

Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum Record Unit 390

Edgartown Women's Club 1898-2004

By Karin Stanley

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Martha's Vineyard Museum

Call No.

Title: Edgartown Women's Club

Creator: Karin Stanley

Quantity: 2.0 cubic feet

Abstract: These documents, relating to the Edgartown Women's Club, range from the Club's founding in 1898 through 2004. The bulk of the collection consists of published annual reports (1898-1982) and meeting minutes (1945-2004). Newspaper clippings (1928-2004) also form a large part of the collection. Some correspondence, other organizational papers, and historical notes are also included.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information: The documents of the Edgartown Women's Club were acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in 2006 from Eileen Robinson.

Processing Information: Karin Stanley

Access Restrictions: none

Use Restrictions: none

Preferred citation of publication: Martha's Vineyard Museum, Edgartown Women's Club, Record Unit 390.

Index Terms

Edgartown Women's Club

Women's Clubs

Martha's Vineyard women's organizations

General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts

The Women's Club

Series and Subseries Arrangement

Series I: Correspondence, 1904-1987

Series II: Organizational Records

Subseries A: Financial Records, 1997-2002

Subseries B: Treasurers Reports, 1987-1990

Subseries C: Receipts, 1902-1922

Subseries D: Member Lists
Subseries E: By-Laws
Series III: Meeting Minutes
 Subseries A: Bound, 1945-1989
 Subseries B: Unbound, 1976-2004
 Subseries C: Spiral notebooks, 1990-1996
Series IV: Annual Reports, 1898-1982
Series V: Programming, 1901-1998
Series VI: Awards and Citations, 1998-2004
Series VII: Clippings, 1928-2004
Series VIII: Reference, 1898-2004

Historical Note

In 1898 Miss Sara Joy Mayhew was invited to a Woman's Club meeting in Lynn, Massachusetts. Impressed with the "hospitality and mental stimulus" from this meeting she decided to form a similar club upon her return to Edgartown. A constitution and by-laws were written and members recruited. The club's goal was the social and literary advancement of its members. Three departments were created; literature and current topics, travel, and home science. Members joined a department, studied a topic and presented a program at monthly meetings. Topics ranged from "Historical Events during the Reign of Henry VIII," "The Parks of London," and "Salads: Artistic and Hygienic." Some drama and musical presentations were given, and special guests invited to speak. This busy roster of business meetings, classes, entertainments, and socials could reach almost forty meetings a year!

Initially, the membership was limited and very selective. Women wishing to join needed to be sponsored by two members and voted on by the entire club. Votes were taken by members dropping black or white balls into a voting box. Three black balls meant a candidate was turned away. In 1975, this practice was abolished and any woman on the Island was now encouraged to join. In a symbolic gesture, the voting box was donated to the MVM.

Over the years, the club's interests and activities evolved. The original departments changed to reflect current issues in women's lives. Education, public health, conservation, and social welfare emerged with the changing times. The annual reports (1898-1980), in this collection provide an overview of these changes. In the past, members reported on these topics, however as women's lives became busier, invited speakers replaced member presentations. Philanthropic activities also increased over the years. During the social upheaval of the sixties and seventies members became more interested in helping less fortunate people. Fundraising and volunteer activities became a focus. The Martha's Vineyard Hospital, Brockton Veterans Administration Hospital, MV Literacy Program, Red

Stocking Fund, and the Island Food Pantry all have benefited from the Club's activities. In recent years the club's membership has risen in age, and also dropped in numbers. Again women's changing lives are reflected in the club's activities. The ladies no longer hold fundraisers or volunteer on behalf of the club; charitable donations come through donations and dues. As Club President Carolyn O'Daly (2002-2004) wrote, "The club has settled back into being a social event. The handbook encourages members to 'Bring a sandwich and a friend.'"

