



BHC-MSS 0230
 Guide to the Papers of Lew Corbit Jr.
 July 2022

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Corbit, Lew Jr.

Title: Papers of Lew Corbit Jr.

Dates: 1859-1987 [bulk 1942-1987]

Quantity: 2 linear feet

Abstract. Lewis Corbit Junior, known as Lew, helped run the Corbit Studio from the passing of his father in 1952 until his death in 1986. Known as a treasure trove of Bridgeport's history thanks to the studio's presence in Bridgeport since 1906, Lew's personal papers reflect his family life and activities outside of the photo studio. This included correspondence to his parents during World War II, material related to his wife Ione's teaching career in Bridgeport, his time as a scout master for the Boy Scouts, and more. There is minimal material related to Corbit Studios in this collection.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

Lewis Henry Corbit Jr. (Lew) was born in Bridgeport on October 14, 1914. The son of Lewis Corbit Sr. and his wife Hazel Cummings, Lew was born into a family of photographers. He took over the family business with his brother Lawson following Lewis Sr.'s death in 1952.

Corbit's Studio began in 1906, and was housed at 2 Elm Street until closing in 2002. A treasure trove of Bridgeport's history, they were responsible for photographing major Bridgeport events, offered portrait photography, and did additional work on the side.

Lew himself was also a great repository of Bridgeport history, and was well known in Bridgeport for this. He served in the Army in World War II, and met his wife Ione in that period. A Nashville, Tennessee native, Ione and Lew wed in 1943. They had a son, Lewis Sanders. Ione worked as a teacher in Bridgeport for thirty years, with most of her time spent at the Maplewood School. (See BHC-MSS 0188.)

In addition to army service and running the photography studio, Lew acted as a scout master Boy Scouts of America troop #71 based in Stratford. He led the group for 25 years.

Lewis Corbit Jr. died on June 20, 1986. His wife Ione passed away on January 4, 1989.

Scope and Content note:

It should be emphasized from the beginning that the Papers of Lew Corbit Jr. contain very little information regarding Corbit Studio, the photography studio founded by Corbit's father. Instead, these are personal papers that reflect life outside of the photography studio and provide insight

into Lew Corbit Jr. himself. This includes correspondence to his parents during World War II, material related to his wife Ione and her career as an educator in Bridgeport, and their son Lewis Sanders who features in photographs and correspondence. An active scout master for the Boy Scouts of America, Lew Corbit Jr.'s leadership of troop #71 out of neighboring Stratford is heavily featured. He led the group for 25 years.

Some material relates to Corbit's parents - including their estate - but most of it is visible in the personal photographs that compromise series III. Some earlier material from the 19th Century is included in the collection, but it is scant.

Arrangement note:

The collection is divided into four series. The first, personal papers and correspondence, contains letters, personal effects, and similar documents relating to Lew himself, his wife Ione, and their son. They are placed in order of relation to Lew Corbit Jr. Series II is a subject file that focuses on various personal commitments in Corbit Jr.'s life including his time as a scout master for the Boy Scouts of America, professional commitments, and some earlier family correspondence. They are arranged alphabetically.

Photographs compromise series III. Save a small folder of material taken by Corbit Studios, these are non-professional photographs. Rather, they are typical family photographs featuring various relatives, trips, and so on. They are arranged by family relations first, and then chronologically when possible. Photograph albums and negatives are also included.

Series IV features a small smattering of physical objects including various patches from the Boy Scouts of America.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Estate of Lew Corbit Jr.

Preferred Citation:

Papers of Lew Corbit Jr. (BHC-MSS 0230), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Corbit, Ione Sanders
Corbit, Lewis Henry Jr.
Corbit, Lewis Henry
Corbit, Lewis Sanders
Corbit family

Corporate names

Boy Scouts of America
Corbit Studio

Subject tracings

Photographers
Photography

School teachers

Detailed box/folder listing

Series I, Personal papers and correspondence

Box 1

1. Corbit, Lewis Henry Jr., 1928-1954
2. Army correspondence to Lewis Corbit Sr., 1943-1945
3. Army correspondence to Lewis Corbit Sr., 1943-1945
4. Corbit, Ione Sanders [wife], 1961-1984
5. Corbit, Ione Sanders [wife], 1961-1984

Box 2

1. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, correspondence, 1957-1959
2. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, correspondence, 1960-1965, undated
3. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, 1954-1967
4. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, 1954-1967
5. Corbit, Holly [granddaughter], 1965

Series II, Subject files

6. Barnum Museum, 1981-1983
7. Boy Scouts, 1969-1973

Box 3

1. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976
2. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976
3. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976
4. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976
5. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976
6. Boy Scouts, 1955-1976

Box 4

1. Corbit Studio, 1953-1984
2. Circus, 1980-1987
3. Correspondence with Leroy Evans, 1909-1919
4. Financial. 1952-1968
5. Hanson, John, 1942-1951
6. Lansdale, H. Parker, undated
7. Maps, 1952-1974
8. Marriage, 1943
9. Parents, Lewis Henry Corbit and Hazel Cummings, 1914-1953
10. Pilot's license, 1950-1952

11. Riley, Bernard, undated
12. Sanders family. 1917-1940
13. Unidentified letter, 1859

Series III, Photographs

Box 5

1. Corbit family, undated
2. Corbit, Ione Sanders. Undated
3. Corbit, Ione Sanders, school, 1960s-1981
4. Corbit, Lewis Henry Jr. 1940s-1980s
5. Corbit, Lewis Henry Sr. and family, 1936-1949
6. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, 1945-1975
7. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, baseball, undated
8. Corbit, Lewis Sanders, school, c. 1960s
9. Grandchildren, 1963, undated
10. Sanders family, undated

Box 6

1. Photographs from "red album", 1870s-1900s
2. Photographs from "red album," 1900s
3. Corbit Studio photographs, 1927-1930
4. Unidentified, undated
5. Unidentified, undated
6. Unidentified, undated
7. Negatives, undated
8. Negatives, undated
9. Negatives, undated
10. Negatives, undated

Box 7

1. Photo album, early 20th century
2. Scrapbook belonging to Ione Sanders, 1938-1939
3. Photo album, 1970s
4. Photo album, 1979
5. Grenadier yearbook [belonging to Lewis Sanders Corbit], 1962

Box 8

1. Photo album, 1940s
2. Photo album, 1942-1943
3. Photo album, graduating class of an unidentified school [likely belonging to Ione], 1959
4. Photo album, undated

Flat file D, drawer 7, folder 4 – Photographs, undated

Slide film box # 8

ENY, 1975

Slides, unidentified, undated

Slides, unidentified, undated

Mixed subjects, undated

Mixed subjects, undated

Box 10

1. Old Time Western Flick, undated

2. Sandes, 1945 Aradia Avenue family flick, c. 1970s [KodaChrome]

Series IV, Realia

Box 9

1. New York Times "press" sign, undated
2. Desk plate reading "Lewis H. Corbit, Korea, 1954", 1954
3. Plaque, Service to Boyhood from Troop 71 of Boy Scouts of America, c. 1967
4. 34 Boy Scout patches, 1960s-1970s
5. Plaque with the Boy Scout creed, undated