

India Federation of America and ILA Foundation records, 1970-2007

Descriptive Inventory for the Collection at Chicago History Museum, Research Center
by Anne Hardgrove, 2001; rev. 2013

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Title: India Federation of America and ILA Foundation records, 1970-2007.

Main entry: ILA Foundation (Chicago, Ill.)

Span dates: 1970-2007.

Size:

6.5 linear ft. (17 boxes) and 1 oversize folder.

Restriction: In order to view an original videotape, a research copy must be made.

Provenance statement: The ILA Foundation donated this collection (1999.0146; 2009.0073.1) and provided financial assistance for processing it.

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Please cite this collection as: India Federation of America and ILA Foundation records (Chicago History Museum) plus a detailed description, date, and box/folder number of a specific item.

This descriptive inventory contains the following sections:

Historical note,

Summary description of the collection,

Description of some material related to the collection,

List of online catalog headings about the collection,

Arrangement of the collection,

Detailed description of archival series in the collection,

List of contents of the collection.

Historical note:

ILA Foundation is a not-for-profit community organization with members throughout the Chicago area. It is a charitable and educational organization with a secular outlook, whose general mission is to provide a common vehicle for the expression of cultural, educational, social and economic affairs of the people of Indic origin in North America. Its primary purpose is to foster friendship and understanding between people whose origins are in the South Asian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and other groups of people in North America. The ILA Foundation encourages, sponsors, collaborates and coordinates activities that advance appreciation of the historical and cultural heritage of the South Asian community, as well as contribute to intercultural understanding between them and other groups who are their neighbors here. The ILA Foundation provides financial resources and support to other organizations, groups, and individual activities dedicated to

cultural, educational, social, economic, and community affairs of the people of "Indic" origin in North America; that is, South Asians of all nationalities and religious persuasions.

The ILA Foundation has contributed funding to a diversity of projects, including research on American attitudes about Indians, a variety of cultural, artistic, musical and scientific presentations, education materials for school children and the public, and events for civic participation, including neighborhood celebrations and national conferences. The ILA Foundation contributions for such activities have ranged from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand, typically joining its financial contribution with those of other supporting organizations. The financial support of the ILA has come entirely from the board, the members, the executive committee, and from corporate matching funds in recognition of their employees' volunteer activities.

ILA Foundation was first incorporated in the State of Illinois on February 19, 1971, as the Federation of India Student Associations of the United States of America (FISA). FISA was founded in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1964 by eleven India Associates, and held the first Indian student conference. Based on findings and discussions at the convention and in the following months, the focus soon shifted from concerns of students from India to concerns of newly arrived immigrants from the Indian subcontinent settling in this country. In February 1973, with Chandra Jha as President, the charter was revised and the name was changed to the India League of America (ILA). Membership was open to individuals as well as associations of a regional or religious character.

From 1974 to 1980, ILA initiated annual award banquets recognizing contributions of renowned individuals including conductor Zubin Mehta, sitarist Ali Akbar Khan, and structural engineer Fazlur Rahman Khan (designer of Sears Tower and John Hancock Center). Over these years ILA sponsored many free or low-cost immigration clinics at which attorneys gave all-day workshops. These workshops provided important legal information for people wanting to change their visa status from student to permanent resident or wanting to sponsor relatives from India.

ILA was one of the few ethnic organizations invited to file a brief for the community on the issue of minority rights when the legislation was being debated in Washington in 1976. The ILA had vehemently disagreed with the decision on the part of the federal Office of Budget Management to move the Indic people from the "white other" category to "Asian and Pacific Islander," which was a protected class status group. Though other South Asian groups had in fact agitated to have their status changed, the ILA leaders believed that this move would hinder "the progress made heretofore in assimilation." One of the major reasons given against this new classification was a fear of a backlash reaction and increased incidents of violence against people of South Asian origin.

The year 1976 was a particularly active period of ILA activities, coinciding with the American Bicentennial celebrations. ILA organized the first India Day Parade in 1976. In this year ILA also organized and staffed an India exhibit at Navy Pier featuring arts, crafts, and cultures of India as well as contributions of Indian immigrants in America. The exhibit featured free supply of hot tea, video and slide shows, music and dance demonstrations as well as live Yoga and biofeedback workshops in cooperation with volunteers from the Himalayan Institute. The exhibit drew about 1500 visitors daily for three weeks. During the same period, ILA sponsored Chicago performances of many renowned performing artists of classical music and dance from India, including Yamini Krishnamurthy, Sitara Devi, Nikhil Banerjee, Ali Amjad, and others. ILA organized and hosted a three-day festival in conjunction with the Smithsonian, entitled "Smithsonian On-Tour." ILA organized visas and sponsored a three-month artist-in-residence program for many visiting artists

and dancers, including Pandit Kartick Kumar who gave demonstrations, instructions and concert programs at university campuses across the U.S.

