



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**American Bridge Association records**

1933-2005

Sc MG 274

## Summary

**Creator:** American Bridge Association

**Title:** American Bridge Association records

**Date:** 1933-2005

**Size:** 2.42 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of the American Bridge Association, 1991.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** The formation of the American Bridge Association (ABA) in 1932 was due to racial prejudice; a group of African American players in the New York area conceived the idea of a national organization, leading to the ABA's formation at Buckroe Beach, Virginia. The American Bridge Association records (1933-2004) consist principally of printed matter, correspondence of the editor of the "Bulletin," and histories of the organization.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], American Bridge Association records, Sc MG 274, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Janice Quinter, 1991, and Chandra Buie, 1996. Processed as part of the Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artifact.

Transferred to the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division: newsletters.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image materials. For more information, please contact the division at [schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org](mailto:schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org) or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

## Creator History

The formation of the American Bridge Association (ABA) in 1932 was due to racial prejudice and the then-common practice of segregation and hence exclusion from membership and competition in the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). A group of African American players in the New York area conceived of the idea of a national organization to foster and promote duplicate bridge among themselves, leading to the ABA's formation at Buckroe Beach, Virginia. As of 1991, the ABA had 7,000 members and was divided into seven regional and 215 local groups. It sponsors annual tournaments held in the spring and summer as benefits for charitable organizations. Many of the local groups print a newsletter entitled "ABA Flash", and a bulletin is published bimonthly. William R. Tatem assumed the responsibilities of editor of the *Bulletin* in 1939, and developed it into one of the nation's outstanding publications devoted to organized bridge.

One of ABA's most influential presidents was Victor R. Daly (1949-1964). His major accomplishment was the eradication of racial discrimination in organized bridge in the United States. In 1950, the ACBL polled its membership on the issue of integration and only 56% of the membership favored a continuation of the policy of racial restrictions. Subsequently, friendly areas like New York, Boston, St. Paul, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay area allowed non-white players to compete in local and regional tournaments, even though they generally were not granted membership in the ACBL. After a series of conferences and extensive negotiations between ABA President Daly and ACBL officials in New York, the ACBL voted to amend its by-laws to permit unrestricted membership in the League on the basis of local option. Although there had been hope that the new by-law would be ratified in July 1954, it was not accepted unanimously by the membership until the ACBL national annual meeting in Montreal in 1967.

## Scope and Content Note

The American Bridge Association records (1933-2004) consist principally of printed matter, correspondence of the editor of the *Bulletin*, and histories of the organization. Included are its constitution and by-laws, a 1938 annual report written by President E. T. Belsaw, a list of life members, and a 1954 handbook of information. William Tatem's correspondence as editor of the *Bulletin* (1939-1951) discusses many of the internal policies and strained relationships with the American Contract Bridge League. In 1983, he annotated many of the letters.

Printed material consists of information pertaining to several of ABA's regional sections (1950-2004), souvenir journals and journals for national tournaments (1933-1995), information about the National Division, and news clippings. A winner's ribbon from the 1947 annual tournament and duplicate bridge boards complete the collection.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African Americans -- Recreation  
African Americans -- Social life and customs  
African Americans -- Societies, etc

Bridge players  
Contract bridge  
Race relations

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Card files

**Names**

American Bridge Association

## Container List

### History

- b. 1 f. 1 1954-1986
- b. 1 f. 1a "Historical Inventory of the American Bridge Association Archival Collection"  
1995
- b. 1 f. 2 Manuscript histories of the ABA by J. Herbert Kerr, Maurice Robinson, and  
Joe Steber ca. 1965-1983
- b. 1 f. 3 Miscellaneous publications 1939-1949
- b. 1 f. 4-5 ABA anniversaries 1958-1986  
Includes "Golden Jubilee" anniversary, 1983.
- b. 1 f. 6 Garcia, James. "A Nostalgic Reminiscence in The American Bridge  
Association" 1983
- b. 1 f. 7 Livingston, Eddiema. "Bridge Reflections in Rhyme" 1983

### Profiles of ABA officers and members

- b. 1 f. 8 1958-1969
- b. 1 f. 9 1970-1979
- b. 1 f. 10 1980-1989
- b. 1 f. 11 Life members 1963-1984

