



BHC Special Collections  
Guide to the Seeley Collection of Almanacs  
By Meg Rinn  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** American Almanacs, Old Farmer's Almanac, Middlebrook's Almanac, and others

**Title:** Guide to the Seeley Collections of Almanacs

**Dates:** 1776-1990

**Quantity:** 34 pamphlet boxes

**Abstract:** Collected by former Barnum Museum curator Elizabeth Seeley, the almanac collection demonstrates the wide dissemination and use of almanacs in the 1800s into the 1900s. Almanacs were primarily guides for farming, but almost always included astrological information, entertainment, jokes, and other items. Their history goes back into the medieval era and earlier, as farming and tidal information was absolutely essential for pre-industrial societies.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Note:** This collection was arranged by former archivist David Palmquist. The description and slight readjusting of material was performed by Meg Rinn. Some material bears the Bridgeport Public Library stamp, implying that additions to the base collection from the Seeley home was added onto over the years.

**Biographical History:**

Elizabeth Sterling Seeley (1897-1974) was a direct descendant of P.T. Barnum, and in addition to being an active member of the Bridgeport community, served as the curator of the Barnum Museum. She was an avid collector of many things as well as invested in keeping the Barnum legacy alive. Following her death in 1974, material from her estate was acquired by the Bridgeport History Center. In addition to her personal papers, several of her collections were also taken in, including that of her almanacs.

While it is unclear why she chose to collect them, their range of 1776 into the 1970s provides a window into the mass production of an important annual publication that many Americans relied on. Additional almanacs were added to the collection following her death in 1974. These items were likely found within the Bridgeport History Center's stacks and simply appended to the collection.

**Bibliography**

Bates, Albert Carlos. (1914.) Check List of Connecticut Almanacs. American Antiquarian Society. <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/proceedings/44817296.pdf>

Denker, David. (1954.) American Almanacs in the Eighteenth Century. Journal of the Rutgers University Library. <https://jrul.libraries.rutgers.edu/index.php/jrul/article/viewFile/1328/2765>

**Scope and Content note:**

As a genre, almanacs are incredibly old with a history going as far back as 2000 BCE. The purpose has largely remained unchanged: they record important information for farming and seafaring, with an emphasis on predictions for crops, tides, and phases of the moon.

Within early America and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almanacs were viewed as a key reference guide for not only farming and seafaring, but a means of tracking time. This was especially true for rural areas, where it was easier to track natural cycles such as the phases of the moon. They were highly valued in a household, and they can be [incredibly valuable historical resources](#) that reflect concerns of certain communities. Later volumes with advertisements and the like can be used to study consumer culture as it grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The two most prominent titles in the collection are the Old Farmer's Almanac, originally edited by Robert B. Thomas and still being published today. Middlebrooks' Almanac was published by Elijah Middlebrook in Bridgeport, Connecticut, making it the most local of the publications in the collection.

**Arrangement Note:**

Arranged alphabetically, with smaller volumes of material grouped together, arranged alphabetically, and placed at the end of the collection.

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** Accession #1974.09

**Preferred Citation:**

Please cite the almanac as an individual book according to the style guide you are using.

**Detailed box and folder listing**

Box 1, American Almanac, 1830-1835

Box 2, American Almanac, 1836-1882

Box 3, Ayers Almanac, 1885-1880

Box 4, Beckwidth Almanac, 1870-1887

Box 5, Beers Almanac, 1813-1832

Box 6, Telephone Co. and Bell System Almanacs, 1934-1952

Box 7, Family Christian Almanac, 1848-1869

Box 8, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1799-1845

Box 9, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1846-1891

Box 10, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1915-1936

Box 11, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1937-1954

Box 12, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1955-1959, 1961-1962, 1966, 1970

