



BHC-MSS 0185  
Guide to the Papers of Charles A. Wheeler  
by Meg Rinn  
February 2022

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Wheeler, Charles Augustus

**Title:** Papers of Charles A. Wheeler

**Dates:** 1898-1944

**Quantity:** 2 linear feet

**Abstract.** Charles Augustus Wheeler served as the superintendent of the City of Bridgeport Police Department from 1927 to 1944 and was an active member of a number of police organizations at the state and national level. His tenure in Bridgeport saw changes made to transportation, traffic, and more. The collection contains his assembled clippings that document these changes.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Biographical History:**

Charles A. Wheeler was born in the city of Bridgeport on October 3, 1877 to Charles and Rose Dunn Wheeler. He began a career in law enforcement starting in 1901 as a patrol man, and flew up the ranks over the next 16 years, reaching the rank of captain in 1917. He served in that capacity until he retired in 1927 due to an undisclosed disability according to newspaper obituaries.

His retirement was short lived, and he was named superintendent of police in 1927. His time in the post lasted until 1942, during which major changes to the department were made. Wheeler had a particular interest in the use of cars and how they related to police work. He drove the first patrol wagon himself, and understood the benefits of transportation. During his tenure as superintendent, he disbanded the motorcycle patrols in favor of cars due to safety concerns and saw to the installation of police radios in all patrol cars. He also implemented a number of traffic reforms related to safety of pedestrians, police officers, and vehicles.

Wheeler was active in professional policing organizations, including the New England Associations of Chiefs of Police, the State Police Association of Connecticut, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police – the latter of which he served as president of. His active engagement with other professionals put him in touch with FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, who was considered a close friend.

He married Mabel Sniffen, with whom he had a son, Charles A. Wheeler Jr. He coached football, worked with the Boy Scouts, and was socially active in a number of Bridgeport clubs and societies. He died in February of 1944, following his retirement.

**Scope and Content note:**

The collection is made of selected documents related to Wheeler's policing career, with a particular emphasis on the International Chiefs of Police Association. The scrapbooks, however, are the most noteworthy as they appear to have been assembled by Wheeler himself and reflect changes in the Bridgeport Police Department as well as state and national level police organization events.

**Arrangement Note:**

Series I, Bridgeport Police Department, features three subseries. The first is documents related to the department and Wheeler's career. The second contains material related to the International Chiefs of Police, and the third features scrapbooks and clippings. Series II contains personal material.

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** 2022.06, gift of Margaret O'Hara.

**Preferred Citation:**

Papers of Charles A. Wheeler (BHC-MSS 0185), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

**Names and Subject Tracings**

*Personal names*

Wheeler, Charles A.

Wheeler family

*Corporate names*

City of Bridgeport. Police department.

International Association of Chiefs of Police

*Subject tracings*

Policing

Police reform

**Detailed box/folder listing**

Box 1

Series I, Police department

Subseries 1, Documents

Subseries 2, International Chiefs of Police

Subseries 3, scrapbooks and clippings

1. Police record of arrests and daily memoranda, 1908
2. Letters of promotion, 1898-1913
3. Professional correspondence, 1918-1942
4. International chiefs of police reports, bulletins, and related material, 1933-1951
5. International Chiefs of Police letterhead, undated
6. Business and membership cards, 1930s-1944
7. Police ephemera, 1910s-1930s
8. Testimonial, Bridgeport Police Department, 1934
9. Testimonial, Hartford, Conn., 1941

10. Testimonial, Connecticut State Police, 1944
  11. Clippings, support of Wheeler appointments, 1920s-1940s
- Series II, Personal material
12. Personal correspondence, 1935-1938
  13. Clippings, Mable Walker and Charles Wheeler, 1918-1965

Box 2

1. Clippings, 1920s-1940s
2. Obituaries, 1944
3. Wheeler house foundation, 1981
4. Photographs, Charles A. Wheeler, undated
5. Photographs, Mabel Wheeler, undated
6. Photographs, family members, undated
7. Photographs, police department, undated
8. Scrapbook, 1920s-1940s [pasted into a program for an International Chiefs of Police convention program]
9. Scrapbook, 1936-1938

Box 3

1. Scrapbook, 1942
2. International Chiefs of Police clippings scrapbook, 1937
3. The Detective [police association newsletter welcoming International Chiefs of Police Association to Chicago for convention], 1933

Box 4

1. Chicago Tribune, January 11, 1919
2. Bridgeport Standard Telegram, February 10, 1919
3. Bridgeport Post, February 22, 1919
4. Bridgeport Times, March 26, 1919
5. Bridgeport Post, December 14, 1919
6. Bridgeport Post, August 31, 1931f
7. Sunday Herald, February 22, 1942

Box 5

1. Scrapbook, 1935-1938
2. Scrapbook, 1916-1918
3. Scrapbook, 1940-1941