

Field Services report for Bentonsport Improvement Association

12/2023

Submitted by Amy Groskopf

Current conditions:

The Bentonsport Improvement Association (BIA) is fortunate that their members have received donations of historical materials relating to the history of Bentonsport from a variety of current and former residents. These materials are stored in private homes but were donated by the original owners with the idea that they would be preserved and available to anyone interested in the history of Bentonsport.

Project Goals:

The BIA members want to make sure that the historical materials entrusted to them are properly stored and can be made available to researchers and their own members. They also are concerned about the long-term preservation of the documents, including making sure that materials are not inadvertently destroyed or lost due to the fact that they are being stored in private homes. They are also interested in scanning some of the materials to provide improved access as they do not currently have a building that can act as an archive or reading room. The BIA would like to apply for grant funds through the HRDP program and others in order to better preserve and provide access to these historical records.

Recommendations:

My recommendations fall under the following broad categories: legal issues involving ownership of the materials; surveying and organizing the materials; physical preservation of the materials; and digitization for access.

Legal Issues:

At this point the majority of the materials are legally owned by private individuals rather than the BIA and are stored in private homes. While the BIA is very fortunate that local residents recognized other residents who are interested in preserving these materials and were willing to donate the materials to them, this does present some challenges. First, if something were to happen to one of the current owners of the records there is no guarantee that their heirs would give the materials to another BIA member or that they might even recognize the value of the materials and just dispose of them. In addition, grant funders are unlikely to fund preservation and access projects for items that are in private hands. It is also very difficult for the BIA to share the materials with their community and any other interested parties.

While the BIA does not currently have a facility that can be used to store all of the materials in one location, they can resolve the ownership issue fairly easily using the following steps:

-create a simple deed of gift form (a sample form is attached)

-do a broad inventory of the materials, noting the original donor/owner of the materials; the current owner and location of the materials; and a brief description of the materials. A draft survey form is attached.

-use the deed of gift and description of the records created during the survey to formally transfer ownership of the materials from the current owner to the BIA.

-place clear labels on the boxes of materials indicating that they are the property of the BIA so that it is clear to anyone unfamiliar with the materials (such as an estate executor) that these items belong to the BIA.

Surveying and providing access to the materials:

As stated above, a broad initial survey of the materials is an essential first step in resolving the ownership of the materials. Once completed the survey information can be used to make a plan for the further organization and preservation of the materials. With materials scattered in the community it is difficult to truly understand the volume of materials as well as the preservation needs. Once completed it will be possible to use the information to create a budget for purchase of preservation storage materials – archival boxes, acid-free folders, etc. It will also help to understand the preservation challenges in the materials – how many scrapbooks that have “magnetic” pages; number of photographs; any audio or video tapes, etc.

The survey will also help identify materials and/or collections of special historical significance. This information will inform any grant applications as well as assist in setting priorities for processing the material. Processing the collections does not need to be done in great detail or be overly complicated. Using the survey information as a starting point, a collection from a local organization or business can be considered “processed” with the following information:

Name of the organization or business

Brief description/history of the organization or business

Inclusive dates of the records

General information about the types of records – membership records; financial records; correspondence; photographs; foundational records such as articles of incorporation, etc

Box and/or folder list of the records such as the example below:

Box 1: articles of incorporation and membership records

Box 2: financial records

Box 3: scrapbooks about members and organization events

Box 4: ephemera, including flyers about events

As the box or folder list is created the materials can be re-boxed and/or placed in appropriate preservation enclosures.

Records of an individual or family can be handled in much the same way – substituting a brief biography for the description of the organization.

The finding aids can be placed in a binder and stored at the current BIA community center. They can also be shared with the local public library and other area historical societies. Eventually they can also be shared online.

Preservation of materials:

I only looked at a small sample of the materials that are part of this project. Assuming these materials are typical, they are in generally stable condition with no visible water, mold or insect damage. Some of the photo albums and scrapbooks are in volumes that use “magnetic” pages to hold the items. If possible these album pages should be scanned and/or copied to retain the original organization and then disassembled and the individual items placed in folders and separated by interleaving sheets.

The remainder of the materials need to be re-boxed and or foldered using archival boxes and folders or other archival enclosures based on the type of material.

