Guide to the Walter E. Schmidt, S.J. & the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village Collection MSS.1989.03.08

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document the activities of Father Schmidt and the participants of the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village. Started by a
handful of youth in 1944, the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village was created as a response to what city officials deemed a
rise in juvenile delinquency during wartime. After two brief stints by others in leadership roles, Father Schmidt was
appointed director in December 1944, a position he held until the organization was dismantled forty-one years later. The
records consist of founding documents, meeting minutes, membership lists and correspondence; fundraising and publicity
materials; scrapbooks with photographs and ephemera from Youth Village events and celebrity visits; and writings about
Youth Village, Father Schmidt and juvenile delinquency. Documentation of various athletic programs affiliated with Youth
Village is also included, with more extensive coverage of the world renowned track and field and gymnastics clubs. There
are also materials documenting Father Schmidt’s life and the honors bestowed upon him. This collection is arranged into
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Language of Material: English

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Processing Information
information added by Mia Hope in 2018.

Biographical History
Born in San Francisco in 1911, Walter Schmidt, S.J. was the only child of Swiss immigrant parents. After graduating from St.
Ignatius High School, he worked at the Bank of Italy and attended the University of San Francisco at night. Schmidt joined
the Society of Jesus in 1929 and was ordained in 1941. He earned his A.B. and M.A. in psychology from Gonzaga University
and spent two years at St. Ignatius High School, where he taught Latin and algebra, organized the band and glee club and
coached baseball and swimming.

Upon receiving his S.T.L. from Santa Clara University in 1942, Father Schmidt joined the faculty and taught theology. He
assumed a succession of key administrative posts at Santa Clara University including Dean of Men, Director of Community
Relations, Vice President for University Relations, Assistant to the President and Senior Vice President. As a member of the
university’s Board of Trustees for 15 years, he was active in the founding and development of the Board of Regents and the
Board of Fellows. He was the co-founder and coordinator of the Golden Circle Theatre Party, an annual fundraising event
which brought numerous Hollywood actors to Santa Clara.

Father Schmidt is best known for his work with the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village, or the Wutzit Club as it was originally
named. Started by a handful of youth in 1944, the Wutzit Club was a response to what city officials deemed a rise in
juvenile delinquency during wartime. Father Schmidt spoke often on this topic, an epidemic he believed was due to shifting family dynamics during the war that led women to the workplace and left many homes without a patriarch as head of household.

When he took charge of the Wutzit Club in 1944, Father Schmidt established an assortment of youth recreational programs. Youth Village programming included a glee club, weekly radio broadcasts, a dramatic society, a sports program and a club newspaper. The club offered classes in art, dance, photography, sculpture, woodworking and radio repair. It also sponsored three dances a week and a variety of civic projects. By 1947, the club had 1,000 members. By 1956, when the new Santa Clara Valley Youth Village facilities opened, membership had climbed to 4,000. As a result, Father Schmidt won acclaim for sharply reducing juvenile delinquency in Santa Clara. The Youth Village was well known for producing world class athletes. From track and field to boxing, swimming to gymnastics, the programs set many world and U.S. records. Between 1956 and 1968, 16 Youth Village athletes made U.S. Olympic teams, garnering five medals. Father Schmidt himself served as chaplain for the U.S. team twice.

In the late 1960s, the Youth Village redirected its activities. It dropped some programs, such as track and field, and added others. It built a Little League baseball field and a gymnasium for the Santa Clara Valley Gymnastics Club. It also began to service different age groups, including seniors. In 1985, the Santa Clara Youth Village facility was sold, and the proceeds were used to establish a Santa Clara University scholarship in Father Schmidt’s name. Father Schmidt died April 10, 1988. In 2005, Wutzit Club alumni succeeded in their lobbying efforts to name a newly created youth center in his honor, the Walter E. Schmidt Youth Activity Center in Santa Clara, California.

Bibliography


Note: This biographical note consists of excerpts taken verbatim or paraphrased from the Father Schmidt and the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village: 50 Years a Jesuit, pamphlet.

Organizational History
Santa Clara University was founded in 1851 by the Society of Jesus as Santa Clara College and is California’s oldest operating institution of higher learning. It was established on the grounds of Mission Santa Clara de Asís, the eighth of the original 21 California missions. The college originally operated as a preparatory school and did not offer courses of collegiate rank until 1853. The institution became known as the University of Santa Clara in 1912, when the schools of engineering and law were added. For 110 years, Santa Clara University was an all-male school. In 1961, women were accepted as undergraduates and Santa Clara University became the first coeducational Catholic university in California. The number of students and faculty tripled over the next decade and the university began the largest building program in school history with eight residence halls, a student union, and an athletic stadium. In the early 1970s, the Board of Trustees voted to limit the size of the undergraduate population, an action that was intended to preserve the character and ensure the quality of the university for generations to come. In 1985, the university adopted Santa Clara University as its official name.

