**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on Use</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Images</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Note</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope Note</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Headings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVENTORY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive Summary

Identifier
ICU.SPCL.COMMITTEEOF15

Title
Chicago Committee of Fifteen. Records

Date
1909-1927

Size
26 Volumes (1 box)

Repository
Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract
Also known as Manuscript Codex 1028, these twenty-six volumes were gathered for an investigation of Chicago crime, focusing on prostitution and the illegal sale of alcohol. Notes are from on-scene investigations, summaries of court records and newspaper clippings.

Information on Use

Access
The collection is open for research.

Digital Images

Original documents, texts, and images represented by digital images linked to this finding aid are subject to U. S. copyright law. It is the user’s sole responsibility to secure any necessary copyright permission to reproduce or publish documents, texts, and images from any holders of rights in the original materials.

The University of Chicago Library, in its capacity as owner of the physical property represented by the digital images linked to this finding aid, encourages the use of these materials for educational and scholarly purposes. Any reproduction or publication from these digital images requires that the following credit line be included: Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

The images presented here may include materials reflecting the attitudes, language, and stereotypes of an earlier time period. These materials are presented as historical resources in support of study and research. Inclusion of such materials does not constitute an endorsement of their content by the University of Chicago.

The University of Chicago Library appreciates hearing from anyone who may have information about any of the images in this collection.
Historical Note

The Chicago Committee of Fifteen was initially formed in 1908 as a private organization that sought to combat pandering in Chicago. Its original directive was to investigate and publicize the venues typically associated with vice. The Committee sent investigators (typically in pairs) to designated “sin districts” to gather first-hand observations such as names, addresses, phone numbers, and observed illegal activity at the end of which the task force members would contact the police and swear out affidavits. In 1911 the Committee was re-vamped to increasingly target prostitution, primarily because city officials such as Mayor Fred Busse were interested in exploring the question of whether prostitution should remain a regulated business in segregated vice districts (such as the Levee at 22nd and Dearborn) or should the districts be outlawed, thereby scattering prostitution throughout the city and making it more difficult to keep in check. There were a number of social concerns that the investigators took note of including, but not limited to, crime, vice, military personnel attendance, interracial contact, and potential illegal sexual activities (such as prostitution, miscegenation, and homosexuality).

The related Chicago Vice Commission members initially favored segregation, but eventually shifted their attitude and concluded that segregation and regulation had failed and that the vice districts should be abolished. They published a report in 1911 entitled The Social Evil in Chicago, which asserted that prostitutes had few other economic or educational opportunities for improvement.

One of the more startling findings of the Commission was the connection between low wages and a woman’s decision to enter prostitution. Generally a woman earned an income 40 percent lower than what was deemed necessary for independent living, while the average prostitute was able to earn well above it. Even though their research indicated a need for minimum-wage legislation, many members on the commission rejected any connection between wages and vice.

It was after the city refused to follow the recommendations of the Commission and establish a new city bureau to investigate and prosecute prostitution that Chicago’s anti-vice leadership passed to the Committee of Fifteen.

Typically, each entry begins with a list or addresses that the observers visited, followed by the time of day (or night) they entered and exited, and then a brief indication of the kind of information that was gleaned. Terms such as "General Observation" and "EVIDENCE" indicate what level of vice was observed. After the summary page, typically the entries of observations for the date follow.
Scope Note

Also listed as Manuscript Codex 1028, this collection is comprised of 26 volumes of material containing research data from the Committee, and an additional box of sources. Volumes 1-24 consist of the hand-written records of the researchers’ observations at particular sites and venues of supposed criminal activity. Volumes 25-26 are the records of court cases that resulted from these research endeavors and primarily address pandering allegation. The additional box contains a collection of ledgers that holds lists of addresses, the purpose of which is unclear. It is possible that these ledgers were taken out by investigators to keep track of addresses that they visited in any given evening, though there are no dates recorded to clarify. Many of them are empty or very nearly empty.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Chicago Vice Commission. The Social Evil in Chicago. 1911

Subject Headings

- Committee of Fifteen (Chicago, Ill.)
- Prostitution -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Crime -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Prohibition -- Illinois -- Chicago

INVENTORY

Volume 1

Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, April 1922-April 1923

Volume 2
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, April 1923-December 1923

Volume 3
Research Observations and address lists of locations, January 1924-February 1925

Volume 4
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, March 1924-August 1924

**Volume 5**

Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, January 1924-April 1924, February 1926-March 1926, December 1926-January 1927

**Volume 6**

Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, March 1926-September 1926

**Volume 7**

Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, November 1916-November 1917
Volume 8
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, November 1916-November 1917

Volume 9
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, August 1917-January 1918
Volume 10
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, November 1917-May 1918

Volume 11
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, November 1917-June 1918

Volume 12
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, December 1917-May 1918

Volume 13
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, May 1918-November 1918
Volume 14
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, June 1918-February 1919

Volume 15
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, June 1918-July 1919

Volume 16
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, February 1919-September 1919
Volume 17
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, November 1918-July 1919
View digitized documents, part 8. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/src/m/committeeof15-0017-08

Volume 18
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, July 1919-December 1920

**Volume 21**
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, October 1921-March 1922, September 1926-February 1926

**Volume 22**
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, August 1922-April 1923
View digitized documents, part 2. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/src/m/committeeof15-022-02
View digitized documents, part 8. http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/src/m/committeeof15-022-08

**Volume 23**
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, August 1924-August 1925, January 1926-February 1926

**Volume 24**
Research Observations, Address lists, and date/time schedules of researchers, March 1925-August 1915, December 1925-March 1926

**Volume 25**
Individual entries for court cases resulting from the Committee’s work including information on trial proceedings, October 1909-August 1915

**Volume 26**
Individual entries for court cases resulting from the Committee’s work including information on trial proceedings, August 1915-March 1926

Box 1
Folder 1
Supplemental Reports of Investigation, 1922-1923.

Box 1
Folder 2
Affidavits. Typed and handwritten

Box 1
Folder 3
Aimed at the Pimp Flyer

Box 1
Folder 4
Report of Vice Commission, draft fragment

Box 1
Folder 5
Ledger with Addresses

Box 1
Folder 6
Ledger with Addresses

Box 1
Folder 7
Ledger with Addresses

Box 1
Folder 8
Ledger with Addresses

Box 1
Folder 9
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-009

Box 1
Folder 10
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-010

Box 1
Folder 11
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-011

Box 1
Folder 12
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-012

Box 1
Folder 13
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-013

Box 1
Folder 14
Ledger, blank

Box 1
Folder 15
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-015

Box 1
Folder 16
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-016

Box 1
Folder 17
Ledger with Addresses
committeeof15-027-017

Box 1
Folder 18
Loose-leaf notes
committeeof15-027-018