

Public Domain Bridgeport History Books at the Bridgeport History Center



by Meg Rinn, assistant archivist
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Researching Bridgeport history within the public domain

The staff at the Bridgeport History Center use some history books more than others, especially when starting with new questions. Many of these books were written in the late 19th or early 20th century, and as such are now in the public domain. The books not only include general Bridgeport history, but some contain genealogical information or institutional history that can be wonderfully helpful for specific research queries.

What follows is a list of the books and summaries of their contents and links so that you can read them online and conduct research.

General histories

Danenberg, Elsie N. (Elsie Nicholas), [The Story of Bridgeport](#) (1936.) Bridgeport, Conn.: Brewer-Borg Corporation.

Written to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the City of Bridgeport's incorporation, [The Story of Bridgeport](#) provides a look into the city's history from the vantage point of 1936. Compared to Orcutt and Waldo, it is a more basic history with none of the genealogy or focus on colonial and pre-colonial eras that the other two have. However, it does include a lengthy list of Bridgeport industries, clubs, and prominent citizens of that particular era. It isn't as dense as Waldo or Orcutt, but it is a solid place to begin with understanding Bridgeport's history. It also includes information about the Bridgeport centennial.

Orcutt, Samuel [History of Bridgeport](#) (1887.) New Haven, Conn.: Published under the auspices of the Fairfield County Historical Society

Written by Reverend Samuel Orcutt, [A History of the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut](#) is both a key resource for Bridgeport history and a product of its time. It addresses the pre-colonial and colonial history of the Bridgeport area and its earliest white settlers and includes extensive quotations from primary source documents. However, the pre-colonial history is predictably unkind to the Native Americans who lived in the area first. Also included are biographies of prominent Bridgeport citizens as of 1887, lists of key institutions such as businesses and schools, and even lists of burials in local graveyards.

Standard Association. [Standard's History of Bridgeport](#) (1897.) Bridgeport, Conn: The Standard Association.

Written only ten years after the work of Rev. Samuel Orcutt, the [Standard's History of Bridgeport](#) acts as a sort of abridged version of Orcutt's work and a preview of the tome that George Curtis Waldo Jr. would produce in 1917. Those looking for a highlights reel of Orcutt's work and more illustrations would benefit from this volume.

Waldo, George C. Jr., [History of Bridgeport and Vicinity, Volume 1](#) | [History of Bridgeport and Vicinity, Volume 2](#) (1917). New York, Chicago, S. J. Clarke Publishing

Written in 1917, History of Bridgeport and Vicinity by George Curtis Waldo Jr. is similar to the work of Rev. Orcutt, but updated to reflect the changes in the city from 1887 to 1917. Curtis includes a larger focus on Native American history prior to colonial settlement as well as the early settlement of the area, before focusing on the various aspects of the city itself. He includes histories of certain industries such as banking, a focus on commercial Bridgeport and transportation, and even military history. Volume 2 contains biographies.

Church histories

Palmer, Charles Ray, [The bi-centennial celebration of the First Congregational church and society of Bridgeport, Conn., June 12th and 13th, 1895](#) (1895.) New Haven, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press

Focusing on one of the earliest churches in Bridgeport, founded in 1695, this book contains a history of the church as well as reprinted programs from the actual church services held in celebration. It provides an additional facet of early Bridgeport history, as well as offers the names of key early figures from that era.

Ward, Jeannette Hope . [History of Trinity Church, Bridgeport, Conn., 1863-1915](#). (1915.)

This short history of Trinity Church focuses on the founding of the church, early pastors, and prominent figures in the church's history.