

Beverly Improvement Society Papers (1888-1991)

MSS: #033

Processed by: Jo Dutilloy, (Apr 2019)

Volume: 7 Boxes and 5 Binders, 3ft 11in

Abstract:

The records of the Beverly Improvement Society. Collection includes secretary records from the founding of the organization until 1991. The records cover society members and leadership as well as projects and initiatives to beautify the parks and homes of Beverly since 1888.

Collection Creator:

Beverly Improvement Society

Provenance:

Given to Historic Beverly by the Beverly Improvement Society beginning in 2010.

Processors Note:

This finding aid was based on the collection as stored at the Historical Beverly Archives in 2019. Some secretary, treasurer, and membership notes were stored in binders and notebooks which were kept loose in boxes or as free standing books. Binder materials were rehoused in archive safe plastic binders by a previous archivist.

The majority of the collection was loose documents in file folders. The descriptions and dates of many boxes and files did not accurately reflect the contents. The processor attempted to keep the documents grouped in the way they were filed. It is assumed that the order in which files were grouped in January of 2019 were in some way reflective of their organization by the Improvement Society. Where groups of files seemed miscellaneous, efforts were made to keep the files together to reflect the way the Beverly Improvement Society conducts regular business based on the order of documents and meetings found in Recording Secretary notes and binders.

Meeting minutes, financial records, and administrative documents are organized by date. The rest are organized by topic and by date within those topics where possible. Undated items are filed with the papers they were filed closest to.

There remain some preservation issues, notably several of the binders are full of adhesive and interleaved with newspaper clippings. Administrative Documents files also include some clippings in their original acidic paper that have not been photocopied. These should eventually be photocopied onto acid free paper to better preserve the contents.

Copyright:

Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Curator of Collections in the Cabot House of Historic Beverly

Preferred Citation:

Title of Document, Beverly Improvement Society Papers, Historic Beverly, 117 Cabot Street, Beverly, MA 01915

Historical Note

Beverly Improvement Society was established in 1888 to “improve and adorn the town of Beverly and to preserve its natural beauties” according to the original By-Laws. The officers consisted of the first president Mrs. William C Boyden, a vice president, a treasurer, and 2 secretaries including Ms Bessie A. Baker. The executive committee was made up those officers, ten members, and chairmen of sub committees. Later a board of trustees was added. Annual meetings are held every September and executive meetings are held every month. The group was open to be joined by any member of the public for \$1 per year or by planting 1 or more trees in Beverly.

Since its founding, the group has gathered funding and initiatives regarding planting trees, maintaining beaches and parks, advocating for environmental health, and inspiring community involvement in local beautification. The Beverly Improvement Society is the primary caretaker of Lynch Park and received annual funds from the will of David Lynch to maintain and plant the garden. The collection includes records of what plantings were made and how much they cost. The group was also involved in significant building and renovation projects in Lynch park.

Since the beginning of the society, there have been initiatives to encourage local planting especially among children. What started as a children’s backyard gardening contest developed into a gardening contest at schools. The collection retains application slips and winner results as well as photographs of some of the backyards and gardens.

The group was also involved in collaborative efforts with other local environmental advocacy and protection groups around issues like Dutch Elm Disease, air and water pollution. In 1961-1963, the Beverly Improvement Society attended and followed legislative initiatives regarding air pollution and smoke ordinance regulation.

Beverly Improvement Society is still active today.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of documents focused on the organization of the Beverly Improvement Society. This includes correspondence, treasurer records, annual reports, meeting minutes, and other financial documentation. There are also newspaper clippings both separate

and interfiled with other administrative documents. Most of the material is dated and organized chronologically where appropriate.

The “Administrative Documents” description is unique to this collection. It reflects the items interfiled together which fall under the kinds of documents included in the Secretary Records: correspondence, meeting minutes, annual reports, newspaper clippings, financial documentation, and occasionally other miscellaneous items. There may be some duplication between the Secretary Records and corresponding Administrative Documents.

Secretary Records and Administrative Documents cover the regular business of the Improvement Society. They note the status of projects, funding, and topics of interest to the group. Annual reports from committees included in these files summarize the work based on the year. Membership can also be determined from these records as well as from the earlier membership books. Receipts might be used to identify local businesses and their locations at the time of the transaction.