### Correspondence

#### Tatem, William

- b. 1 f. 12 1939-1946
- b. 1 f. 13-14 1947
- b. 1 f. 15-16 1948
- b. 1 f. 17-19 1949
- b. 1 f. 20-23 1950
- b. 1 f. 24 1951
- b. 1 f. 25 Jefferson, Leonard 1974-1980
- b. 1 f. 26 Daniels, Ann 1947-1976
- b. 1 f. 27 Price, Robert 1990-1991
- b. 1 f. 28 Miscellaneous 1969-1987
- b. 1 f. 29 Blank letterhead
- b. 1 f. 30-31 William Tatem files and notes 1974-1983
- b. 1 f. 32 Scrip program 1982-1985
- b. 1 f. 33 Invitations
- b. 1 f. 34 Membership applications
- b. 1 f. 35 Scholarship fund 1985-1993
- b. 1 f. 36 Worship service programs 1993-1994
- b. 1 f. 37 Martin Luther King Time Capsule 1987

### Printed matter

- b. 1 f. 38 Miscellaneous 1985-1994  
News clippings

Printed matter (cont.)  
News clippings (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 39 1939-1952
- b. 1 f. 40 1955-1985
- b. 1 f. 41 1988-1995
- b. 1 f. 42 *Booker, Courtland S. Par Bridge and the Atomic Club System* 1955
- b. 1 f. 43 *White, Clarence R. and Richie D. Williams White. Bid Your Way to Winning Bridge: Made Easy* 1984

National Division

- b. 1 f. 44 Constitution, by-laws, and codes 1950-1981
- b. 1 f. 45 Board letters and actions 1970-1994
- b. 1 f. 46 Minutes and agendas of meetings 1951-1981
- b. 1 f. 47 Annual report 1938
- b. 1 f. 48 President's Annual Reports 1993-1994
- b. 1 f. 49 Past Presidents 1975-1983
- b. 1 f. 50 Treasurers' reports 1982-1994
- b. 1 f. 51 Account/audit records 1990-1994
- b. 1 f. 52 Executive Secretary reports 1983-1993

Newsletters

- b. 1 f. 53 "Monthly Memos" 1977-1987
- b. 1 f. 54 "Monthly Update" 1988-1994

Handbooks

- b. 1 f. 55 Informational 1954-1993
- b. 1 f. 56 Secretarial 1975
- b. 1 f. 57 Campaign literature 1987-1993
- b. 1 f. 58-59 Tournament schedules and information 1971-1995  
Includes award schedules, 1985-1992.
- b. 1 f. 60 Headquarters building 1993-1995
- b. 1 f. 61 Committee reports 1983-1992
- b. 1 f. 62 Hyatt Regency hotel negotiations 1989-1991
- b. 1 f. 63 ABA Annual Tournament winners ribbon 1947

National Tournament Souvenir programs and journals

Programs

- b. 2 f. 1 1933
- b. 2 f. 2 1946-1948

Journals

- b. 2 f. 3 1951-1963
- b. 2 f. 4 1969
- b. 2 f. 5 1972-1974
- b. 2 f. 6 1975-1976
- b. 2 f. 7 1980-1981
- b. 2 f. 8-9 1982-1983
- b. 2 f. 10-12 1985-1987
- b. 2 f. 13 1988

National Tournament Souvenir programs and journals (cont.)

Journals (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 14 1989-1990
- b. 2 f. 15-18 1991-1995

Eastern section

- b. 2 f. 19 Statement of purpose undated
- b. 2 f. 20 VP reports and actions ca. 1980s
- b. 2 f. 21 Committe meeting minutes 1995
- b. 2 f. 22 Agendas 1978-1995
- b. 2 f. 24 Financial reports 1983-1993
- b. 2 f. 25 "A Handbook For New Players of ABA" 1982
- b. 2 f. 26 Correspondence 1972-1993
- b. 2 f. 27 Campaign literature 1985-1992
- b. 2 f. 28 Archives Committee 1992-1995
- b. 2 f. 29-30 Sectional Tournament (and other) flyers 1950-1995
- b. 2 f. 31 Miscellaneous 1979-1994

Newsletters

- b. 3 f. 1 "The Easterner" 1961-1975
- b. 3 f. 2 "Echo Newsletter" 1980-1981
- b. 3 f. 3 "Echoes...from the Midwest" 1981-1983
- "Mashariki"
- b. 3 f. 4 1976-1988
- b. 3 f. 5 1988-1995

Other sections

- b. 3 f. 6 Metropolitan Bridge Unit 1954-2005
- b. 3 f. 7 Miscellaneous 1957-1991
- b. 3 f. 8 Great Lakes section 1970-1990
- b. 3 f. 9 Mid-Atlantic section 1987-1995
- b. 3 f. 10 Southern section flyers 1985-1995
- b. 3 f. 11 Western section 1979-1993
- b. 3 f. 12 Dallas, Texas Bridge Club 1978
- b. 3 f. 13-14 Duplicate bridge boards undated