



BHC-MSS 0045

Guide to the Records of the Bridgeport Centennial Incorporated

By Nathan R. Martin

1984

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Bridgeport Centennial Incorporated

Title: Records of Bridgeport Centennial Incorporated

Dates: 1935-1936

Quantity: 8 manuscript boxes, 4 oversize boxes

Abstract: The records of the Bridgeport Centennial Incorporated include subject files, a reading file of the managing director, and other items including photographs, oversize material, scrapbooks, and a financial ledger.

Collection Number: BHC-MSS 0045

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Note: This finding aid was originally hand written in 1984 by Nathan Martin. It was transcribed in April 2019 by Meg Rinn. Some sections have been lightly edited for clarity. Series have been denoted and subject headings have been added. Otherwise, the finding aid is a direct type copy.

Administrative History

Bridgeport Centennial Inc. began as a plan and scope committee of approximately sixty members in December of 1935. This committee, under the chairmanship of former mayor Edward T. Buckingham and drew upon the basic plans for the upcoming celebration, for in 193 Bridgeport was to celebrate her 100th year. The Plan and Scope Committee scheduled tentative events and formulated a rough budget.

In early January an executive committee was selected by Mayor Jasper McLevy in conference with a special sub-committee. The first meeting of this executive committee was held on January 14, 1936. At this meeting the committee voted to adopt all suggestions of the Plan and Scope Committee and also decided to become incorporated as Bridgeport Centennial, Inc. Mayor McLevy was selected as honorary chairman and former mayor Buckingham would serve as acting chairman. Senator John M. Taft was elected vice-chairman, Francis J. Hill of the Chamber of Commerce was elected secretary and City Comptroller Perry J. Rodman was voted treasurer. W.B. Aurandt was chosen to be the managing director of the corporation. Other members were: Rabbi Albert L. Martin, the Reverend Dr. Willian Horace Day, W. Gerald Bryant, George Wellington, Bernard J. lee, Edward J. Pease, Mrs. Alvin c. Bruel, Cornelius J. Donnelly, Judge Frederick A. Bartlett, and John J. O'Neill.

The executive committee met throughout the celebration, which lasted from January , Bridgeport Night at the United Church Forum, until October 3, the date on which Isaac Sherman Jr. took office as the city's first mayor in 1836.

Some important events of the Centennial Celebration were: the Centennial Exposition held at the Remington Buildings on Helen Street in May; Charter Day, June 4, which was the official opening of the Celebration and celebrated the original grant of the city's charter; the re-opening of the Barnum Museum on June 16; the Centennial Historical Pageant, which took place on July 18 and 19 and depicted the history of Bridgeport; Old Home Week which was August 1-8 and welcomed back past Bridgeporters; an immense Labor Day parade on September 7 which featured many floats, bands, etc.; finally the Official Closing of the Centennial, on October 3rd, where the new monument was unveiled and historical events were dramatized.

Another important accomplishment of the organization was the issue of a special coin to commemorate the Centennial. This coin, a 50 cent piece, featured P.T. Barnum on one side and eagle on the other. There were between 15,000-25,000 coins issued and they were sold for \$2 each. A special postal cachet was also printed and sold.

One of the organization's most important achievements was the publishing of a book, *The Story of Bridgeport*. The book was researched and written by Mrs. Elsie Nichols Dannenberg and tells Bridgeport's history from its earliest origins up to the Centennial. A program of the centennial was printed in the back of the book.

On October 9, 1936, Bridgeport Centennial, Inc. closed its books. Though sales of coins and books continued, the company's activities, in effect, ended. The company was left with a surplus. Of the cash, \$3000 was given to the library in December of 1937, and the remainder, along with the left over coins, was given to the Community Chest. In addition, 13,000 copies of *The Story of Bridgeport* were donated to the library. On April 26, 1938, Bridgeport Centennial, Inc., was officially dissolved.

Scope and Content Note

The records of Bridgeport Centennial, Inc. cover a period extending from December 193 until October 1936. The majority of the material is concentrated between June and October of 1936.

There are length files on all facets of advertising and publicity, as well as a detailed file on the publishing and merchandising the book *The Story of Bridgeport*. There are also programs and publications from many of the events which took place during the celebration.

Along with the office files are six scrapbooks of newspaper clippings dealing with the city's centennial. There is also a financial ledger and an itemized list of all objects displayed at the Centennial Exposition.