The items should then be stored in spaces where the temperature and humidity are as stable as possible – avoiding basements and attics as much as possible. They should also be stored in locations where they are not subject to damage if a water pipe or roof might leak or that may be subject to flooding. Once housed in archival enclosures and stored in a safe location the materials are likely stable enough to remain in good condition for a number of years. Ongoing monitoring to detect insect or mold damage will help ensure the materials remain in stable condition.

Digitizing the collections:

The purpose of digitizing the collections is to provide better access for researchers and build awareness of the interesting history of the Bentonsport area. Use of digital copies will also prevent damage from the physical handling of the materials.

With no paid staff I do not recommend hosting your own website to share your digitized collections. There are free and low-cost options available that provide some support and training and also handle site security. Relying on a volunteer with technical expertise only works for as long as the volunteer is available. Using a hosted site and one of the software platforms mentioned below will also allow individual volunteers to work remotely and simultaneously to upload and describe digital objects.

Some of the best procedures I have found for scanning materials for access can be found on the website for the Iowa Heritage Digital Collections. Information about this project is available here: [Frequently Asked Questions · Iowa Heritage Digital Collections](#). This project uses a shared platform, administered by the State Library of Iowa using Omeka software. Although the Bentonsport Improvement Association is not, strictly speaking, an historical society, it does function as such for the community and will likely be eligible to participate in the Iowa Heritage Digital Collections project. Contact for the project at the State Library is Tom Keyser: Tom.Keyser@iowa.gov.

Another option for digital hosting is the Internet Archive. A good example of what this could look like is from the Scott County Library System: [User Account \(archive.org\)](#).

If the BIA prefers to have a dedicated website to share their digitized collections, one of the least expensive options is likely to be an Omeka site. They have reasonably inexpensive options to host collections for individual organizations. The software supports description of individual scanned objects that is consistent with the current standards for description of digital objects. <https://omeka.org> The available option at omeka.net, which provides a hosted service is the option I recommend.

ContentDM is another software that functions very similarly and provides good support and training. They also host digital collections. I have worked with this software fairly extensively – an example of a contentDM site is the Upper Mississippi Valley Digital Image Archive: [Upper Mississippi Valley Digital Image Archive - Upper Mississippi Valley Digital Image Archive \(umvphotoarchive.org\)](http://umvphotoarchive.org) The downside to using ContentDM is the cost – it is quite expensive.

Another software that might be of interest is Past Perfect: [PastPerfect: The World's Leading Collections Management Software \(museumssoftware.com\)](http://museumssoftware.com). This software is designed to manage many aspects of collection management for museums and is generally used by museums, rather than archives and libraries. However, it does have the capability to host and manage digital collections.

One of the most important pieces of a successful digital collections project is the description of each item in the collection. I recommend working with someone who is trained in describing digital collections before starting on this type of project. This becomes more and more important as the digital collection increases in size. If you have small collection of perhaps 50 items it is reasonably easy to click your way through each item. As the collection grows in size it needs to be searchable and use of a controlled vocabulary and creating standards to describe your digital objects becomes very important to the success of your project.

Scanning equipment: To scan items for increased access rather than preservation, a resolution of 600dpi is sufficient. Most scanners designed for home or office use will scan at that resolution. The size of the scanning bed also needs to be considered – 11" x 17" is the minimum to provide the flexibility to scan scrapbook pages and other oversized items. If there are items much larger than 11" x 17" it is likely more cost effective to take the items to a commercial vendor such as a FedEx store. It may be useful and cost effective to purchase a combination scanner/copier/printer that would meet additional needs to copy survey sheets and print finding aids for example.

Box number: _____

Location: _____

Organization or person who created the records: _____

Inclusive dates: _____

Provenance (how did the items come to the current owner or the BIA): _____

Type of material	amount	Items of note
Photographs		
Negatives		
Diaries		
Scrapbooks		
Papers (letters, etc.)		
Published books		
Bound volumes (ledger books, etc.)		
Ephemera (broadsides, posters, menus, etc.)		
Maps		
Architectural Plans		
Artifacts (any 3D items)		
Audio recordings		
Video recordings		
Other		

Items of special significance, if any: _____

Condition of items: _____

Immediate threats to items (mold, insects, etc.): _____

Checklist prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Joan Holt Papers on the Indian Point Energy Center

CALL NUMBER

TAM.754

DATE

1978-1989, inclusive

CREATOR

Holt, Joan

EXTENT

11 linear feet in 11 record cartons

LANGUAGE OF MATERIALS

Materials are in English.

