

McLean County Museum of History

Bloomington Cemetery Association Collection

Processed by
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box
COLLECTION DATES:	1857-1963
PROVENANCE:	Gift
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

The Bloomington Cemetery Association (BCA) was a private stock corporation that operated the Bloomington Cemetery from 1857 through 1963. A Perpetual Care Trust Fund, to which plot owners individually and voluntarily contributed for the maintenance of the cemetery. The area was a point of pride to the citizens of the City of Bloomington. After 1960 the neglected appearance of the Cemetery caused concern among local residents, who became suspicious of the Board of Trustees of the BCA and its responsibility for overseeing the Association's financial affairs. Although funds were still supposed to be available for the care of plots and general areas of the cemetery, the Board claimed these were insufficient. In 1962, a mass protest was made to the City Council by Bloomington citizens, with a request for the City to assume management of the cemetery. This process began with an

investigation into the financial status of the BCA, which found that the President of the Board of Trustees had mismanaged the Perpetual Care funds, possibly deliberately. By mid 1963 the report of the investigating committee was made public, and governance of the cemetery was turned over to a board elected by Bloomington Township officials.

The Bloomington Cemetery, now known as Evergreen Cemetery, is located in the fourth ward of Bloomington, with its main entrance at Miller Street, off East Street (see map). Many notable McLean County citizens are buried there, including Adlai E. Stevenson and David Davis.

Scope Note

The Bloomington Cemetery Association Papers contain a Secretary's ledger from 1857-1936, Bloomington Cemetery Association publications and papers from the early 20th century, and papers, correspondence and newspaper clippings concerning a 1963 investigation into the BCA's financial status and the subsequent transfer of deed. The items were donated anonymously sometime after 1963.

The **secretary's ledger** contains minutes from early Board of Trustee meetings, as well as lot and payment records until 1936. The manuscript ledger contains a copy of the BCA charter on its first page.

The **early publications** include the Rules and Regulations of the Bloomington Cemetery and the BCA and booklets containing inspirational quotes and advertising language for the cemetery. Both publications have numerous black and white photographs of cemetery grounds and headstones.

The collection also contains **tax papers** from the first quarter of the century, **Board of Trustee minutes** from the 1930's, **monthly financial statements** for the mid 1940's, and various **Perpetual Care Trust Fund Agreements** and **Lot and Deed Receipts** from throughout the BCA's history.

The collection includes an anonymous, detailed 25 page paper on the history and investigation of the Bloomington Cemetery Association, written by a source who was witness to all the events and who obtained personal testimonies from many of the persons involved in the investigation. A large bulk of the investigation papers consists of **State Reports, committee notes** (typescript and manuscript) and **memoranda** concerning state laws and BCA mismanagement.

Correspondence between major actors includes letters written by **William R. Bach**, president of the Board of Trustees in the 1930's, and his son **William J. Bach**, who became president of the Board after his father. The correspondence also includes a letter to attorney **Thomas L. Cochran** discussing the transfer of the deed of the Bloomington Cemetery; letters from attorneys **Walter Yoder** and **James DePew**. Other major participants in the investigation whose letters are part of the collection include members of a special committee: **Thorton Jarmin**, who became head of the new Board of Trustees in 1963; **Dan Holder**, a city representative; and **Vernon Prenzler**, a town councilman. **Elizabeth Stevenson Ives** was also included in the correspondence, as she was an interested and wealthy plot owner who provided the funds necessary to get the investigation started.

Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Publications

- 1.1 Bylaws, Rules and Regulations (1904)—2copies
- 1.2 Illustrated Booklet and List of Officers (1912)—2 copies
- 1.3 Bloomington Cemetery Association Stock Certificate (Blank)
- 1.4 Rules and Regulations (n.d.)—typescript copy, 9 page

Folder 2: Early Bloomington Cemetery Association Papers

- 2.1 Tax Audit Sheet (1917)—typescript, 2 pages
- 2.2 IRS Report on Tax Investigation for 1917-1920 (July 20, 1921)—typescript, 8 pages
- 2.3 Balance Sheet for 1916-1919
- 2.4 Statement of Obligation regarding Perpetual Care Trust Fund signed by Wm. R. Bach, Wm. J. Bach and Lelia M. Bach (Sept. 25, 1937)—typescript, 1 page
- 2.5 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
(Sep 27, 1937)—typescript, 3 pages
(May 21, 1938)—typescript, signed by W.R. Bach, 2 pages
(May 23, 1938)—typescript, signed by W.R. Bach, 2 pages
(Apr 3, 1939)—typescript, 2 pages
- 2.6 Lot Indentures/Deed (1901, 1919, 1924, 1943)
- 2.7 Perpetual Care Trust Fund Agreement (Blank)
- 2.8 Perpetual Care Trust Fund Agreements (1938, 1947 (2), 1954
- 2.9 Perpetual Care Statement (1937)
- 2.10 Receipts for Plot and Perpetual Care payments (1924, 1943, 1954, 1962 (2)
photostats
- 2.11 Financial Statements
Jul 1942-Nov 1942 (monthly)
Letter from Meritt A. Gifford, Public Accountant and Tax Consultant, to Wm.
R. Bach, President Bloomington Cemetery Association (Apr 1, 1947)
Oct 1946-Feb 1947 (monthly)
Profit and Loss Statements for the year 1946 and for Jan-Feb, 1947

