



BHC-MSS 0103
Guide to the Records of the Sterling Home
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: The Sterling Home

Title: Records of the Sterling Home

Dates: 1833-1990

Quantity: 15 linear feet

Abstract: In 1849, the Bridgeport Protestant Widows Society was founded with the intent of providing charity and support to widowed members of the Protestant denominations in Bridgeport. The Sterling Home was administered by them and went on to provide housing for widows without anywhere else to go, along with communal support through the grieving process. Within the collection are minutes, financial documents, and reports that provide insight into the administrative elements that ran the Sterling Home until it shut down in 1992. The Sterling Home is now a part of FSW Inc.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

In 1849, the Bridgeport Protestant Widows Society was founded with the intent of providing charity and support to widowed members of the Protestant denominations in Bridgeport. It was chartered in 1853, and received a massive windfall of money upon the death of Polly Sterling. The daughter of Dr. James Eaton Beach, Polly had married into the Sterling family. Her husband Sylvanus had a successful saddlery business and was president of the Bridgeport Savings Bank. When Polly Sterling died, she left the Society \$39,000 in her will. With that money, the Bridgeport Protestant Widows Society made good use of funding, laying the cornerstone for the Sterling Home on May 1, 1884 at 354 Prospect Street.

The home served to provide housing for widows without anywhere else to go, along with communal support through the grieving process. The Sterling Home became a part of FSW Inc., or Family Services Woodbridge (now LifeBridge) in 1995.

Scope and Content

The material within the records of the Sterling Home is comprised mostly of minutes and of financial records - donation books, account books, and bank statements. Between these groups of documents, it is possible to have a general overview of the administrative elements of running the Sterling Home. What the collection does not have extensive documentation of is what it was like to live in the home, residents, or like information. For that, the best sources are the scrapbooks located in Series VI, as well as the clippings in the same series.

Arrangement

Series I, Land deeds and gifts, contains legal information about the donation of the Sterling estate, along with the personal papers of Polly and Sylvanus Sterling. Also included are various legacies, as the Home was often named in the wills of various wealthy Bridgeporters in the early 20th century. They are arranged chronologically.

Series II Reports and Series III Minutes provide insight into the running of the home on a yearly level through annual reports and a more monthly level through the minutes. It is worth noting that the minutes run from 1849-1984, providing a nearly complete picture of the Home's history. They are arranged by document type then size, with executive level reporting privileged first.

Series IV focuses on finances, and includes donation records, account books, and bank statements up into 1990. They are arranged by document type then size, with executive level reporting privileged first.

Buildings and Grounds comprises series V, and strives to corral various information about the physical home itself, maintaining it, and general activity of what went on. Of note are the menus from the 1940s. The material is arranged chronologically, as there are no significant individual record groups that can be parsed out.

The final series, VI, contains truly miscellaneous material, such as advertisements for the home, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks featuring photographs. The scrapbooks are extremely well labeled. Arranged chronologically.

Subject tracings

Corporate names

Bridgeport Protestant Widows Society
Sterling Home of Bridgeport

Subjects

Bridgeport, Conn.
Charities
Widows

Detailed Box/Folder Listing

Series I – Land deeds and gifts

Box 1

1. Papers of Sylvanus and Polly Sterling, 1833-1868
2. Deeds of Sylvanus and Polly Sterling, 1829-1855
3. Deeds of Sylvanus and Polly Sterling, 1839-1851
4. Deeds of Sylvanus and Polly Sterling, 1866-1867
5. Estate papers of Polly Sterling, 1867-1868
6. Various legacies, 1852-1915

7. Various legacies, 1961-1921
8. Various legacies, 1923-1957 and undated
9. Estate papers and legacy of Mary Wood, 1906-1913
10. Legacies, 1866-1970
11. Sanford and Hotchkiss estates, 1979-1980

Series II – Reports

Box 2

1. Constitution and report of the first year of the [?], 1849-1852
2. Annual reports, 1849-1915 [non-inclusive]
3. Annual reports, 1970-1975
4. Annual reports, 1976-1980
5. Board of Trustees, 1955
6. Rules and regulations, undated
7. State of Connecticut papers, 1960=1969

Series III - Minutes

8. Minute book, 1849-1859
9. Minute book, 1870
10. Minute book, 1875-1885
11. Minute book, 1883-1892

Box 3

1. Minute book, 1893-0895
2. Minute book, 1905-1931
3. Minute book, 1906-1912
4. Minute book, 1912-1917
5. Minute book, 1917-1919

Box 4 [downsize to letter box]

1. Minute book, 1921-1925
2. Minute book, 1926-1930
3. Minute book, 1931-1936
4. Minute book, 1937-1941
5. Minute book, 1941-1944

Box 5 [downsize to letter box]

1. Minute book, 1945-1947
2. Minute book, 1948-1956
3. Minute book, 1964-1974

Box 6 [downsize to letter box]

1. Minute book, 1971-1975
2. Minute book, 1974-1977
3. Minute book, 1976-1979
4. Minute book, 1977-1980
5. Minute book, 1980-1984