The collection also includes a series of collected files that had an unusually large timespan. Some of these include notes for anniversary celebrations. The processor chose to keep these together instead of distributing them into administrative document folders and has labeled them based on the anniversary date that most nearly follows the latest date of the items in the folder. They are filed under Series VIII Miscellaneous, Subseries A: Retrospectives.

Of note: the collection includes photographs taken of backyards and gardens in Beverly in 1895 and 1914 including addresses. These can be found under the Yard Improvement subseries of Series VI: Initiatives and Projects. Photographs of an outdoor society event in 1983 are filed with other Administrative Documents for that year.

Keywords/Access Points

1800s
19th century
1900s
20th century
parks
community
organization
gardens
Lynch Park

Series List

The collection is arranged into 8 series. 3 of the series are organized into subseries.

Series I: Recording Secretary Notes

Series II: Treasurer Journals

Series III: Membership Books

Series IV: Administrative Documents 1941-1991

Series V: Financial Records

Subseries A: Treasurer Papers 1938-1964

Subseries B: Financial Statements 1976-1990

Subseries C: Receipts 1949-1965

Subseries D: Checkbook Records

Subseries E: Bank Statements and Deposits

Subseries F: Legacies and Probate Wills

Subseries G: Miscellaneous

Series VI: Initiatives and Projects

Subseries A: Yard Improvement

Subseries B: Parks

Subseries C: Legal Projects

Subseries D: Miscellaneous

Series VII: Newspaper articles and photos

Series VIII: Miscellaneous

Subseries A: Retrospectives

Subseries B: Ribbons

Subseries C: Associated Organizations Documents

Content List

Series I: Recording Secretary Notes (1903-1979)

Location	Box	Content	Date
9D	1	Secretary's Book	1903-1912
9D	1	Secretary's Book	1912-1921
9E		Secretary Binder	1921-1937
9E		Secretary Binder	1937-1950
9E		Secretary Binder	1950-1959
9E		Secretary Binder	1959-1967
9E		Secretary Binder	1967-1974
9E		Secretary Binder	1975-1979

**Series II: Treasurer Journals
(1888-1959)**

Location	Box	Content	Date
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1888-1898
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1898-1910
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1910-1933
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1933-1941
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1941-1951
9D	2	Treasurer Book	1951-1959

**Series III: Membership Books
(1933-1940)**

Location	Box	Content	Date
9D	2	Oversize Membership Book	Undated
9D	2	Membership Book	1933-1940

**Series IV: Administrative Documents
(1941-1991)**

Series/Arrangement Note: Administrative Records is the name for the general assortment of files found in folders and secretary notes. These records include correspondence, meeting minutes, committee reports, newspaper clippings, and other notes mixed together. This grouping also matches Recording Secretary's documents and what is presumed to be the order of Improvement Society Meetings. They have been organized into individual file folders based on the Beverly Improved Society financial year as described in the By-Laws, from October 1st to October 1st of consecutive years.

No files were made for the dates 1942-43, 1947-48, 1954-55, 1955-56, 1974-75, 1977-78, 1981-82, 1982-83 because no documents were associated with those dates.

File labeled "Undated" contains files originally found in a folder with range of dates 1961-1966

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1941-1942
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1943-1944
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1944-1945
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1945-1946
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1945-1947
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1948-1949
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1949-1950
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1950-1951
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1951-1952
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1952-1953
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1953-1954
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1956-1958
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1958-1959

9D	3		Administrative Documents	1959-1960
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1959-1960
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1960-1961
9D	3		Administrative Documents	Undated (1961-1966)
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1961-1962
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1962-1963
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1963-1964
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1964-1965
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1965-1966
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1966-1967
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1967-1968
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1968-1969
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1969-1970
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1970-1971
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1971-1972
9D	3		Administrative Documents	1972-1973
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1973-1974
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1975-1976
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1976-1977
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1978-1979
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1979-1980
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1980-1981
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1983-1984
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1984-1985
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1985-1986
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1986-1987
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1987-1988
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1988-1989
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1989-1990
9D	4		Administrative Documents	1990-1991

Series V: Financial Records

Subseries A: Treasurer Notes (1938-1964)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	4		Treasurer Notes	1938-1945
9D	4		Treasurer Notes	1945-1952
9D	4		Treasurer Notes	1952-1958
9D	4		Treasurer Notes	1958-1964