ABSTRACT

Joan Holt was the Director of the Indian Point Project at the New York Public Interest Research Group in the late 1970s and early 1980s. She also was involved in activism concerning disarmament, civil rights, women's rights, and United States involvement in the Vietnam War. The Joan Holt Papers (dated 1978-1989) consists of materials created and collected by Holt documenting her involvement in efforts to decommission the Indian Point Energy Center (IPEC). Materials in this collection include petitions, correspondence, memoranda, flyers and other ephemera, press releases, newspaper clippings and reports produced by the New York Public Interest Research Group concerning safety investigations, nuclear power plants' impact on the health of local citizens, emergency preparedness protocols, and the prospect of nuclear accidents like Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. This collection also includes transcripts of testimonies by Holt and other experts at local public meetings and federal hearings with the United

States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. A significant portion of this collection consists of the working documentation used to prepare for these meetings, including notes, surveys, memoranda of talking points, and reports. This collection provides evidence of the organizing efforts that occur as part of a nuclear decommissioning campaign, as well as the broader antinuclear movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joan Holt was the Director of the Indian Point Project at the New York Public Interest Research Group in the late 1970s and early 1980s. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Queens College (1959) and her M.A. in Psychology from New York University (1975). She also was involved in activism concerning disarmament, civil rights, women's rights, and United States involvement in the Vietnam War.

ARRANGEMENT

This collection has not been arranged by an archivist. The materials are arranged in the order in which they were received from the donor.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Joan Holt Papers (dated 1978-1989) consists of materials created and collected by Holt documenting her involvement in efforts to decommission the Indian Point Energy Center (IPEC). Materials in this collection include petitions, correspondence, memoranda, flyers and other ephemera, press releases, newspaper clippings and reports produced by the New York Public Interest Research Group concerning safety investigations, nuclear power plants' impact on the health of local citizens, emergency preparedness protocols, and the prospect of nuclear accidents like Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. This collection also includes transcripts of testimonies by Holt and other experts at local public meetings and federal hearings with the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. A significant portion of this collection consists of the working documentation used to prepare for these meetings, including notes, surveys, memoranda of talking points, and reports. This collection provides evidence of the organizing efforts that occur as part of a nuclear decommissioning campaign, as well as the broader antinuclear movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

SUBJECTS

ORGANIZATIONS

[U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant \(N.Y.\)](#)

PEOPLE

[Holt, Joan](#) (Role: Donor)

TOPICS

[Nuclear power plants -- New York \(State\); Antinuclear movement;](#) [Nuclear power plants -- Health aspects;](#) [Nuclear power plants -- Safety measures;](#) [Nuclear power plants -- Decommissioning;](#) [Emergency management -- New York \(State\)](#)

DONORS

[Holt, Joan](#)

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

Materials are open without restrictions.

LOCATION OF MATERIALS

Materials are stored offsite and advance notice is required for use. Please request materials at least two business days prior to your research visit to coordinate access.

IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ACQUISITION

Donated by Joan Holt in August 2018; the accession number associated with this gift is 2018.122.

COLLECTION PROCESSED BY

Rachel Searcy

PROCESSING INFORMATION

At the time of accessioning, materials were rehoused in archival boxes and folders, and described on the collection-level with a box inventory.

Inventory

Transcripts, Correspondence, NYPIRG Reports, 1979-1983, inclusive

Box: 1 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Correspondence, Meeting Notes, Petitions, Surveys and Questionnaires, 1979-1986, inclusive

Box: 2 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Press Releases, Newspaper Clippings, 1979-1988, inclusive

Box: 3 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Newspaper Clippings, 1979-1982, inclusive

Box: 4 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Press Releases, Correspondence, Research Files, Testimony Transcripts, 1980-1987, inclusive

Box: 5 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Testimony Transcripts, Financial Records, 1981-1983, inclusive

Box: 6 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Reports, Testimony and Hearing Transcripts, 1982-1983,
inclusive

Box: 7 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Reports, Testimony and Hearing Transcripts, 1982-1983,
inclusive