Bibliography


Arrangement

Scope and Content of Collection
The Walter E. Schmidt, S.J. & the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village Collection, 1944-2009 (bulk 1944-1974), documents the activities of Father Schmidt and participants of the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village from its inception in 1944 to its closure in 1985. The records consist of founding documents, meeting minutes, membership lists and correspondence; fundraising and publicity materials; scrapbooks with photographs and ephemera from Youth Village events and celebrity visits; and writings about Youth Village, Father Schmidt and juvenile delinquency. Documentation of various athletic programs affiliated with Youth Village is also included, with more extensive coverage of the world renowned track and field and gymnastics clubs. There are also materials documenting Father Schmidt’s life and the honors bestowed upon him.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Youth centers -- 20th century
Scope and Content
This series documents the history of the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village from its inception in 1944 until its closure in 1985. Included are founding documents, meeting minutes and membership lists; fundraising and publicity materials; records of proposed projects including Youth Village Manor and the Boy’s Ranch; and writings about Youth Village, Father Schmidt and juvenile delinquency.

There is documentation of the various athletic programs affiliated with Youth Village, including boxing, track and field, gymnastics and a Little League baseball team. There is more extensive coverage of track and field, including correspondence related to finding housing and employment for international athletes; fundraising; the Olympic Men’s Track & Field Committee; track meets and schedules; and the Santa Clara Valley Youth Village’s dissolution of the track team (after 16 years) in favor of building a gymnastics program.

Scrapbooks contain a wide variety of materials. Some consist predominately of newspaper clippings about Youth Village, but others include organizational records and correspondence; photographs of Youth Village events, participants and visiting Hollywood celebrities; and ephemera. Materials documenting the many theatrical productions at Youth Village can also be found in the scrapbooks. Indicative of the era in which it took place, there are photographs and ephemera from minstrel shows with actors appearing in blackface.

Note: Boxes labelled “Youth Village Scrapbook Pages” contain disassembled scrapbooks.

Arrangement
This series is arranged by format.

Box 1: Youth Village Organizational Records, 1947-1984, & undated
Folder 1: Founding Documents, 1947-1959, & undated
Folder 2: Minutes, 1947-1964
Folder 3: Minutes, 1957-1978
Folder 4, 1960-1984, & undated
Folder 5: On Juvenile Delinquency, 1955-1958
Folder 6: Projects, building construction, 1955-1957, & undated
Folder 7: Projects, Boy’s Ranch, 1958-1959
Folder 8: Projects, The Youth Village Manor, 1964-1965
Folder 9: Publicity, 1958-1981, & undated
Folder 10: Wutzit Club, 1948-1984, & undated

Box 2: Youth Village Membership Lists, 1958-1969
Folder 1: 1958
Folder 2: 1959
Folder 3: 1960
Folder 4: 1961
Folder 5: 1962
Folder 6: 1963
Folder 7: 1969

Box 3: Writings about Youth Village, 1948-1979, & undated
Folder 1: Thesis about Youth Village, 1948
Folder 2: 1949-1966, & undated
Folder 3: undated
Folder 4: Newspaper Clippings, 1955-1979
Box 4: Santa Clara Valley Youth Village Track Team, 1953-1968, & undated
  Folder 1: Correspondence, 1953-1959
  Folder 2: Correspondence, 1960
  Folder 3: Correspondence, 1960
  Folder 4: Correspondence, 1961
  Folder 5: Correspondence, 1965-1968, & undated
  Folder 6: Fundraising, 1958-1964
  Folder 7: Correspondence, 1960-1961
  Folder 8: Organizational records, 1957-1968
  Folder 9: Photographs, undated
  Folder 10: Photographs from the Olympic Games (non-SCU), 1956
Box 5: Santa Clara Valley Youth Village Track Team, 1956-1968
  Folder 1: Amateur Athletic Union, 1956-1968
  Folder 2: Amateur Athletic Union, 1960-1963
  Folder 3: Articles/publicity, 1959-1968
  Folder 4: 1963-1966
Box 6: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1944-1958
Box 7: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1944-1973
Box 8: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1945-1983
Box 9: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1950-1959, 1980
  Folder 1: 1950-1980
  Folder 2: 1950-1980
  Folder 3: 1950-1980
  Folder 4: 1950-1980
  Folder 5: 1950-1980
  Folder 6: 1950-1980
  Folder 7: 1950-1980
  Folder 8: 1950-1980
  Folder 9: 1954-1959
  Folder 10: 1954-1959
  Folder 11: 1954-1959
Box 10: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1955-1956
  Folder 1: 1955
  Folder 2: 1955
  Folder 3: 1955
  Folder 4: 1955
  Folder 5: 1955
  Folder 6: 1955
  Folder 7: 1955
  Folder 8: 1955
  Folder 9: 1956
  Folder 10: 1956
  Folder 11: 1956
  Folder 12: 1956
Box 11: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1957-1959
  Folder 1: 1957
  Folder 2: 1957
  Folder 3: 1957
  Folder 4: 1958-1959
  Folder 5: 1958-1959
  Folder 6: 1958-1959
  Folder 7: 1958-1959
  Folder 8: 1958-1959
  Folder 9: 1958-1959
Box 13: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, circa 1950-1975
  Folder 1: 1950-1975
  Folder 2: 1950-1975
Series I. Youth Village, 1944-1988, & undated

