



BHC-MSS 0078
Guide to the Joseph Caesar Cardozo Collection
By Meg Rinn, June 2020

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Unknown creator, American

Title: Joseph Caesar Cardozo Collection

Dates: 1982-1999

Quantity: 1/2 manuscript box

Abstract: Founder of major Bridgeport institutions such as Harborfest and the Ocean Classroom, Joseph Caesar Cardozo was a remarkable educator and member of the Bridgeport community. Much of his work related to Bridgeport's maritime history and helped to strengthen ties and highly the importance of Bridgeport's relation to Cape Verde.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History

Founder of major Bridgeport institutions such as Harborfest, Joseph Caesar Cardozo was born in Port Chester, New York, on May 19, 1953. He graduated high school from Notre Dame in Fairfield, Connecticut. Cardozo went on to receive a BA in special education and communications from Western Michigan University in 1977 and then a Masters in educational administration from Wayne State University in 1980. Between these years Joseph Caesar Cardozo also worked as a special education teacher in Michigan.

He returned to Connecticut in 1980, occupying a position in the Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services until 1985. Cardozo was instrumental in organizing the Ernestina Committee of Cape Verdeans United into the Connecticut Friends of Ernestina/Morrissey Inc. This enabled the creation of the Ocean Classroom, a maritime education program for Bridgeport youth that also led to the creation of the Bridgeport Vocational Center for Aquaculture.

The Ernestina is a storied schooner that in the mid-20th century became a part of trade that crossed to Cape Verde. As Bridgeport has strong connections to Cape Verde, the ship is of particular note for the local community. Cardozo helped with preserving the ship itself, which was donated to the state of Massachusetts.

In addition to organizing the Ocean Classroom and helping to restore the Ernestina, Cardozo was a key part of founding Bridgeport's Harborfest, a citywide festival that celebrates Bridgeport's maritime heritage, especially in the Black Rock section of the city.

A gifted educator, Joseph was able to develop curricula for middle schoolers in not only English, but Kreyol, Haitian and Cape Verdean Creole, Spanish, and Vietnamese, among others.

Cardozo was an involved educator and active citizen, serving in Bridgeport politics. He was the elected representative for the 133rd district in Bridgeport from 1982 to 1984, a part of the

Connecticut State Advisory Harbor Management and Waterways Commission, and Board of Contract Appliance for the City of Bridgeport.

He moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1988 where he worked as the Director of Programs and Development for the Schooner Ernestina organization. He was present when the schooner was designated a National Historic Landmark, and remained at the post until 1992 when he moved to Boston. From 1992 until his death in 1994, Cardozo worked as the Director of Education for the Multicultural Aids Coalition.

Cardozo died on July 9, 1994 with a large number of awards and honors in his name, including the 1987 Invited Educational Guest of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Scope and Content note:

The collection was found in the Bridgeport History Center in a binder, with material arranged in a particular way but the source was unclear. Mostly containing newspaper clippings, along with promotional material for the Schooner Ernestine, the Ocean Classroom, and Harborfest. The collection shows Cardozo's passions and helps document their impact on the City of Bridgeport. The amount of photocopied newspapers likewise shows how Cardozo's hard work was received at the time, as well as the sheer volume of work he did for the community.

Arrangement Note:

Original order based on the binder the material was submitted in.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Donation from Theresa Cardozo. Accession # 2007.17.

Preferred Citation:

Joseph Caesar Cardozo Collection (BHC-MSS 0078) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Cardozo, Joseph Caesar
Effie M. Morrissey (Schooner)
Multicultural Aids Coalition

Subject tracings

Aquaculture
Harborfest (Bridgeport, Conn.)
Navigation--History
Verde, Cape (Senegal)

Detailed box and folder listing

Box 1

1. Ocean classroom, Harborfest, 1982-1999
2. Newspaper clippings, 1982-1999
3. Newspaper clippings, 1982-1999