Subseries B:
Financial Statements
(1976-1990)

Series/Arrangement Note: Bound copies of audits, etc. were put together by an accounting firm. Missing years were not included in this collection but may be found in recording secretary notes or administrative documents for that year.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	4		Financial Statements	1976-1980
9D	4		Financial Statements	1981-1985
9D	4		Financial Statements	1989-1990

Subseries C:
Receipts
(1949-1965)

Series/Arrangement Note: There is no file for 1954-55 because no documents corresponded to those dates.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	4		Receipts	1949-1950
9D	4		Receipts	1950-1951
9D	4		Receipts	1951-1952
9D	4		Receipts	1952-1953
9D	4		Receipts	1953-1954
9D	4		Receipts	1955-1956
9D	4		Receipts	1956-1957
9D	5		Receipts	1957-1958
9D	5		Receipts	1958-1959
9D	5		Receipts	1959-1960
9D	5		Receipts	1960-1961
9D	5		Receipts	1961-1962
9D	5		Receipts	1962-1963
9D	5		Receipts	1963-1964
9D	5		Receipts	1964-1965

Subseries D:
Checkbook Records
(1929-1945, 1952-1962)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	5		Checkbooks	1929-1942
9D	5		Paid Checks	1843-1945
9D	5		Paid Checks	1952-1956
9D	5		Paid Checks	1956-1958
9D	5		Paid Checks	1958-1962

Subseries E:
Bank Statements and Deposits
(1941, 1945-1961)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	5		Bank Statements	1941 and 1945-1947
9D	5		Bank Statements	1948-1949
9D	6		Bank Statements	1950-1951
9D	6		Bank Statements	1952-1953
9D	6		Bank Statements	1954-1955
9D	6		Bank Statements	1956-1957
9D	6		Bank Statements	1958-1959
9D	6		Bank Statements	1960-1961
9D	6		Bank Deposits	1914-1939, 1945-1947, 1949-1951
9D	6		Bank Deposits	1951-1954, 1954-1958, 1958-1962

Subseries F:
Legacies and Probate Wills

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	6		Legacies and Probate Wills	

Subseries G:
Miscellaneous

Series/Arrangement Note: Originally in a loose box with other financial records. Includes Cancelled checks, Expenditures, 1952-53

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	6		Miscellaneous	

Series VI: Initiatives and Projects

Subseries A:
Yard Improvement
(1903, 1924, 1895)

Series/Arrangement Note: Backyards and House Photos books include pictures of homes and their respective addresses on the day they were taken.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	1		Yard Prize Photos Book	1924
9D	1		Backyards Book	1903
9D	6		House Photos	1895
9D	6		School Children's Garden Contest	Undated

Subseries B:
Parks
(1973)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	6		Survey of Beverly Parks	1973
9D	7		Lynch Park	

Subseries C:
Legal Projects
(1961-1963)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7		Air Pollution and Smoke Ordinance	1961-1963

Subseries D:
Miscellaneous
(1945)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7		Notable Women of Beverly	Undated
9D	7		By Law Amendment	1945

Series VII: Newspaper articles and photos
(1959-1982)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7		Planning Board Public Hearing	1963
9D	7		Newspaper Articles and Photos	1959-1982

Series VIII: Miscellaneous

Subseries A:
Retrospectives
(1888-1982)

Series/Arrangement Note: 70th Anniversary file includes Lynch Park Transparencies. 95th/100th Anniversary file includes 50th and 75th anniversary notes.

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7		Misc or 40 th Anniversary	1889-1928
9D	7		Misc or 65 th Anniversary	1954-1961
9D	7		Misc or 70 th Anniversary	1888-1958
9D	7		Misc or 95 th /100 th Anniversary	1896-1980
9D	7		Misc or 100 th Anniversary	1888-1982

Subseries B:
Ribbons
(Undated)

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7		Ribbons awarded to Historic Beverly	Undated

Subseries C:
Associated Organizations Informational Documents

Location	Box	Folder	Content	Date
9D	7	1	Associated Organizations Informational Documents	
9D	7	2	Associated Organizations Informational Documents	

Bibliography

Beverly Improvement Society, Historic Beverly, 117 Cabot Street, Beverly, MA 01915