group shot, undated	8	29
Atlanta family home, c. 1920s	9	31
Alva Maxey, c. 1930s	9	32
Alva Maxey, c. 1930s	9	33
Alva Maxey learning to drive, 1931	9	34
Alva Maxey, Grady and Helen, 1931	9	35
Alva Maxey's graduation, 1932	9	36
Alva Maxey's graduation, 1932	9	37
Barbara and Edyth Maxey, 1932	9	38
Alva Maxey, c. 1940s	9	39

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

Family and friends, c. 1940s	9	40
Marie Maxey Austell and Alva Maxey Boyd, c. 1940s	9	41
Charles Maxey, 1947	9	42
Tena Maxey, c. 1950s	9	43
Charles III and Tena Maxey, c. 1950s	9	44
Alva and Tena Maxey, c. 1950s	9	45
Tena and Charles Maxey, 1951	9	46
Alva Maxey and Tena Maxey, 1952	9	47
Alva and Tena Maxey, 1952	9	48
Charles and Alva Maxey, 1952	9	49
Alva and Tena Maxey, 1954	9	50
Alva and Tena Maxey, 1954	9	51
Alva and Tena Maxey, 1962	9	52
Charles Boyd, 1966	9	53

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

Sledding with children, 1969	9	54
Alva Maxey at Roosevelt University, 1969	9	55
Alva Maxey, 1972	9	56
Alva Maxey Boyd, 1972	9	57
Haitian trip, 1979	9	58
Russell Simmons, Alva Maxey, Clyde Wright, Ruth, S., 1994	9	59
Alva Maxey and Charles Boyd, 1998	9	60
Bernard Turner and Alva Maxey Boyd, 2002	9	61
Bernie, Angie, Alva Maxey and Allan, 2003	9	62
Alva Maxey, undated	9	63
Alva Maxey, undated	9	64
Alva Maxey, undated	9	65
Charles Maxey III, undated	9	66
Charles Dewey Maxey, undated	9	67

Subseries 1. Family Photographs

Charles Lincoln Maxey, undated	9	68
Edith Maxey, undated	9	69
Edythe Maxey, undated	9	70
Tena Maxey, undated	9	71
Tena Maxey, undated	9	72
Vera Maxey, undated	9	73
Alva Maxey's class at Roosevelt University, undated	9	74
Family and friends, undated	9	75
Not yet identified, undated	9	76
Not yet identified, undated	9	77
Maxey family, undated	9	78
Alva Maxey, undated	9	79
Alva Maxey Boyd, undated	9	80
Alva Maxey Boyd at Roosevelt University, undated	9	81

Subseries 2. Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs Photographs

Charles and Alva Maxey, undated	9	82
Dinner event, undated	9	83
Washington Boulevard homes, undated	9	84
Unknown graduation, undated	9	85
Alva Maxey, undated	9	86
Alva Maxey at Prairie Avenue mansion, undated	9	87
Westside Women's Division, undated	9	88
Subseries 2. Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs Photographs		
	Box	Folder
Block club negatives,	10	89
Block club negatives,	10	90
Block clubs, (1 of 3), undated	10	91
Block clubs, (2 of 3), undated	10	92
Block clubs, (3 of 3), undated	10	93

Subseries 2. Chicago Urban League's Block Clubs Photographs

“Black Beautiful,” c. 1951	10	94
Black Beautiful awards program, Photo by Beatty, 1951	10	95
“We Were People,” Photo by Mildred Mead, 1952	10	96
Community organization staff, undated	10	97
Block clubs, undated	10	98
“We Planned and planned and learned,” Photo by Milwaukee Journal, undated	10	99
Block clubs, undated	10	100
“Sometimes we admire our own work,” undated	10	101
“We work and work and organize clubs,” undated	10	102
“Community organization staff, By Beatty Photo, c. 1950s	10	103
“Sometimes we had fun.” (Johnson’s farm in Michigan) undated	10	104
“Sometimes we had fun.” undated	10	105
“Sometimes we had fun.” undated	10	106

Oversized Materials:

“Some of our hardest and best workers as organizers,” undated	10	107
“We planned and planned and learn,” By Beatty Photo, undated	10	108
“We studied and planned and learned,” undated	10	109
“We worked, worked and cleaned,” Photo by Margaret Mead, undated	10	110
“Blockclub,” undated	10	111
“Some of our hardest and best workers as organizers,” undated	10	112
“Studies and planned/learned,” By Beatty Photo undated	10	113
“See How Clean We Got,” undated	10	114
“Sometimes we admire our own work,” undated	10	115
“We Worked and Worked and Cleaned and Cleaned,” undated	10	116
“Block clubs,” undated	10	117
Oversized Materials:		
	Box	Folder
Chicago, 1967, 1969	6	2/4

Oversized Materials:

Chicago Sun-Times: Park Avenue Mansion, 1968	6	4/9
Ebony, 1967-1970	6	2/10
Holiday, 1963	6	2/12
Special Interest Newspaper Clippings, 1963, undated	6	2/18
Chicago Review, 1955	7	2/7
Charles L. Maxey, Attorney's Certificate, 1909	7	2/25
Charles L. Maxey, Indiana Supreme Court Certificate, 1909	7	2/26
Charles L. Maxey, Teacher's Certificate, 1927	7	2/27
Tena B. Maxey, Teacher's Certificate, 1929	7	2/33
Alva B. Maxey, Admittance to High School Certificate, 1923	7	1/1