



FINDING AID

INDEPENDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION RECORDS 1906-1962 AND UNDATED (bulk dates: 1940-1944)

National Park Service

Catalog Number: INDE 4337

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HISTORY

The Independence Hall Association (IHA) was formed in July 1942 as an extension of the Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution. Prior to the formation of the IHA, there had been periodic attempts to preserve the historic buildings surrounding Independence Hall. With the outbreak of World War II, however, the threat of aerial warfare inspired a new movement to protect the historic buildings in Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood. The Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings was created in December 1941 to study methods for protecting these structures in wartime. Judge Edwin O. Lewis (1879-1974), president of the Sons, and David Knickerbacker Boyd (1872-1944), chairman of the committee, were key figures in the process. Over the course of a few months, Boyd organized four subcommittees and enlisted the aid of several individuals from the architectural and historical community. It soon became apparent that the scope of work was too great for an individual hereditary organization to coordinate. The committee had a long-term view of historic preservation that required government assistance as well as the support of several different patriotic, historical, and hereditary societies. The Sons, however, were averse to taking an active and possibly partisan role in lobbying for government aid. When the committee was asked to sponsor and promote a Congressional bill to make Independence Hall a national park, the Sons made the decision to disband the committee. In May 1942, the Sons accepted the committee's report to the annual meeting, thanked everyone for their hard work, and dissolved the group.

Formally freed from the Sons of the Revolution, Judge Lewis and D. Knickerbacker Boyd quickly moved to form a new organization to carry on the work of the Sons' committee. On May 21, 1942, Boyd organized an informal meeting of the former committee members to discuss "various possibilities for further protecting the Historical Buildings of Philadelphia and for planning in advance for developing open areas in the vicinity of Independence Hall, Carpenters' Hall, and the Old Custom House and adjacent Shrines of National importance." At the meeting, the former committee members decided to call a public gathering in June to discuss their preservation goals with over 250 civic, hereditary, historical, and patriotic organizations. At this meeting a firm commitment was made to create a new association dedicated to the preservation of the historic eighteenth century buildings in Old City, Philadelphia. The Independence Hall Association was formally founded on July 4, 1942.

The newly-minted IHA was quick to mobilize the historical, architectural, and patriotic community in Philadelphia. Edwin O. Lewis was chosen as the new president and D. Knickerbacker Boyd as the executive secretary. Boyd was an architect who had been involved with plans to create a small park across the street from Independence Hall in 1915. Boyd was active in the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and had a great interest in historical buildings. He brought his extensive technical knowledge of architecture to the table, as well as decades' worth of contacts within the preservation field. With his practice

suffering from Philadelphia's depressed construction market, Boyd was able to dedicate his substantial resources – including his office staff – to the Association. He was instrumental in coordinating the large solicitations that helped get the IHA started. Boyd also served as communication nexus for the various individuals involved with the Association, many of whom were the leaders of Philadelphia's major cultural institutions.

The primary goal of the Independence Hall Association in the 1940s was the creation of Independence National Historical Park. The Association worked tirelessly throughout the war to promote the preservation of Independence Hall and the historic sites of Old City. Though they faced a preoccupied federal government's reluctance to create a new national park in wartime, they did successfully persuade President Roosevelt to lift his moratorium on national historical site designations in 1943. They also managed to negotiate an agreement between the City of Philadelphia, who owned Independence Hall, and the National Park Service regarding the building's care. Headed by Philadelphia architect Roy F. Larsen (1893-1973), the Association's Design Committee developed several plans to create a large open park with grass and trees connecting Independence Hall with other historic sites in the neighborhood. The plan's open space aesthetic reflected the preference of many IHA members, and especially Judge Lewis, who vigorously championed his vision during the planning phases of the park.

After the death of D. Knickerbacker Boyd in February 1944, Judge Lewis took over the active responsibilities of the Association. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, the IHA was primarily occupied with lobbying both state and federal governments for funding to plan the new park. They were also interested in the revitalization of the Old City neighborhood, which had been heavily commercial since the end of the nineteenth century. Judge Lewis, who served as president of the IHA from 1942-1967, organized most of the association's efforts during this period. Judge Lewis was also chosen to serve as the chair of the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission, created by Congress to draw up the plans for the new national park, as well as the Advisory Commission of Independence National Historical Park. Serving in these capacities, Judge Lewis was able to exert considerable influence and guide park planning to coincide with the Association's goals.

