

Guide to the Records of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society BHC-MSS 0117

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Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library

Bridgeport History Center
Bridgeport Public Library
925 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
hclibrarian@bridgeportpubliclibrary.org
URL: <https://bportlibrary.org/hc/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library
Creator:	Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society
Title:	Records of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society
ID:	BHC-MSS 0117
Date:	1834-
Physical Description:	4 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Older than the City of Bridgeport itself, the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society is one of the city's oldest continuing organizations, as well as one of the state's. The group began as a small collection of women sewing clothing and providing aid and has continued its mission ever since. Within this collection is a near continuous record of their activities from 1865 into the modern era.

Preferred Citation

Records of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society (BHC-MSS 0117) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Older than the City of Bridgeport itself, the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society is one of the city's oldest continuing organizations, as well as one of the state's. It was founded in 1813, during the War of 1812. Several women noticed that there was poverty among families fighting in the war, and they met with Molly Hawley (wife of Captain Abijah Hawley) and her daughter Polly. The group sewed clothed for those in need, and soon enough decided to make the venture into a real society.

Early on, the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society was focused on garment making, with membership fees being used to buy cloth. Additional funding was gathered by appealing directly to citizens. Officially chartered in 1884, the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society has remained a highly active presence in the City.

Currently the reach of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society includes Bridgeport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Monroe, and Stratford. Managers meet once a month to discuss requests made through organizations, who act as referral points for individuals in need.

The Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society has donated their minutes to the Bridgeport History Center consistently over the years, and the collection is anticipated to expand.

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Scope and Contents

The Records of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society is unique in the Bridgeport History Center's collection, as the contents are continuous for almost all of the organization's existence. Specifically, the organization minutes begin in 1884, when the Society received its charter, into the present day. Complementary secretary reports and treasurer reports cover much of the same time period, making it possible to examine the actions of the Society on a highly granular level.

Also of note are items in the additional materials series – including a book of garments given from 1910 to 1911 which harkens back to the Society's original purpose, as well as the early constitutions and by-laws present in the first series.

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Arrangement

Series I contains the constitutions and by-laws of the society. Series II consists of reports and minutes, but is divided into the following sub-series.

Sub-series A contains overall reports of the organization, including annual reports and chairman reports delivered to the group. Sub-series B consists of minutes from 1884 (when the group received its charter) to 2013, and is anticipated to continually expand. Sub-series C contains secretary's reports, and sub-series D contains treasurer's reports and associated financial documents.

Series III contains flyers and invitations to events, and series IV contains anniversary booklets that often contain organization histories. Series V consists of additional material, including a notebook of garments given from 1910-1991. The final series, VI, consists of clippings.

All material is organized chronologically within series and sub-series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donation of the Bridgeport Ladies Charitable Society.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Bridgeport (Conn.)
- Charities
- Connecticut--History--War of 1812
- Service clubs

Collection Inventory

Series I - Constitution and Bylaws

Title/Description	Instances	
Constitution and by-laws, 1865, 1885, undated	BHC-MSS 0117	folder 1
Resolution of incorporation and updates, 1950	BHC-MSS 0117	folder 2

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Series II - Minutes and reports

Sub-series A - Executive reports

Title/Description	Instances	
Annual reports, 1888, 1903, 1914, 1926	BHC-MSS 0117	folder 3-4
Tea Chairman reports, 1986-2007	BHC-MSS 0117	folder 5

Sub-series B - Minutes

Title/Description	Instances	
Minutes, 1884-1916	BHC-MSS 0117	folder 6-7
Minutes, 1912-2002	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 2	folder 1-15
Minutes, 2002-2013	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 3	folder 1-10

Sub-series C - Secretary's reports

Title/Description	Instances	
Secretary's reports, 1906-1955	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 3	folder 11-15
Secretary's reports, 1955-1976	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 1-5

Sub-series D - Treasurer's reports and financial documents

Title/Description	Instances	
Treasurer's reports, 1888-2008	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 6-10
Expenses, 1951-1968	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 11
Some tax returns, various legal forms, some history, various forms of documentation, 1966-2007	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 12

Wealth management report, 2010	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 13
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Series III - Events

Title/Description	Instances	
New Year's reception, 1911, undated	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 14
Valentine's Tea, 1917, undated	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 15
Teas, 1931-1934, 1937-1950	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 16
Centennial tea, 1938	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 17

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Series IV - Anniversary materials

Title/Description	Instances	
100th anniversary booklet, 1913	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 18
125th anniversary booklet, 1938	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 19
175th anniversary booklet, 1988	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 20
200th anniversary booklet, 2013	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 21

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Series V - Additional materials

Title/Description	Instances	
List of garments given, 1910-1911	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 22
List of records, 1944 January 17	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 23
Copied historical notes from 1877, 1903, 1913, undated		

	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 24
Photocopy of photograph from 1888, undated	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 4	folder 25

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Series VI - Clippings

Title/Description	Instances	
Photocopy of First Annual Meeting Notice in the Connecticut Courier, 1823, August 16	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 5	folder 1
Clippings, 1860-1950	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 5	folder 2-8
3 stamps of the giving basket, undated	BHC-MSS 0117 Box 5	folder 9

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