Folder 3: Investigations into Financial Status of the BCA

- 3.1 Untitled Paper on History and Investigation of the BCA (n.d.)—typescript, author unknown. Twenty-five pages, including footnotes, bibliography and other sources.
- 3.2 Legal Memos
(Jul 29, 1936)—typescript, 1 page
(Oct 1, 1936)—typescript, 1 page
(May 19, 1937)—manuscript, 10 pages
- 3.3 Report of Care Funds in Trust (1961)
- 3.4 State of Illinois Department of Financial Institutions Cemetery Authority
Annual Report for 1961-1962
(Jun 8, 1962)—photocopy, 3 pages

- 3.5 Notes on Trust Fund (1961)—Manuscript on Holder Hardware Co. stationery, 1 page
- 3.6 Notes from Illinois Revised Statutes Chapter 21 – Cemeteries
(n.d.)—typescript, 1 page
(n.d.)—manuscript, 4 pages
- 3.7 Special Committee Report (Jun 13, 1962)—typescript, 2 pages
- 3.8 Data Sheet on Mismanagement of the BCA (n.d.)—manuscript on Holder Hardware Co. stationery, 1 page
- 3.9 Memorandum of Discrepancies in Management of the BCA (Sep 8, 1962)—typescript, source unknown, 2 pages
- 3.10 Committee Records of Actions (Feb 1963)—typescript, 5 pages
-Cover sheet
-Summary in Chronological Order of Cemetery Situation
-History and Operations of the BCA
- 3.11 Transfer Proposal (Mar 10, 1963)—typescript, 1 page
- 3.12 Cemetery Care Trust Fund: Investigation Questions (1963?)—typescript, 1 page
- 3.13 Memo on Trust Fund for Cemetery Care: Dates and Actions of Investigation (Jan 27, 1964) typescript, 1 page
- 3.14 Resolution of Deed Transfer (n.d.)—photostat, 2 pages
- 3.15 Deed and Assignment of Personal Property of the BCA to the Town of the city of Bloomington (n.d.)—photostat, 4 pages
- 3.16 Summary of Investigation (n.d.)—typescript, source unknown

Folder 4: Correspondence

- 4.1 WRB (William R. Bach?) to Ester Brown, acting Secretary of Bloomington Cemetery Association; reasons to have a meeting (May 14, 1938)—typescript, 1 page
- 4.2 William R. Bach to the Board of Trustees of BCA; report of acts and duties as Trustee of Care Funds of BCA, including list of Care Funds Assets. (May 31, 1948)—typescript, signed by William R. Bach, 3 pages
- 4.3 James DePew (Township Attorney) to City of Bloomington on Special Meeting (Jun 13, 1961)—typescript, 1 page
- 4.4 Unknown (Dan Holder?) to T. R. Jarmin and Vernon Prenzler; reaction to Letter from W. J. Bach, 8-31-62 (Sep 1962)—manuscript, 2 pages
- 4.5 Walter Yoder (Attorney) to T. R. Jarmin; advice on investigation procedures (Aug 30, 1962)—typescript, signed by Walter A. Yoder, 2 pages
- 4.6 Walter Yoder to the Director of Cemeteries, Department of Financial Institutions, Springfield Illinois; Yoder as legal spokesperson for Bloomington Cemetery Association (Aug 30, 1962)—typescript, signed by Walter A. Yoder, 2 pages.
- 4.7 Walter Yoder to William J. Bach; encouraging cooperation by Bach with the proposals and actions of the new committee and the township (Aug 30, 1962)—typescript, signed by Walter A. Yoder, 2 pages
- 4.8 Walter Yoder to William J. Bach; response to 8-31-62 letter from Bach (Sep 13, 1962)—typescript, 2 pages
- 4.9 Walter Yoder to William J. Bach; advice on transfer of deed (Nov 19, 1962)—typescript, 1 page
- 4.10 William J. Bach to Mr. Thomas L. Cochran (Attorney with Sorling, Catron & Hardin); discussion of transfer of deed (Mar 7, 1963)—photostat, 2 pages

- 4.11 Dan G. Holder (special committee member) to Mrs. Elizabeth Stevenson-Ives (plot owner); discussion of deed transfer and actions of special committee (Mar 14, 1963) --typescript, 3 pages
- 4.12 "D" (Dan Holder?) to "Buffy (Elizabeth Stevenson-Ives) on investigation (n.d.)—manuscript, 1 page, 2 sides

Folder 5: Newspaper Clippings (Bulk Dates 1962-1964)