Once the park was established, the Independence Hall Association expanded its interests to include the broader historical community in Philadelphia. The IHA continues to remain interested in the park's development and in the preservation of Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK INDEPENDENCE HALL
ASSOCIATION RECORDS
1906-1962 AND UNDATED (bulk dates: 1940-1944)

CATALOG NUMBER INDE 4337

VOLUME 6 LF

DESCRIPTION The Independence Hall Association Records document the early years of the organization's activities and the efforts of its members to create Independence National Historical Park. The bulk of the collection was created by David Knickerbacker Boyd, the Association's first executive secretary, and includes correspondence, meeting minutes and agenda, subject files, membership information, newspaper clippings, printed material, photographs, and scrapbooks. There is also a small amount of correspondence from Boyd's successor, Elizabeth Boyd Borie.

The materials in this collection span the years 1906-1962, with the bulk of the records dating from 1940-1944. Researchers should note that some of the records pre-date the creation of the Independence Hall Association.

ORGANIZATION The Independence Hall Records are organized into eleven subseries: Series I: Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution, Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings, Series II: Corporate Materials, Series III: Committees, Series IV: Financial Records, Series V: Officers' Correspondence, Series VI: Meetings, Series VII: General Correspondence Subject File, Series VIII: Elizabeth Boyd Borie Term, Series IX: Membership, Series X: Photographs, and Series XI: Scrapbooks.

RESTRICTIONS NO

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS Independence National Historical Park Archives:
- Edwin O. Lewis Papers

- Isidor Ostroff Papers

HIERARCHY

- I. SERIES I: PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION, COMMITTEE ON PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, 1940-1942
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- III. SERIES III: COMMITTEES, 1942-1944
- IV. SERIES IV: FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1942-1945
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- VIII. SERIES VIII: ELIZABETH BOYD BORIE TERM, 1942-1953, 1962
- IX. SERIES IX: MEMBERSHIP, circa 1942-1945
- X. SERIES X: PHOTOGRAPHS, 1943, undated
- XI. SERIES XI: SCRAPBOOKS, 1908-1956

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

I. SERIES I: PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION, COMMITTEE ON PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, 1940-1942

This series is arranged variously by subject, and thereunder chronologically.

This series contains the records of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings, precursor to the Independence Hall Association. These records relate to the creation of the IHA, and include correspondence, financial records, meeting minutes and agenda, and general subject files.

II. SERIES II: CORPORATE MATERIALS, 1942-1944

This series contains the charter and by-laws of the Independence Hall Association.

III. SERIES III: COMMITTEES, 1942-1944

This series is arranged variously by subject, and thereunder chronologically.

This series contains the records of the various committees and sub-committees of the Independence Hall Association. Materials include correspondence, memoranda, membership recruitment documentation, status reports, and administrative files. The bulk of the records were created by the IHA's Finance Committee and Membership Committee.

IV. SERIES IV: FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1942-1945

This series is arranged alphabetically.

This series contains the early financial records of the Independence Hall Association. Materials include bills, checks, receipts, reports, and warrant book stubs.

V. SERIES V: OFFICERS' CORRESPONDENCE, 1942-1944

This series is arranged alphabetically, and thereunder chronologically.

This series contains correspondence between the officers of the Independence Hall Association, as well as letters sent to outside individuals and organizations. Officers represented include President Edwin O. Lewis, Executive Secretary David Knickerbacker Boyd, Treasurer Joseph F. Stockwell, and Vice Presidents Roy F. Larson, William E. Lingelbach, and Francis A. Wister. This series also includes financial documentation and newspaper clippings. Much of the correspondence relates to the earliest days of the organization.

VI. *SERIES VI: MEETINGS, 1942-1944*

This series is arranged chronologically.

