



BHC-MSS 0098

Guide to the Records of the Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Conn., Inc.

By Meg Rinn

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Conn., Inc.

Title: Records of the Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Conn., Inc.

Dates: 1935-1989

Quantity: 3 MB 2 OS

Abstract: Starting in 1929, the Bridgeport iteration of the Altrusa Club provided public service and means for women to connect from 1929 to 1988. Within the collection is extensive documentation of the group's minutes, budgets, and their major public service initiatives and their impact, with a focus on 1951 until the club disbanded in 1988.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

Altrusa International was founded as the Altrusa Institute and intended to be a women's civic organization conceived by Dr. Alfred Durham. Along with Mamie L. Bass, the two created the club that focused on providing job opportunities and connections for women. The organization has shifted from this initial purpose over time and is now focused on public service, much like the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs.

The Bridgeport iteration of the organization was started on November 26, 1929 by Mary Vinson Clark, who served as a field organizer for the parent organization. However, the Bridgeport club did not receive its charter until November 1935, as Altrusa required a baseline membership of 30 individuals.

Over the years, the Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Connecticut, participated in a large number of public service projects, which they carefully documented in their own club history (see box 3 folders 13 and 14.) Newsletters and minutes make it clear the club was a very close knit group of women.

Following a vote on May 24, 1988, the club disbanded. This was likely based on declining membership, which is alluded to in various newsletters from the late 1980s. Altrusa International Inc. itself continues to exist to this day.

Scope and Content note:

The collection primarily contains minutes, newsletters, yearbooks, scrapbooks, and two versions of the Altrusa Club's history. Taken together, it is possible to have a solid insight into the club's life from 1951 until it disbanded in 1988. This includes member names, photographs of club events, and even lists of their major public service projects from 1951 onward.

Upon disbanding in 1988, the club donated all of its existing records to the Bridgeport History

Center.

Arrangement Note:

The collection has been placed into four series. The first is minutes and reports, covering the club from the late 1950's to its end in 1988. Likewise, series II, finances, charts a similar course. Series III consists of newsletters to membership, and the final series, series IV, consists of membership and activities materials. They include yearbooks, membership lists, scrapbooks, and most importantly, club histories that document the various works and accomplishments of the Altrusa Club.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Donation of the Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Conn., Inc. (1989.23)

Preferred Citation:

Records of the Altrusa Club of Bridgeport, Conn., Inc. (BHC-MSS 0098) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Clark, Mary Vinson

Corporate names

Altrusa International

Subject tracings

Service clubs

Detailed box and folder listing

Series I – Minutes and Reports

Box 1

1. President's annual report, 1960-1977
2. Minutes, 1951-1956
3. Minutes, 1951-1956
4. Minutes, 1957-1967
5. Minutes, 1957-1967
6. Minutes, 1967-1972

Box 2

1. Minutes, 1979-1988
2. Minutes, 1979-1988

Series II – Finances

3. Budgets, 1960-1989
4. Treasurer's report/budgets, 1976-1988
5. Checks, 1969-1989

Box 3

1. Check books, 1967-1973
2. Check books, 1982-1988

Series III - Newsletters

3. Newsletter, 1966-1968
4. Newsletter, 1969-1974
5. Newsletter, 1975-1979
6. Newsletter, 1980-1984
7. Newsletter, 1985-1988

Series IV – Membership and activities

8. Charters, incorporations, membership lists, 1935-1965
9. Membership forms, 1959-1981
10. Yearbooks, 1965-1988
11. Final program, June 1988
12. Altrusa Club of Bridgeport camp project, 1950
13. Archives of the Bridgeport Altrusa Club, 1948
14. History of the Bridgeport Altrusa Club 1929-1979, 1988

Box 4

1. Scrapbook, 1947-1962
2. Scrapbook, 1949-1974
3. Scrapbook, 1966-1974

Box 5

1. Scrapbook, 1966-1968
2. Scrapbook, 1974-1987
3. Scrapbook, Undated
4. Award from University of Bridgeport for contribution to annual giving fund, 1976