By the end of the 1970s, the ILA leadership created a Federation of Indian Associations in Chicago to formally coordinate and shape activities with the leaders of the many other South Asian cultural organizations in the Chicago area. ILA leaders organized and presided over meetings during 1978 and 1979 and were an active part of FIA as advisers and board members. ILA helped form a Coordinating Committee of Indian Organizations that met from 1978-79. In addition, ILA kept in close contact with several other Indian organizations, and even discussed forming a merger with the Association of Indians in American during 1976-78.

In 1981, the India League of America changed its name to the ILA Foundation and became exclusively a grant-giving organization. The focus of the organization shifted to providing funding for externally oriented activities to protect the long-term image and welfare of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent and their succeeding generations. The ILA Foundation Grants and Programs from 1981 onwards have included a wide variety of projects and foci, including art exhibitions, films and photographic exhibits, education grants, education projects, and community service grants.

Exhibitions funded in part by the ILA Foundation have included an exhibit of 15-18th century textiles at the Field Museum; "India: Festival of Science" at the Museum of Science and Industry; "Through Indian Eyes," an exhibit of 19th century photos at the Chicago Cultural Center; "The Perfumed Garden," an exhibit of Indian miniatures at Lake Forest College; "Ocean of Painting," folk and tribal art; and "Popular Painting Traditions in India and their impact on contemporary art and culture," a seminar at the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago. The ILA Foundation has sponsored a festival of films by Shyam Benegal and Satyajit Ray, a photo exhibition of the Himalayas, and sculptures of Indira Johnson at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Educational grants have included contributions towards the Fazlur Rahman Khan Memorial Chair at Lehigh University, the Surendra Saxena Memorial Chair at Illinois Institute of Technology, and the Mellon challenge for India Studies at the University of Chicago.

Education projects included a PBS documentary entitled "India Speaks;" "Tastes of India" at the Community Center in Schaumburg; a seminar series "India Day" by the Ameer Khusro Society; a TV series called "Mixed Marriages"; a panel discussion on the South Asia Diaspora at the University of Chicago; a handicrafts exhibit at the University of Iowa; a national conference "India in America--The Immigrant Experience" at The Asia Society; a research report "Anti-Indian Feelings in American Cities," in the context of violence against Indians in New Jersey; and an educational program in cooperation with the Indo-American Center entitled "Interacting with South Asian immigrants." Community service grants have included grants to the Indo-American Center for the purchase of educational equipment; to the Alliance of Midwest Indian Associations for Thanksgiving Dinners for the homeless and for a senior citizens health fair; and to Apna Ghar, a South Asian women's shelter.

Beginning in the early 1990s, the locus of ILA Foundation activity shifted from the its Board to an Executive Committee. The ILA Foundation Executive Committee, comprised mostly of women, met on a monthly basis to discuss programs and proposals submitted by persons or organizations seeking funding. During this period, the ILA Foundation Board has met on a quarterly basis.

Summary description of the collection:

The ILA Foundation records contain correspondence, reports, minutes, announcements, news clippings, financial records, and other Chicago office files of the ILA Foundation and its predecessor, the India League of America, relating to its activities as a charitable and educational organization with a secular outlook, whose general mission is to provide a common vehicle for the expression of cultural, educational, social, and economic affairs of the people of Indic origin in North America. Its primary purpose is to foster friendship and understanding between people whose origins are in the South Asian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and other North Americas. The ILA Foundation encourages, sponsors, collaborates, and coordinates activities that advance appreciation of cultural and art heritage of the South Asian community, as well as contribute to intercultural understanding.

Some copies of the newsletter, *News & Views*, are included in this collection, but a more complete set of the newsletters is cataloged separately as a serial at Chicago History Museum, Research Center.

Description of some material related to the collection:

Related materials at Chicago History Museum, Research Center, include the India League of America and ILA Foundation photographs (1999.0146) and a set of the newsletter, *News & Views*.