This series contains correspondence, meeting minutes, and agenda related to Independence Hall Association meetings. It includes documentation from organization-wide meetings, public meetings, meetings with government officials, and meetings of various IHA committees and its Board of Directors.

VII. *SERIES VII: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE SUBJECT FILES, 1906-1944, undated*

This series is arranged alphabetically, and thereunder chronologically. In some instances, correspondence has been organized according to its letter designation.

This series forms the bulk of the collection, and contains correspondence, newspaper clippings, and publications related to a variety of subjects. In addition to correspondence with individuals and government officials, this series contains the IHA's files on museums, local historical organizations, historic buildings and monuments, exhibits, and Philadelphia history, as well as invitations to special events. Researchers should also note that some of the records, particularly those related to city planning, represent D. Knickerbacker Boyd's own professional papers.

VIII. *SERIES VIII: ELIZABETH BOYD BORIE TERM, 1942-1953, 1962*

This series is arranged chronologically.

This series contains correspondence related to Elizabeth Boyd Borie's term as executive secretary of the IHA following D. Knickerbacker's Boyd's death in 1944.

IX. *SERIES IX: MEMBERSHIP, circa 1942-1945*

This series contains the IHA's membership card file. The card file is arranged alphabetically.

X. *SERIES X: PHOTOGRAPHS, 1943, undated*

This series is organized alphabetically.

This series contains photographs of the Independence Hall Association, its members and events. Photographs document the unveiling of the plan for the American Philosophical Society building, an exhibit at Independence Hall, and demolition on Independence Mall. There are also two notable photographs, one of executive secretary D. Knickerbacker Boyd and another that includes many members of the IHA.

XI. *SERIES XI: SCRAPBOOKS, 1908-1956*

This series is arranged chronologically.

This series contains three scrapbooks that depict the history of the Independence Hall Association. They were created by D. Knickerbacker Boyd and given to Edwin O. Lewis upon Knickerbacker's death. Some of the material in the scrapbook pre-dates the creation of the IHA.

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- Folder 2: Sons of the Revolution – General Society Triennial Meeting proceedings, 1940
- Folder 3: Sons of the Revolution – General Society Triennial Meeting proceedings, 1940
- Folder 4: Sons of the Revolution – Pennsylvania Society, 1942-1943
- Folder 5: Sons of the Revolution – Pennsylvania Society, Color Guard, 1937-1942
- Folder 6: Sons of the Revolution – Pennsylvania Society, printed material, 1940-1943
- Folder 7: Sons of the Revolution – Pennsylvania Society, Triennial Meeting of the General Society in Philadelphia, 1939-1940
- Folder 8: T, 1942-1943
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- Folder 16: Women's organizations – Colonial Dames of America, Chapter II, 1942-1943
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- Folder 18: Women's organizations – Pennsylvania Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1942-1943
- Folder 19: Women's organizations – Philadelphia Federation of Women's Clubs and Allied Organizations, 1942-August 1943
- Folder 20: Women's organizations – Philadelphia Federation of Women's Clubs and Allied Organizations, September-December 1943
- Folder 21: Women's organizations – Women's Overseas Service League, 1943-1944
- Folder 22: Wistar, Frances A., 1943
- Folder 23: World Peace Treaty in Philadelphia, 1943-1944
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SERIES VIII: ELIZABETH BOYD BORIE TERM, 1946-1952, 1962

Folder 25: Correspondence, 1946-1949

Folder 26: Correspondence, 1950-1952, 1962

IX: MEMBERSHIP, CIRCA 1942-1945

Card File Box

Membership contact information, circa 1942-1945

SERIES X: PHOTOGRAPHS, 1943, undated

Folder 27: American Philosophical Society plan and presentation, undated

Folder 28: Boyd, David Knickerbacker, undated

Folder 29: Exhibit at Independence Hall, 1943

Folder 30: Mall demolition progress, undated

Folder 31: Membership of association, 1943

Box 6

SERIES XI: SCRAPBOOKS, 1908-1956

Scrapbook Volume I: 1908-1945

Box 7

Scrapbook Volume II: 1945-1952

Box 8

Scrapbook Volume III: 1952-1956