Box 7

1. General record book, 1971-1975
2. General record book, 1975-1978
3. General record book, 1979-1980
4. General record book, 1979-1980
5. General record book, 1981-1983

Box 8

1. General record book, 1982-1984
2. General record book, 1983-1984

3. General record book, 1984-1986
4. General record book, 1985-1986

Series IV - Finances

5. Treasurer's report, 1920, 1928-1931, 1935

Box 9

1. Treasurer's report, 1975-1977
2. Treasurer's report, 1976-1983
3. Treasurer's report, 1980-1984
4. Treasurer's report, 1983-1987
5. Treasurer's report, 1989-1990
6. Treasurer's report, 1989-1990

Box 10

1. Financial report to Secretary of State, 1972-1980
2. Mrs. Reid's reports, 1968-1976
3. Incomplete financial reports, 1968-1973
4. Incomplete financial reports, 1968-1981
5. Financial statements, 1982-1989
6. Donations, 1866-1868
7. Donations, 1893-1901
8. Donations, 1903-1905
9. Donations, 1905-1906

Box 11

1. Donations, 1907-1911
2. Donations, 1910
3. Donations, 1910-1914
4. Donations, 1912-1913
5. Donations, 1913-1917
6. Donations, 1916-1918
7. Donations, 1919-1922
8. Donations, 1920-1923
9. Donations, 1924-1931

Box 12 downsize to lb

1. Account book, 1861-1868
2. Account book, 1888-1889
3. Account book, 1890-1935
4. Account book, 1895-1897
5. Account book, 1895-1898

Box 13 downsize to lb

1. Account book, 1898-1904
2. Account book, 1904-1908
3. Account book, 1910
4. Account book, 1910-1919
5. Account book, 1911-1920

Box 14 downsize to lb

1. Account book, 1912-1915
2. Account book, 1916-1918
3. Account book, 1920-1922
4. Account book, 1924-1925

Box 15

1. Account book, 1869-1879

2. Account book, 1888-1894

3. Account book, 1880-1887

Box 16

1. Financial journal, 1869-1891

Box 17

Account book, 1921-1922

Account book, 1923-1925

Account book, 1926-1928

Box 18

Account book, 1929-1931

Account book, 1932-1934

Account book, 1935-1937

Box 19

Account book, 1939-1940

Account book, 1941-1943

Account book, 1944-1946

Box 20

Account book, 1947-1952

Account book, 1952-1957

Account book, 1957-1960

Box 21

Account book, 1960-1963

Account book, 1963-1969

Box 22

1. Bank statements, 1931-1945

2. Bank statements, 1946-1956

3. Bank statements, 1977

4. Bank statements, 1978

5. Bank statements, 1979

Box 23

1. Bank statements, 1979

2. Bank statements, 1980

3. Bank statements, 1980

4. Bank statements, 1980

5. Bank statements, 1981

6. Bank statements, 1981

7. Bank statements, 1981

8. Bank statements, 1981

9. Bank statements, 1984

10. Bank statements, 1984

11. Bank statements, 1985

12. Bank statements, 1985

13. Bank statements, 1996

14. Bank statements,1987
15. Bank statements,1988
16. Bank statements,1989
17. Bank statements,1989

Box 24

1. Bank statements,1981-1983

Series IV – Buildings and grounds

Box 25

1. **Investures** of estate, 1871-1892 **investiture? I don't know enough about it**
2. Land deeds, 1869-1870, 1902-1903, 1939
3. 1886-18700, 1889, 1892, 1914
4. Main house, 1973
5. Real estate, 1938-1941
6. Taxes, 1881-1921
7. Construction bills, 1884
8. Building contracts, 1903, 1920-1929
9. Bills, 1920-1921
10. Elevator papers, 1920-1939
11. Alteration contracts, 1933, 1938
12. Dumbwaiter, 1938

Box 26

1. General maintenance papers, 1971-1983
2. Bills, 1990-1991
3. Journals, 1849-1867, 1907-1910
4. Accounts, 1920-1925
5. Supervisor reports, 1947-1951

Box 27

1. Supervisor reports, 1952-1955
2. House reports, 1970-1989
3. Menus, 1941-1942
4. Food bills, 1988
5. Food bills, 1989-1991
6. Food bills, 1889
7. Food bills, 1990

Box 28

1. Food bills, 1991

Series V – Additional material

2. Letters to various home members, undated
3. Correspondence, general, 1915-1921
4. Advertisements, 1970-1999
5. Invitations to 125th anniversary, 1975
6. Misc. reports and papers, 1947-1954
7. Misc. reports and papers, 1954-1956
8. Misc. reports and papers, 1967-1975
9. Misc. reports and papers, 1969-1979
10. Misc. reports and papers, undated
11. Clippings, 1900, 1949, 1975
12. Clippings, 1975, 1980
13. Clippings, 1980-1999
14. Photographs, 1990

15. Scrapbook, 1900-1949

16. Scrapbook, 1930-1950

Box 29

1. Scrapbook, 1960-1979

2. Scrapbook, 1983

Box 30

1. Two tin boxes, undated

2. Seal stamper, undated