Scope and Content Note

This 2.0 cubic foot collection contains documents arranged chronologically within their series. This comprehensive collection provides a look at the activities of the Edgartown Women's Club over the past 100 years. These documents date from the club's founding in 1898 to minutes and clippings from the year 2004. The bulk of this collection consists of annual reports and meeting minutes. The annual reports, dating from 1898-1980, show how programming changed over the years. Meeting minutes were recorded in bound books, spiral notebooks, and loose paper collections. Loose papers inserted in the bound books were removed and filed chronologically in adjacent folders, according to their order of appearance in the bound books. The "spiral" from the notebooks has been removed and the papers, along with any loose insertions, have been arranged chronologically. Newspaper clippings, financial records, and other organizational papers are also included.

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence, 1904-1987

Box 1 of 4

Folder 1: Correspondence, 1904-1987

Series II: Organizational Records

Subseries A: Financial Records, 1997-2002

Box 1 of 4

Folder 2: Financial Reports, 1997

Folder 3: Financial Reports, 1998

Folder 4: Financial Reports, 1999

Folder 5: Financial Reports, 2000

Folder 6: Financial Reports, 2001

Folder 7: Financial Reports, 2002

Subseries B: Treasurer's Reports, 1987-1990

Box 1 of 4

Folder 8: Treasurer's Reports, 1987-1990

Subseries C: Receipts, 1902-1922

Box 1 of 4

Folder 9: Receipts, 1902-1922

Subseries D: Member Lists

Box 1 or 4

Folder 10: Member Lists

Subseries E: By-Laws

Box 1 of 4

Folder 11: By-Laws

Series III: Meeting Minutes

Subseries A: Bound, 1945-1989

Box 1 of 4

Folder 12: Meeting Minutes, Bound, 1945-1954

Folder 13: Meeting Minutes, Loose pages from bound book, 1945-1954

Box 2 of 4

Folder 1: Meeting Minutes, Bound, 1966-1983

Folder 2: Meeting Minutes, Loose pages from bound book, 1966-1983

Folder 3: Meeting Minutes, Bound, 1983-1989

Folder 4: Meeting Minutes, Loose pages from bound book, 1983-1989

Subseries B: Unbound Meeting Minutes, 1976-2004

Box 2 of 4

Folder 5: Meeting Minutes, unbound, 1976-1987

Folder 6: Meeting Minutes, unbound, 1988-1989

Folder 7: Meeting Minutes, unbound, 1990-1998

Folder 8: Meeting Minutes, unbound, 1999-2004

Folder 9: Meeting Minutes, unbound, no date

Subseries C: Spiral Notebooks, 1990-1996

Box 2 of 4

Folder 10: Meeting Minutes, Spiral Notebook, 1990-1992

Box 3 of 4

Folder 1: Meeting Minutes, Spiral Notebook, 1992-1994

Folder 2: Meeting Minutes, Spiral Notebook, March 1994 - May 1994

Folder 3: Meeting Minutes, Spiral Notebook, 1994-1996

Series IV: Annual Reports, 1898-1982

Box 3 of 4

Folder 4: Annual Reports, 1898-1904

Folder 5: Annual Reports, 1904-1909

Folder 6: Annual Reports, 1909-1915
Folder 7: Annual Reports, 1915-1920
Folder 8: Annual Reports, 1920-1925
Folder 9: Annual Reports, 1925-1930
Folder 10: Annual Reports, 1930-1935
Folder 11: Annual Reports, 1935-1940
Folder 12: Annual Reports, 1940-1945
Folder 13: Annual Reports, 1945-1950

Box 4 of 4

Folder 1: Annual Reports, 1950-1955
Folder 2: Annual Reports, 1955-1960
Folder 3: Annual Reports, 1960-1965
Folder 4: Annual Reports, 1965-1970
Folder 5: Annual Reports, 1970-1975
Folder 6: Annual Reports, 1975-1979, 1981-1982

Series V: Programming, 1901-1998

Box 4 of 4

Folder 7: Programming: "The Romance of the Shawl"
Folder 8: Programming, 1901-1998

Series VI: Awards and Citations, 1998-2004

Box 4 of 4

Folder 9: Awards and Citations, 1998-2004

Series VII: Clippings, 1928-2004

Box 4 of 4

Folder 10: Clippings, 1928-2004

Series VIII: Reference, 1898-2004

Box 4 of 4

Folder 11: Reference
Folder 12: Reference, from spiral notebook