

Bridgewater State University

Maxwell Library
Archives & Special Collections

Bridgewater Improvement Association Records, 1901 - Current (MSS-030)

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley, March 2018*

Last Updated: April 29, 2019

Volume: 3 linear feet (2 document boxes and oversized material)

Acquisition: All items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by the Bridgewater Improvement Association.

Access: Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright: The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the Maxwell Library will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the University Archivist.

Bridgewater Improvement Association Administrative History

The Bridgewater Improvement Association (BIA) was founded in 1901 as the Bridgewater Village Improvement Society. The organization's objective upon being created was to create a better town, both to look at and to live in. The original constitution stated the focus of the group: "the promotion of order, beauty, and public welfare." Arthur C. Boyden, head of Bridgewater State Normal School from 1906 to 1933, was voted the first president of the BIA in 1901.

From its inception in 1901 to the present, the BIA has dedicated itself to the beautification of Bridgewater without the help of taxpayer dollars. In 1966 Flora T. Little, who joined the BIA Executive Board in 1904 and was a long-time member, set up a trust fund for the organization called the "Little Tree & Park Fund." In the late 1970s the BIA was responsible for the creation of the fountain in front of the Academy Building in Bridgewater. Upon the Academy Building's large-scale renovations between 2015 and 2017, the BIA helped the town's cause by re-constructing the fountain they originally put in during the 1970s. The organization is still active within the Bridgewater community.

Scope and Content Note

The collection focuses on annual and regular meeting minutes dating back to 1901, as well as financial documents pertaining to the numerous projects and yearly expenses the BIA spent on beautifying and bettering the town.

Box and Folder List**Box 1****Folder**

1. Ledger – annual meeting minutes, 1901-1948
2. Ledger – annual meeting minutes, 1949-1966
3. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1913-1945
4. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1946-1972
5. Ledger – meeting minutes, 1972-1991
6. Ledger – financial and membership lists, 1901-1915
7. Ledger – financials, 1967-1990
8. Random financial statements, 1979-1997
9. Ledger – financials, 1990-1996
10. Meeting minutes, 1989-2003
11. President's files, 1993-2001
12. Meeting minutes, financials, president's files, 2002-2008
13. Meeting minutes, financials, president's files, 2009-2016

Box 2**Folder**

1. Constitution and list of members of the Bridgewater Village Improvement Society, 1901
2. BIA constitutions/by-laws, 1960, 1990, undated
3. Articles of Organization (went from BIA to BIA, Inc.), 1969
4. BIA mission and areas it maintains, c. 2016
5. BIA brochure, 1957
6. Copy of land deed for "Little Park," 1934
7. Flora T. Little Trust (creation of), 1966
8. "Little Tree & Park Fund" account financials, 1967-1971
9. Quitclaim Deed for Little Park, 2016
10. Mary Caroline Bryant Trust, includes information on money she gave the Ousamequin Club as well as the BIA, 1965-1993
11. Edward A. MacMaster Trust (creation of), 1966
12. Quitclaim Deed, Louis N. Vinios to BIA dealing with part of Central Square, 1988
13. BIA legal documents, 1970-1988
14. List of BIA officials, 1960-1971
15. Adoption of new BIA seal, undated
16. BIA Proclamation from town of Bridgewater, c. 2016
17. BIA financial documents, 1976, 1978, 1986
18. BIA invoices, 1995-2009
19. Blue print of Bridgewater Central Square, 1983
20. BIA membership information, 1980-2000
21. Research on BIA origins in 1886
22. BIA early history write up and research, 2016
23. BIA history research, early 1900s
24. BIA history research, 1920s

25. BIA news clippings, 1960s
26. BIA history, news clippings, projects, and financials, 1970s
27. BIA history, news clippings, projects, and brochures, 1980s
28. BIA history and news clippings, 1990s
29. BIA history research (includes walking tour notes) from early 2000s, 2000-2009
30. BIA history and news clippings, undated
31. Documents pertaining to original fountain at Academy Building, 1976-1978
32. Photographs of original Academy Building fountain, c. 1979
33. Slides of past projects, 1970s-1980s
34. Slides from "Progress of Little Common," 1979-1983
35. BIA work at the new Scotland Field, 1978-1979
36. Town of Bridgewater: City and Town Common's Program – Town Common/Mini Park/War Memorial Proposal, 1985-1988
37. BIA projects—Pleasant Street, undated
38. Documents on projects, 1996-2001
39. BIA and Town Hall renovation, 2010-2011
40. Academy Building fountain, notes, acknowledgements, and agreements, 2013-2017
41. News clippings on new Academy Building fountain, 2015-2017
42. Photograph album of BIA projects, 2013-2017
43. Videos—100th anniversary reception; Walking Bridgewater program, 2001, 2002
44. Binder, "Town of Bridgewater Academy Plaza – Perspective," includes administrative information and more on the construction of the plaza fountain, 2015-2017

Oversized Material:

- Original Academy Plaza fountain plans, 1975 and 1978
- Copy of original Academy Plaza fountain plans, 1975 and 1978
- Plans for Academy Plaza fountain, 2016