



BHC-MSS 0014
Guide to the Records of Court Roma No. 153 (Bridgeport) Foresters of
America
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2018

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Court Roma No. 153 (Bridgeport) Foresters of America

Title: Records of Court Roma No. 153 (Bridgeport) Foresters of America

Dates: 1870s-1960s

Quantity: 3.5 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize box

Abstract: The Foresters of America (now Foresters Financial) were a fraternal society with an emphasis on providing for members when they were in ill health or when they died. Court Roma No. 153 served Bridgeport's Italian American community, and the records document the members of the organization and their activities.

Language: English, Italian

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Administrative History:

Established in Philadelphia in 1832, the Foresters of America was originally an offshoot of the English organization the Ancient Order of Foresters, originally founded in 1745. According to the Ancient Order, the fraternity goes back to the days of Robin Hood, but this is a foundational fabrication. Regardless, Robin Hood is invoked in group rites and events frequently. The American order had a "supreme court" in each state, and individual groups were called "courts" rather than lodges. In 1889, the Foresters of America broke off from their English counterpart and gained independence.

By joining the Foresters of America, members were able to ensure that they would have some form of income should they fall sick, make sure that they (and their spouses) would be buried, and ensure that relatives would be provided for in death. As a result, the organization has survived to become Foresters Financial, which provides financial planning to this day.

Present in the collection is the material relating to the Bridgeport court, called Court Roma. Bridgeport had nine courts in total including Court Roma: Court Iranistan (No. 34), Court Marina (No. 53), Court Pequonnock (No. 62), Court Nathaniel Wheeler (No. 92), Court Park City (No. 99), Catalpa Circle (No. 14), Star of Pembroke Circle (No. 177; Lady Foresters of America), Catalpa Circle (No. 425; Lady Foresters of America), and Lucette Warner Circle (No. 472; Lady Foresters of America).

The designation Court Roma, versus the others which are specific to Bridgeport locales, suggests that it was meant to serve the Italian community. This is furthered by the fact that the only names present within the applications are Italian, and there is correspondence with other Italian organizations. Immigrants joining fraternal organizations for benefits like those listed above was a

logical choice. As such, the Court Roma documents offer insight into the members of the Bridgeport Italian community at the time.

Scope and Content Note:

The immigrant experience within Bridgeport is a story told over and over again by various communities that have called the city home. Fraternal organizations such as the Foresters of America helped to provide a network of support for the community, and Court Roma in Bridgeport represents a unique view into the Italian-American community of Bridgeport from the 1880s to the 1950s. The bulk of the records comprise the 1900s-1920s, and give the names of countless Italian immigrants and Italian-Americans who called the city home at the start of the 20th century.

Arrangement note:

The first series, general information and overview, provides information about the Foresters within Bridgeport, along with reports and information about their financial status. The second and largest series is the membership applications, which arrived at the Bridgeport History Center in alphabetical order. That order has been maintained. Series III represents correspondence from Court Roma over the years, with series IV representing the only existing minutes in the series.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Donated by Nicolas Pasquariello in 2009. Original accession 2009.02

Preferred Citation:

Records of Court Roma No. 153 (Bridgeport) Foresters of America (BHC-MSS 0014), Bridgeport History Center.

Names and Subject Tracings

Corporate Names

Foresters of America

Subject tracings

Bridgeport (Conn.)

Fraternal organizations

Italian American men

Italian American experience

Detailed box and folder listing

Box 1, Series I, General information and overview

1. Court Roma no. 153 Constitution and By-Laws, 1938
 2. By-Laws of the Foresters of America Grand Court of Connecticut, 1936 and 1948
 3. Roll book, 1919-1929
 4. Court Roma no. 153 minutes, April 1937-June 27, 1938
 5. Auditor's Reports, June 10, 1942-June 23, 1949
 6. Auditor's Reports, March 31, 1957-December 31, 1962
 7. Reports for Court Roma no. 153 and USA No. 460, 1935-1941
 8. Report on committee for an excursion, July 1938
 9. Anniversary commissions, 1936-1939
- Series II
10. Blank membership application c. 1928

11. Blank application for reinstatement, undated
12. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, A, 1870s-1930s
13. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, B, 1870s-1930s
14. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, C, 1870s-1930s

Box 2

1. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, D, 1870s-1930s
2. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, E, 1870s-1930s
3. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, F, 1870s-1930s
4. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, G, 1870s-1930s
5. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, I, 1870s-1930s
6. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, L, 1870s-1930s
7. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, M, 1870s-1930s
8. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, N, 1870s-1930s
9. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, O, 1870s-1930s
10. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, P, 1870s-1930s
11. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, R, 1870s-1930s

Box 3

1. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, S, 1870s-1930s
2. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, T, 1870s-1930s
3. Membership applications to Court Roma no. 153, U and V, 1870s-1930s
4. Foresters of America certificates, 1910s
Series III, Correspondence
5. Bulletins from the Grand Court of Connecticut, 1935-1942
6. Correspondence, Supreme Court of Connecticut, 1936-1942
7. Correspondence, Board of Management for Connecticut, 1934-1942
8. Correspondence with Aldo Lardorei, 1936-1941
9. Correspondence with John J. Ciullo, November 1937
10. Correspondence with Amendo Gianntasio, 1939
11. Correspondence with Thomas M. Donnelly National Memorial Association, 1938
12. Correspondence with other Italian organizations, 1936-1941

Box 4

1. Correspondence, 1939-1954
2. Correspondence, 1935-1936
3. Correspondence, 1936
4. Correspondence, 1941
5. Correspondence, 1940s
6. Correspondence, 1 of 2, 1940s-1950s
7. Correspondence, 2 of 2, 1940s-1950s

Series IV, Minutes

Box 5

1. Minutes, September 27, 1945-August 8, 1957
Note: Large portion of the minutes are written in Italian