Box: 8 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Testimony Transcripts, Public Statement to New York State
Assembly Special Committee on Nuclear Plant
Safety, 1980-1986, inclusive

Box: 9 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Newspaper Clippings, Testimony and Hearing
Transcripts, 1978-1989, inclusive

Box: 10 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)

Newspaper Clippings, Report, Publications on Antinuclear
Movement, 1979-1983, inclusive

Box: 11 (Material Type: Mixed Materials)



1250 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3970
TEL · 202 783 5000
FAX · 202 393 3234
WWW.NMWA.ORG

Deed of Gift

I (we), the undersigned Donor(s) (hereinafter singularly or collectively, as the case may be, referred to as "Donor"), hereby donate and convey to the National Museum of Women in the Arts ("NMWA"), subject to the Terms and Conditions attached hereto, all right, title, and interest that I (we) possess in the physical property described in Section 2 of this Deed, below.

1. Donor Information:

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Country/Postcode (*if outside of US*): _____

E-mail address: _____

Additional Contact Person (*optional*): _____

Additional Contact E-mail (*optional*): _____

Additional Telephone Number (*optional*): _____

2. Description of Property:

3. Volume of Property:

4. Significance of Gift to NMWA:

5. Special Considerations or Restrictions regarding Gift:

(Any restrictions must be agreeable to both the donor and NMWA)

6. Date/event when NMWA will take possession of material:

7. Method and payment of transportation of property to NMWA:

8. Donor Acquisition Information:

The Property was acquired by Donor on *(date)* _____ by *(check one below)*:

n/a Donor Papers Gift Inheritance Purchase Debt Satisfaction

Other: _____

9. Future Gifts:

This instrument will also serve to convey any further gifts of materials that I (we) wish to make to NMWA at a later date, and each gift will be described in an addendum.

10. Terms and Conditions

In desiring to further the purpose of the National Museum of Women in the Arts to promote by all appropriate means a wide public knowledge and appreciation for fine arts, I (we) do hereby give and deliver to the Museum the property described above as an unrestricted gift. This Deed transfers to NMWA, and its successors, and assigns all rights to possession, dominion, and control of said collection, including, if applicable, copyright. I (we)

understand that the management, use, display, or disposition of my donation shall be in accordance with the professional judgment of the Board of Directors and the Director of the Museum. Donor acknowledges that upon execution of this Deed of Gift, the Property irrevocably becomes the property of NMWA.

To the best of my (our) knowledge Donor is the sole lawful owner of title to the Property (or Donor is fully authorized by such owner) and have good and complete right, title, and interest including, unless otherwise specified, all transferred copyright, trademark, and related interest to give. Donor further represents that the Property is free and clear from any and all encumbrances, that there has been no prior pledge, option or gift of any part thereof to any person, and that Donor has the right to give or transfer the Property.

The materials are donated and accepted according to the following conditions.

CONDITIONS OF GIFT:

1. NMWA will provide a suitable depository for the materials and will house and maintain the same in good order to ensure both preservation and accessibility. NMWA, however, shall have no liability for damage to or destruction of materials by fire, water, other casualty, or any cause whatsoever.
2. If at any time, NMWA, in its sole discretion, determines that it can no longer adequately house any of the Items or that any Item does not have permanent value or historic interest, then NMWA agrees to use reasonable efforts to contact Donor in order to determine whether Donor would like for the items to be returned to Donor. In the event that NMWA, after employing reasonable efforts, is unable to successfully contact Donor, or if Donor is contacted and advises NMWA that he/she does not wish to have the Items returned, then NMWA may, in its sole discretion, sell or otherwise dispose of the Items as NMWA sees fit, and Donor shall have no claim with respect thereto. In the event that Donor elects to have the Items returned, all return transportation arrangements, including costs and the payment thereof, shall be as mutually agreed upon by NMWA and Donor.
3. Researchers will, upon request, be supplied with duplications (photocopy, photo, and scan) of any items from the collection, unless such reproduction is specifically prohibited above. Such restrictions must have a date of termination.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I (we) have executed this Deed of Gift.

Donor's Signature

Date

Heather Slania

Date

Director of the Betty Boyd Dettre Library
and Research Center
For National Museum of Women in the
Arts