Sturgis Library Archives

MS. 201
Barnstable Comedy Club Collection

Extent: 3 boxes

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of playbills from Barnstable Comedy Club (BCC) productions from 1947-2008.

Biographical and historical information: On June 2,1911, a meeting of the Village Improvement Society of Barnstable was called to vote on the purchase of a piece of land for the site of the new Village Hall. On July 1st, articles of incorporation for the new 'Village Hall of Barnstable' were signed at the office of the Honorary Herman A. Harding. On July 29th the deed for the land was purchased for $500. Roughly a year later, construction had been completed. A well-attended dedication for the building was held on August 2, 1912. Among the speakers were author Joseph A. Lincoln and Congressman Robert O. Harris. They spoke of the importance of the Village Hall for the community and for the growth of Barnstable Village. The original cost of the Village Hall was $3,400.

Ten years later, a group that intended to start a theater met at The Old Barnstable Inn (since then destroyed by fire; The Barnstable Tavern now stands in its place). They named their troupe 'The Barnstable Comedy Club', and began performing plays at The Village Hall, among other locations around Cape Cod. At the time, The Barnstable Women's Club owned The Village Hall and rented the space to the members of The Barnstable Comedy Club. Despite lectures and concerts in the winter and plays in the summer, the Hall never made a profit. In 1925 funds were raised to reduce the mortgage to $500. By 1929, the Woman's Club paid off the mortgage and the debts. Use of the hall by the BCC was limited because of all the other community activities that took place there. The actors of the BCC often had to rehearse at The Old Barnstable Inn, and the homes of members. For this reason, membership was limited.

In 1961, The Barnstable Comedy Club purchased The Village Hall from the Barnstable Women's Club. In accordance with the wishes of the Women's Club, the purchase was made with the understanding that the building would continue to be known as the Village Hall. The BCC finally had a home of its own. Since the group now had primary use of the hall, membership was now open to all. The Barnstable Comedy Club now shouldered the responsibility of maintaining the building and relied on the efforts of its members and patrons to do this. In May 1975, the club was granted the status of tax-exempt and non-profit corporation by the state of Massachusetts.

The BCC realized it was necessary to increase performances of each play to increase members and audiences to meet increased expenses. In the 1979-1980 season, eleven performances of each major production were given; two of the six workshops had to be given twice because of the increased size of the membership. By 1980, the mortgage for the Village Hall had been paid.

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication purposes.

Acquisition: Gift of the Barnstable Comedy Club.

Processed by: Lucy Loomis, July 2026.

Related collection(s):
MS. 79 Barnstable Woman's Club Collection

CONTENTS:

BOX 1	Fldr 1	BCC Productions by year
		PLAYBILLS
	Fldr 2	1947, 1955-56, 1961-63
	Fldr 3	1964-66
	Fldr 4	1967-69
	Fldr 5	1970-73
Box 2	Fldr 1	1974-77
	Fldr 2	1978-79
	Fldr 3	1980-81
	Fldr 4	1982-83
	Fldr 5	1984-89
BOX 3	Fldr 1	1990-1996
	Fldr 2	1997-2008