



BHC-MSS 0094

Guide to the Records of Bridgeport Company Donations to
Johnstown Flood Relief

By Meg Rinn
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Hincks, W.B.

Title: Records of Bridgeport Company Donations to Johnstown Flood Relief

Dates: 1889

Quantity: ½ manuscript box

Abstract: On May 31, 1889, the South Fork Dam burst and flooded the Pennsylvania town of Johnstown. The sudden flooding killed over 2,200 and left a swath of destruction. Donations came from all over the United States, including Bridgeport. The city's donation response was spearheaded by W.B. Hincks. These records show the individual donations of private citizens and major Bridgeport companies.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

On May 31, 1889, the South Fork Dam located upstream of Johnstown, Pennsylvania failed. What happened next was a massive flood that killed an estimated 2,200 people and \$17 million dollars of damage at the time. The flood itself was caused by an extremely heavy rainfall that caused the Conemaugh River to swell, until the dam broke. There were attempts to prevent this break, but the efforts were not successful and a torrent of water was released upon the town.

When the dam overflowed, it picked up trees, homes, and animals and dumped them all upon Johnstown. The aftermath photographs showed staggering damage, and provoked a national and international outpouring of financial support. The response included citizens and corporations from Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Bridgeport donation effort was organized by W.B. Hincks, a prominent citizen and a key part in the corporation Hincks and Johnson and the treasurer of the City Savings Bank of Bridgeport. He was also a Civil War veteran and co-executor of P.T. Barnum's estate.

Scope and Content note:

The bulk of the collection is made up of documents from various companies based in Bridgeport and their financial pledges to the relief effort. The account book essentially acts as an index to the individual donors both personal and corporate. Also reflected is W.B. Hincks's management and role as a private citizen in the Bridgeport community.

Arrangement Note:

Account book has been placed first. It is followed by correspondence and individual contributions,

and then contributions from Bridgeport based companies.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Found in collections. Accession #1996.01.

Preferred Citation:

Records of Bridgeport Company Donations to Johnstown Flood Relief (BHC-MSS 0094) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Hinks, W.B.

Barnum, P. T. (Phineas Taylor), 1810-191

Corporate names

Holmes and Edwards Silver Manufacturing company

Subject tracings

Floods--Pennsylvania--Johnstown (Cambria County)

Detailed box and folder listing

Series 1

Box 1

1. W.B. Hinks accounts for Johnstown sufferers, 1889
2. Correspondence regarding the flood with W.B. Hincks, 1889
3. Contributions from Bridgeport companies, 1889
4. Contributions from Bridgeport companies, 1889