- Folder 3: 1950-1975
- Folder 4: 1960
- Folder 5: 1960
- Folder 6: 1960
- Folder 7: 1960
- Folder 8: 1960

Box 14: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1960-1963
- Folder 1: 1960
- Folder 2: 1960
- Folder 3: 1960
- Folder 4: 1960
- Folder 5: 1960-1961
- Folder 6: 1960-1961
- Folder 7: 1960-1961
- Folder 8: 1960-1961
- Folder 9: 1963
- Folder 10: 1963
- Folder 11: 1963
- Folder 12: 1963

Box 15: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1964-1988
- Folder 1: 1964
- Folder 2: 1964
- Folder 3: 1964
- Folder 4: 1964
- Folder 5: 1967-1969
- Folder 6: 1967-1969
- Folder 7: 1967-1969
- Folder 8: 1972-1988
- Folder 9: 1972-1988

Box 16: Youth Village Scrapbook Pages, 1967-1968

Box 17: Youth Village 25th Anniversary Scrapbook, 1969

Box 18: Golf Tournament Scrapbook, 1971-1973

Box 19: Santa Clara Valley Youth Village Gymnastics Club Scrapbook, circa 1972-1984

Box 20: Youth Village Photographs, undated

Box 21: Youth Village Slides, undated

Items 1-5: Youth Village Newspaper Articles (laminated) & Rome Olympics Poster, 1950-1970

Series II. Walter Schmidt, S.J. Life & Honors, 1947-2009, & undated

Scope and Content

This series documents the honors and recognition Father Schmidt received for his years of service to the Santa Clara and Santa Clara University communities. Included are correspondence; materials from the Father Walter Schmidt, S.J. Recognition Dinner and his Golden Jubilee; writings about Father Schmidt; his travel photographs; and commentary on violent dissent and the American way. Also included are materials related to the Father Schmidt Scholarship at Santa Clara University and the successful effort of Wutzit Club alumni to name a youth activity center in his honor, the Walter E. Schmidt Youth Activity Center in Santa Clara, California.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by format.

Box 22: Personalia, 1964-1986, & undated

- Folder 1: Barry Goldwater, 1964
- Folder 2: 1968-1986
- Folder 3: Recognition Dinner, 1969
- Folder 4: 50 Years as a Jesuit, 1979
- Folder 5: Photographs from a Golden Jubilee, 1980
Folder 6: Souvenirs, 1966-1980, & undated
Folder 7: Vietnam Trip Photographs, undated
Folder 8: Father Schmidt Scrapbook, undated
Folder 9: Father Schmidt Scrapbook, undated
Folder 10: Father Schmidt Scrapbook, undated

Box 23: Wutzit Club Alumni & the Father Schmidt Scholarship, 1947-2009
   Folder 1: Wutzit Club Alumni, 1947-2009
   Folder 2: Wutzit Club Alumni, 1947-2009
   Folder 3: Wutzit Club Alumni, 1947-2009
   Folder 4: Wutzit Club Alumni, 1947-2009
   Folder 5: Scholarship, 1984-1988
   Folder 6: Scholarship, 1984-1988
   Folder 7: Dedication of Walter Schmidt Youth Activity Center (Fr. Donnely), 2006

Series III. Audiovisual Materials, 1953-1974, & undated

Scope and Content
This series includes reel-to-reel audio recordings and films documenting Father Schmidt’s personal and professional life. Included are audio recordings of Father Schmidt’s lectures on youth and the family (1958); a radio interview (1959); and a Golden Circle Theatre Party and films with titles such as “Sketches in Music” (1953), “Building Tomorrow Today” and “Father Schmidt in Alaska” (1955).

Note: Audiovisual materials are not available for playback at this time.

Box 24: Audiovisual Materials, 1953-1974, & undated
Box 25: Audiovisual Materials, 1953-1974, & undated