List of online catalog headings about the collection

The following entries were placed in the online catalog for this collection:

Subjects:

ILA Foundation (Chicago, Ill.)--Archives.

India League of America--Archives.

Amjad, 'Alī

Banergee, Nikhil.

Benegal, Shyam, 1934-

Carter, Lillian, 1898-1993.

Sitara Devi.

Jha, Chandra K.

Johnson, Indira Freitas, 1943-

Khan, Ali Akbar, 1922-2009.

Khan, Fazlur R.

Krishnamurti, Yamini.

Kumar, Pandit Kartick.

Mehta, Zubin.

Ray, Satyajit, 1921-1992.

Sanghvi, Manoj K.

Amir Khusro Society of America.

Asia Forum (Chicago, Ill.)

Asia Society.

Asian Human Services (Chicago, Ill.)

Association of Indians in America.

Association of Midwest Indian Associations.

Bangladesh Foundation.

Bengali Association of Greater Chicago.

Federation of India Student Associations.

Federation of Indian Associations (Chicago, Ill.)

Gujarat Cultural Association (Chicago, Ill.)

India Development Service.
Indo-American Center.
Lake Forest College.
Museum of Science and Industry (Chicago, Ill.)
National Council of Asian Indian Organizations.
University of Chicago. South Asia Language & Area Center. Outreach Educational Project.
Asian Americans--Illinois--Chicago Metropolitan Area.
Charities--Illinois--Chicago.
East Indians--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
Emigration and immigration law--United States.
Minorities. Legal status, laws, etc.
Social service--Illinois--Chicago Metropolitan Area.
South Asian Americans--Illinois--Chicago--20th century.
South Asian Americans--Illinois--Chicago--21st century.
Chicago (Ill.)--Emigration and immigration.
India--Description and Travel.
West Rogers Park (Chicago, Ill.)

Form/genre:

Announcements.
Correspondence.
Financial records.
Minutes.
Reports.

Added entries:

Carter, Lillian, 1898-1993.
Jha, Chandra K.
Sanghvi, Manoj K.
Amir Khusro Society of America.
Asia Forum (Chicago, Ill.).
Asia Society.
Asian Human Services (Chicago, Ill.).
Association of Indians in America.
Association of Midwest Indian Associations.
Bangladesh Foundation.
Bengali Association of Greater Chicago.
Federation of India Student Associations.
Federation of Indian Associations (Chicago, Ill.).
Gujarat Cultural Association (Chicago, Ill.).
India Development Service.
India League of America.
Indo-American Center.
Lake Forest College.
Museum of Science and Industry (Chicago, Ill.).
National Council of Asian Indian Organizations.
University of Chicago. South Asia Language & Area Center. Outreach Educational Project.

Arrangement of the collection:

The India Federation of America and ILA Foundation records are arranged in archival series:

Series 1. Administrative Files, 1970-1994

Series 2. Program and Topical Files, 1973-1998

Series 3. Miscellaneous files, 1976-2007 & oversize folder

Detailed description of archival series in the collection:

Series 1. Administrative Files, 1970-1994

Series 1 (boxes 1-9) consists of two subseries. The first subseries covers the solitary file dating from the ILA's Foundation first incarnation as the Federation of Indian Student Associations (FISA). All other files in the series (subseries 2) are India League of America and ILA Foundation files.

The files of subseries 2 include agendas and minutes of Board Meetings, notes, memos, and correspondence documenting the routine operations of the India League of America and the ILA Foundation. This series is arranged alphabetically and thereunder chronologically. The India League of America newsletter entitled News & Views, which covers the major news events and public programs of the organization, is included in this series.

The correspondence in this series includes routine membership matters, program proposal requests, and program planning. Files on the Annual Award Banquets contain programs and planning materials. The bylaws and Constitutions of the India League of America and the ILA Foundation are found here. Financial materials include audits, banking analysis reports, invoices, and contributions and pledges.

Series 2. Program and Topical Files, 1973-1998

Series 2 runs from box 9 to box 13. It is divided into two subseries: Subseries 1, Program Files; and Subseries 2, Topical Files.

Subseries 1, Program Files, includes materials (newspaper clippings, programs, correspondence) on exhibitions, festivals, workshops, reports, lectures, and other public presentations relating to Indian culture and society, mainly staged in Chicago. The ILA Foundation provided funding for many of these presentations.

