



BHC-MSS 0137

Guide to the Records of *Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural*

By Meg Rinn

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Bridgeport Public Library

Title: Records of Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural

Dates: 1977-1989

Quantity: .5 linear foot (1 manuscript box)

Abstract: Bernard Riley, best known as Bud, was a Bridgeport native born in 1911. A mostly self-taught artist, he gained renown in the mid-20th century for his work. This collection documents the creation and initial promotion of his piece *Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural* which is a part of the second floor reference room in the Burroughs-Saden building at 925 Broad Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

Bernard Riley, best known as Bud, was a Bridgeport native born in 1911. A mostly self-taught artist, he worked factory jobs in Bridgeport to ensure a steady income for his wife Marie Radner and son, John. Riley's early career centered on helping with set dressing at Central High School, and soon he was making cartoons for the local paper, painting signs, and refining his art. He exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1946, the first of many gallery showings which would go on to include the Silvermine Guild of Artists, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

He founded Third Stream Artists, the Silvermine Guild of Artists, and the Bridgeport Arts Council among other organizations.

Riley began planning the mural in the Bridgeport Public Library's Burroughs-Saden building in 1975, with execution starting in 1976. It was not completed in 1984, and he died soon after. During that time, Riley performed extensive research on Bridgeport's history. A display case on the second floor of the Burroughs-Saden building walks visitors through each element of the work.

Scope and Content note:

This collection documents the creation and the initial promotion of *Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural* which is still visible in the second floor reference room of the Burroughs-Saden building of the Bridgeport Public Library. In addition to containing the original grant information that funded the creation of the mural, the collection contains in-progress photographs, information about the opening reception for the work, and promotion of the piece in the first decade of its existence – especially after Riley's passing.

Arrangement Note:

Series I, mural creation, contains images of the mural both completed and in progress, the original grant, reception planning, and documentation about the public reaction to its unveiling. Series II, Mural and Riley's legacy, documents the efforts to celebrate Bud Riley's legacy after his passing through promoting the mural, awarding artists, and celebrating the work for the accomplishment it is.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Found in collections.

Preferred Citation:

Records of Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural (BHC-MSS 0137), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings*Personal names*

Riley, Bernard

Corporate names

Bridgeport Public Library

Subject tracings

Bridgeport, Conn.

Murals

Burroughs-Saden branch, Bridgeport Public Library

Detailed box and folder listing

Box 1

Series I, Mural creation

1. Mural images, undated
2. Photographs of mural in progress, 1980-1982
3. Riley grant, 1977-1979
4. *Bridgeport's Great Historical Mural* program, 1982
5. Riley reception, 1982
6. Connecticut Libraries, vol. 24, no. 1, 1982
7. Clippings, 1973-1983

Series II, Mural and Riley's legacy

8. Third Stream artists, 1983-1984
9. Riley Mural Project [interviews and meeting notes], 1985
10. Riley Committee, 1987-1989
11. Bernard "Bud" Riley memorial award, 1988
12. Copy-editing for mural brochure, 1988-1989
13. Riley CCA grant, 1988-1989
14. Riley address lists, 1989
15. Riley lists, 1989