Box 13, Old Farmer's Almanacs, 1971, 1976-1977

Box 14, Old Farmer's Almanacs, 1978-1982, 1990

Box 15, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1807-1834

Box 16, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1835-1848

Box 17, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1849-1859

Box 18, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1860-1872, 1874

Box 19, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1875-1881

Box 20, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1883-1892

Box 21, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1893-1916

Box 22, Middlebrook's Almanacs, 1917-1923-1927, 1930-1938

Box 23, New England Almanacs, 1837,1839, 1841, 1843,1845,1848-1851,1853-1857

Box 24, New England Almanacs, 1858-1875

Box 25, New England Almanacs, 1876-1885,1887-1889, 1891 1892,1894

Box 26, New England Almanacs, 1895-1910

Box 27, New York Almanack, 1871,1877, 1823

Prindell's Almanac, 1825,1829,1831, 1842,1848,1849,1853

Box 28, New England Almanack, 1805, 1806, 1809,

Allen, Anson Almanac, 1910, 1834,1836

Newtonian Reflector, 1827, 1930

Palmers, 1933

Hutchins Improved Almanac and Ephemeris, 1769,1773,1792,1828, 1836, 837

Illustrated Pilgrim Almanac, 1860, 1861, 1866,

Boston, Massachusetts, 1872, 1881, 1882

Christian Almanac – Hartford, 1827,1829,1831

Christian Almanac – Boston, 1829

Box 29, Standard Annual Almanac, 1894-1898, 1901

Box 30, Staffords' Almanac, 1776-1778, 1797, 1801,1804,1803,1826

Box 31, Tribune Almanacs, 1857-1859, 1862, 1973  
Whig Almanacs, 1845, 1849-1850, 1852, 1854-1955

Box 32, Agricultural & Economic Almanacs, 1817-1818  
American Agriculturist Almanac, 1847  
American Farmers' Almanac, 1845  
Ames, Nathaniel Almanac, 1760  
Annual Register of Rural, 1857  
Affairs Almanac  
Centaur, 1873  
Centennial Almanac, 1878  
Celestial Diary by Salem Pearse, 1750  
Columbia Almanack, 1830  
Comic Almanac, 1839  
Connecticut Almanac New Haven, 1821  
Crocket, Davy Comic, 1845  
Day's City & Country Almanac, 1842  
Day's New York Pocket Almanac, 1831  
Family Almanac, N.Y., N.Y., 1842  
Farmer's Diary of the U.S., 1791, 1793  
Farmer's New Poor Richard Almanac, 1892  
Greens Connecticut Annual Register, 1845  
Greenleaf's Almanac & Ephemeris, 1792, 1795  
Graefenberg Almanac, 1870, 1875

Box 33, Harpin's Connecticut Almanac, undated  
Herbalist, 1945  
Hostetter's United States Almanac, 1876, 1893  
Illustrated Almanac-Greenfield, MA, 1881, 1882  
Illustrated U.S. Almanac, 1893  
Knickerbocker Almanac, 1843  
Landreth's Almanac, 1855, 1857  
Lilly's Almanac, Boston, 1797, 1802, 1803  
Low's Almanack, 1805  
Methodist Almanac, N.Y., 1855  
Nast's Illustrated Almanac, 1872  
New Jersey Almanac, 1828  
New York Observer, 1871  
North East Centre Farmer's Almanac, 1847  
Parley's, Peter, 1836  
Perry, Joseph Almanack-Hartford, 1785

Box 34, Pocket Almanac by Thomas S, 1842  
Pocket Compendium, 1904

Poor Richard Albany Almanack, 1807  
Radway's RRR Kalender, 1873  
Roger Sherman Almanac printed in New Haven, 1756  
Sanford, Joel-Almanack, Bridgeport, 1826  
Temperance Almanac, Albany, N.Y., 1837, 1839  
Thomas, Isiah Almanac, 1795  
Travelers Almanac, 1897, 1898  
Vinegar Bitters Almanac, 1878  
Voov het Jaar Almanac, 1851  
Waterbury Almanac, 1855  
Wright's Almanac, 1909  
Wright's Pictorial Almanac, 1876  
Yankee Farmer's Almanac-Boston,MA, 1833

Box 35, Beckwiths Almanac, 1873, 1875, 1878

Dr. Miles New Wheathe and Hand Book, 1937

Farmers Almanac, 1972

Middlebrook New England Almanac 1874-1875, 1877-1884, 1902

Box 36, Old Farmer's Almanac, 1946 1947, 1952, 1966, 1970

Old Moore's Almanac, 1966, 1969

Standard Annual, 1897