Arrangement Note

Due to fragile nature, material has primarily been left together as it was inventoried. A large spiral bound notebook has been moved to its own folder.

Provenance

Direct donation of Bridgeport Centennial Inc. to the Bridgeport Public Library in November, 1937

Name and Subject Tracings

Corporate names

Bridgeport Centennial Inc.

Subject tracings

Bridgeport (Conn.)

Bridgeport (Conn.)--Centennial celebrations, etc.

Bridgeport (Conn.)--History.

Bridgeport (Conn.)--Social life and customs.

Administrative Information

Preferred citation

Records of the Bridgeport Centennial Incorporated, (BHC-MSS 0045), Bridgeport History Center.

Box and folder listing

Series I, Subject Files

Box 1

1. Addresses, 1936
2. Advertising, automobile, 1936
3. Advertising, billboards, 1936
4. Advertising, railway, 1936
5. Amphitheatre, 1936
6. Boat races, 1936
7. Boy Scouts, 1936
8. By Laws, organization, 1936
9. Charter Day, 1936
10. Coin boxes, 1936
11. Coin, correspondence, 1936
12. Coin, list of applicants, 1936
13. Coin, 1936
14. Coin, orders, 1936
15. Coin, origin of orders, 1936
16. Committee prospects, 1936

Box 2

1. Committees, 1936
2. Conventions, 1936

3. Education, 1936
4. Events, miscellaneous, 1936
5. Exposition, 1936
6. Financial committee, 1936
7. Financial statements, miscellaneous, 1936
8. Girl scouts, 1936
9. Historical committee and exhibition of Bridgeport Relics, 1936
10. History book merchandising, 1936
11. History book, undated proofs, 1936

Box 3

1. International village, 1936
2. Labor Day, 1936
3. Managing director's reading file, January 30-February 17, 1936
4. Managing director's reading file, February 18-March 26, 1936
5. Managing director's reading file, March 27-May 11, 1936
6. Managing director's reading file, May 11-July 13, 1936
7. Managing director's reading file, July 13-September 15, 1936
8. Managing director's reading file, September 16-October 23, 1936
9. Marathon, 1936
10. March, 1936
11. Medals and Buttons, 1936
12. Military demonstration, 1936

Box 4

1. Minutes, 1936
2. Miscellaneous, 1936
3. Miscellaneous, 1936
4. Monument, 1936
5. Old Home Week, 1936
6. Pageant, 1936
7. Pageant, photographs, 1936
8. Pageant, programs, 1936

Box 5

1. Parade proposals, 1936
2. Participation certificates, 1936
3. Poem, 1936
4. Printing, 1936
5. Program, 1936
6. Publicity Committee, 1936
7. Publicity, miscellaneous, 1936

8. Publicity, radio, 1936
9. Publicity, releases , 1936
10. Radio scripts, 1936
11. Recreation, 1936
12. Salaries, 1936

Box 6

1. Seal (publicity) , 1936
2. Soap Box Derby, 1936
3. Societies' contributions, 1936
4. Societies' contributions, 1936
5. Thank you letters, February 17-March 27, 1936
6. Thank you letters, march 27-August 10, 1936
7. Thank you letters, August 10-October 23, 1936
8. Unions, history in Bridgeport, 1936

Box 7

Series II, ledgers

1. Exhibition list, vols.1 and 2, 1936
2. Visitor register from exhibition, 1936
3. Registrations at exhibitions, 1936
4. Financial ledger, 1936

Box 8

Series III, clippings and scrapbooks

1. Clippings, 1936
2. Clippings, 1936
3. Clippings, 1936
4. Clippings, 1936

Box 9

1. Scrapbook #1, December 1, 1935-May 1, 1936
2. Scrapbook #5, August 24-September 23, 1936

Box 10

1. Scrapbook #3, May 2-June 7, 1936
2. Scrapbook #6, September 24-October 30, 1936

Box 11

1. Scrapbook #3, June 8-July 18, 1936
2. Scrapbook #4, July 10-August 23, 1936

Box 12

Series 4, Oversize

1. 100 Years of Progress Bridgeport Centennial Exposition floor plan, May 15-23, 1936
2. Sunday Herald Centennial Supplement, May 31, 1936
3. Posters for Centennial events, 1936
4. Boy Scout Camporee Posters, June 5 -7, 1936
5. Bridgeport Centennial Certificates of Participation, 1936
6. Bridgeport Centennial Certificate of Endorsement, 1936