Subseries 2, Topical Files, includes fliers, correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, and surveys and are arranged alphabetically by topic or title of the organization. This series contains an assortment of newspaper clippings related to topics of interest to the India League of America and the ILA Foundation, such as immigration, violence against immigrant populations, census figures on the numbers of Indians in America, as well as clipping files on affiliated organizations. The papers that concern the discussion about minority status are included here.

Series 3. Miscellaneous files, 1976-2007 & oversize folder (2009.0073.1)

Series 3 contains, in chronological order, records of the ILA Foundation's meetings, financial activities, correspondence, and cultural events. Also present are studies pertaining to Indian immigrants in the United States.

List of contents of the collection:

Series 1. Administrative files, 1970-1994

Subseries 1. Federation of Indian Student Associations (FISA)

box 1

folders:

1 General 1970-1973

Series 1. Administrative files, 1970-1994

Subseries 2. India League of America (ILA) and ILA Foundation

box 1 continued:

folders:

- 2 Addresses of members
- 3 Annual Award Banquets: 1974
- 4 Annual Award Banquets: 1975
- 5 Annual Award Banquets: 1976
- 6 Annual Award Banquets: 1977
- 7 Annual Award Banquets: 1978
- 8 Annual Award Banquets: 1980

box 2

- 1 Annual reports
- 2 Annual report filing forms
- 3 Board of Directors: Internal discussions and lists of members
- 4 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1974
- 5 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1975
- 6 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1976
- 7 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1977
- 8 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1978
- 9 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1980
- 10 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1981
- 11 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1983
- 12 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1984
- 13 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1986
- 14 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1987
- 15 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1988
- 16 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1989
- 17 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1991
- 18 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1992
- 19 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1993
- 20 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1994
- 21 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1995
- 22 Board of Directors: Minutes: 1996
- 23 Brochures

box 3

- 1 Constitution: India League of America 1975-1980
- 2 Constitution: ILA Foundation 1981-92
- 3 Correspondence: 1972-73
- 4 Correspondence: 1974 January-September
- 5 Correspondence: 1974 October-November
- 6 Correspondence: 1974 December
- 7 Correspondence: 1975
- 8 Correspondence: 1976 January-May
- 9 Correspondence: 1976 June-July

10 Correspondence: 1976 August-September

box 4

- 1 Correspondence: 1976 October-December
- 2 Correspondence: 1977
- 3 Correspondence: 1978 January-April
- 4 Correspondence: 1978 May-June
- 5 Correspondence: 1978 August
- 6 Correspondence: 1978 September-October
- 7 Correspondence: 1978 November-December
- 8 Correspondence: 1979
- 9 Correspondence: 1980
- 10 Correspondence: 1981

box 5

- 1 Correspondence: 1982
- 2 Correspondence: 1983
- 3 Correspondence: 1984
- 4 Correspondence: 1985
- 5 Correspondence: 1986 January-August
- 6 Correspondence: 1986 May-August
- 7 Correspondence: 1986 September-December
- 8 Correspondence: 1987
- 9 Correspondence: 1988
- 10 Correspondence: 1989
- 11 Correspondence: 1990
- 12 Correspondence: 1991
- 13 Correspondence: 1992
- 14 Correspondence: 1993
- 15 Correspondence: 1994

box 6

- 1 Correspondence: 1995
- 2 Correspondence: 1996
- 3 Correspondence: 1997
- 4 Financial: Audit reports
- 5-6 Financial: Banking analysis
- 7 Financial: Checks and deposits
- 8 Financial: Contributions and pledges
- 9 Financial statements

box 7

- 1 Financial: Grants and programs
- 2-4 Financial: Invoices
- 5 Financial: Receipts and disbursements
- 6 Financial: Statement of cash position
- 7 Financial: Tax returns
- 8 Incorporation papers

box 8

- 1 Newsletters: 1972-1973
- 2 Newsletters: 1974-1975
- 3 Newsletters: 1976
- 4 Newsletters: 1977-1979
- 5 Personnel
- 6 Presidents' handwritten notes
- 7 Stationary and envelope samples

Series 2. Program and topical files, 1973-1998

Subseries 1. Program Files

box 8 continued:

folders:

- 8 Academic lectures, miscellaneous
- 9 Academic studies: "American Sentiments Towards Indians" 1980
- 10 Academic studies: "The New "Assimilative" Immigrant" 1988
- 11 Academic studies: "A Pilot Study of Anti-Indian Feelings in Chicago and New Jersey" 1976
- 12 Art exhibition, Hancock Center, Chicago 1977
- 13 Benegal, Shyman, film maker

box 9

- 1 Bicentennial: Kartick Kumar concert
- 2 Bicentennial: Navy Pier exhibition
- 3-4 Bicentennial: Smithsonian On Tour
- 5 Birmingham Salutes India
- 6 Fazlur Rahman Khan Chair, Lehigh University
- 7 Festival of India: American Committee
- 8 Festival of India: Calligraphy exhibit
- 9 Festival of India: Chicago Committee
- 10 Festival of India: Festival publicity

box 10

- 1 Festival of India: Film Festival--Film Utsav
- 2 Festival of India: Indians in America book proposal
- 3 Festival of India: Museum of Science and Industry (MSI):
India: A Festival of Science
- 4 Festival of India: MSI: Documentary: "India: Festival of Science"
- 5 Festival of India: MSI: Zubin Mehta
- 6 Festival of India: "From the Ocean of Painting" (curriculum packet, Smart Gallery, Chicago)
- 7 Immigration clinics
- 8 India Day: 1976
- 9 India Day: 1977
- 10 India Day: 1978 (Lillian Carter Honor)
- 11 India Day: 1979
- 12 India Day: 1985
- 13 India Day: 1986
- 14 "India Speaks" (publicity for PBS documentary)
- 15 "Master Dyers to the World"--textile exhibit

box 11

- 1 "Patters of Light and Life in North India"--Indira Johnson
- 2 "Perfumed Garden"--Indian miniatures at Lake Forest College
- 3 Ray, Satyajit, film maker
- 4 "Through Indian Eyes"
- 5 Programs, miscellaneous
- 6 Project proposals, miscellaneous

Series 2. Program and topical files, 1973-1998

Subseries 2. Topical Files

box 11 continued:

- 7 Clippings, Miscellaneous
- 8 Employment counseling
- 9-10 Minority status

box 12

- 1 Other organizations: Air India
- 2 Other organizations: Ameer Khusro Society of America
- 3 Other organizations: Asia Society
- 4 Other organizations: Asian Forum
- 5 Other organizations: Asian Human Services
- 6 Other organizations: Association of Indians in America
- 7 Other organizations: AT&T
- 8 Other organizations: Bangladesh Foundation
- 9 Other organizations: Bengali Association of Greater Chicago
- 10 Other organizations: Coordinating Committee of Indian Organizations 1978

box 13

- 1 Other organizations: Federation of Indian Associations 1980-86
- 2 Other organizations: Government of India Tourist Office
- 3 Other organizations: Gujarat Cultural Association
- 4 Other organizations: Illinois Arts Council
- 5 Other organizations: India Development Service
- 6 Other organizations: Indo-American Center
- 7 Other organizations: Institute for Voluntary Organizations
- 8 Other organizations: National Council of Asian Indian Organizations 1982
- 9 Other organizations: University of Chicago. South Asia Language and Area Center. Outreach Educational Project.
- 10 Other organizations: Miscellaneous

Series 3. Miscellaneous files, 1976-2007 & oversize folder (2009.73.1)

box 14

- 1 Event photos: 1976
- 2 Biographies of awards recipients: 1976
- 3 Minority status paper: 1976
- 4 Background material: 1976
- 5 Asian Indian identity: 1977
- 6 Proposal for integrated rural development program: 1979
- 7 American sentiments toward Indian immigrants survey: 1979

8 Miscellaneous materials: 1981-1994

box 15

- 1 Correspondence: 1981-1995
- 2 Miscellaneous material: 1981-1998
- 3 Zubin Mehta event: 1992
- 4 Indians in America articles: 1986
- 5 Other organizations correspondence, proposals, brochures: 1986-2006
- 6 Anti-Indian feelings and incidents pilot study: 1988
- 7 Board of Directors material: 1988, 1993-1996

box 16

- 1 ILA constitution and bylaws: 1990, 1991
- 2 Trustee, board, and executive committee minutes: 1990-1995
- 3 Board member general material: 1990-1996
- 4 Miscellaneous material: 1995

box 17

- 1 Financial materials: 1997-2005
- 2 Correspondence with Chicago Historical Society: 1998-1999
- 3 Smithsonian exhibit: *Devi the Great Goddess*: 1998-1999
- 4 Financial records: 1998-2007
- 5 University of Iowa museum *Devi the Great Goddess* exhibit: 2001

1 oversize folder.