

Albert Elswick Collection

COLLECTION, MS B75

DATE

1639 – 1966

CONTRIBUTOR

Fairfield Museum

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY ELEMENT

Rev. Albert Elswick, a genealogical researcher and historian by avocation, lived in Bridgeport in the 1950s and 1960s when he compiled and collected the materials in this collection. The cemetery records were copied by Elswick in situ and compared with earlier transcripts, if available. The card file listing deaths in the Parish of Stratfield/City and Town of Bridgeport up to 1860 was compiled from tombstone inscriptions, church records and newspapers. He purchased the manuscript and printed materials at country auctions, tag sales, rummage sales and used book shops. Elswick took many of the photographs himself to document the effects of urban renewal and the construction of Interstate 95. For more information about Elswick's collecting, see his letter in the collection file.

SCOPE & CONTENT

The collection consists of manuscript and printed material on a variety of subjects, transcriptions of records used in genealogical research, and newspaper clippings about topics related to Bridgeport History. The file headings used by the donor were retained. Newspaper clippings were copied and disposed. The Elswick manuscript and genealogical materials were organized into Series A, while the historical material, which is primarily newspaper clippings and photographs, were organized in Series B.

Manuscript materials include the shipping and personal papers, 1845-1863, of John Gould (1801-1871) of Fairfield. The bulk consists of bills of lading for a variety of vessels, including the Schooner Lynchburg, and a receipt for a burial plot. Folder 2 contains the railroad investment records of H. Nichols, 1847-1851. Included in this volume is an inventory of the estate of Charlotte Staples, 1872. Jonathan Smith was a carpenter. His account book, 1794-1804, is in folder 3. The Schooner Hero of Bridgeport carried a cargo of corn, oats, and rye to Boston, New York, Fall River, and Providence. The account of these voyages in 1834 are recorded in the day-book in folder 4.

Incomplete records of several Bridgeport organizations are arranged alphabetically. The Bridgeport Historical Society is represented by newsletters and clippings, 1958-1959. Correspondence and membership records, 1891-1899, illustrate the activities of the Bridgeport Scientific Society. The records of the Fairfield County Historical Society, 1881, 1893, consist of articles of association, a fundraising letter, and a handwritten genealogy of the Wheeler family.

A volume of transcriptions of the records of the Stratfield Congregational Church, 1695-1838, are followed by transcriptions of headstones in the Stratfield Cemetery. A third volume is entitled "Families residing within the present limits of the city of Bridgeport, 1639-1860." An over-sized volume contains copies of the registers of the Episcopal churches in Tashua, 1753-1894, Stratford, 1706-184, and Fairfield, 1785-1825.

Two Edwards family photograph albums and two Bible records are stored in box 2. Boxes 3 and 4 contain file cards arranged alphabetically by name of deceased and contain a copy of birth and death records for people buried in one of four cemeteries in Bridgeport. Birth, death and marriage dates are also recorded in a volume of transcribed vital records in box 5.

Historical information gathered by Rev. Elswick consists of newspaper clippings dating from 1945-1965, unless otherwise noted. Articles about various associations and clubs are supplemented by published booklets concerning the Franco-American Social Club, the Auxiliary Foreign Mission Society (1826) and the Bridgeport Fresh Air Association (1903). These are followed by articles about the Barnum Museum and Phineas T. Barnum, obituaries and other articles of a biographical nature, information about Bridgeport businesses and industries, churches (including some brochures), ethnic groups, the fire department, and four folders of generic "history." The history folders include photographs, postcards, Elswick maps, and lists of train bands. Two folders of "landmarks" that probably fell to urban renewal include photographs taken by Rev. Elswick. Additional folders contain information on libraries, the Museum of Art, Science and Industry, the police department, the railroad, schools (including a few photographs), and theaters. A map of Bridgeport, a city manual and directory are also filed with the articles. Two folders on the Wheeler Mansion include swatches of fabric and wallpaper salvaged from the building when it was razed.

Collection Contents

Albert Elswick Collection

Series A: Genealogical and Manuscript Materials, 1639-1959

Genealogical and Manuscript Materials, 1639-1959

Volume 4: Transcriptions of headstones, ca. 1700-1860

Transcriptions of headstones, ca. 1700-1860



Bridgeport Cemetery Records
Bridgeport Cemetery Records

Folder 1-2: Gould, John. Shipping papers, 1845-1863
Gould, John. Shipping papers, 1845-1863

Folder 3: Nichols, H. Investment journal, 1847-1851
Nichols, H. Investment journal, 1847-1851

Folder 4: Smith, Jonathan. Account book, 1794-1804
Smith, Jonathan. Account book, 1794-1804

Folder 5: Schooner Hero daybook, 1834
Schooner Hero daybook, 1834

Folder 6: Bridgeport Historical Society. Newsletters, articles, 1958-1959
Bridgeport Historical Society. Newsletters, articles, 1958-1959

Folder 7: Bridgeport Scientific Society. Records, 1891-1899
Bridgeport Scientific Society. Records, 1891-1899

Folder 8: Fairfield County Historical Society. Records, 1881, 1893
Fairfield County Historical Society. Records, 1881, 1893

Folder 9: Stratfield Congregational Church. Transcriptions of records
Stratfield Congregational Church. Transcriptions of records

Folder 10: Stratfield Cemetery. Transcriptions of burial records, 1688-
Stratfield Cemetery. Transcriptions of burial records, 1688-

Folder 11: "Families residing within the present limits of the City of..."
"Families residing within the present limits of the City of..."

Volume 1-2: Photograph albums, Edwards family
Photograph albums, Edwards family

Volume 3: Family Bibles
Family Bibles

Series B: Historical Information, 1826-1966
Historical Information, 1826-1966

Folder 32: Theaters
Theaters

Folder 31: Stratton, Charles, S.
Stratton, Charles, S.

Folder 30: Schools. Includes photographs.
Schools. Includes photographs.

Folder 29: Railroads
Railroads



Folder 28: Police Department
Police Department

Folder 27: Museum of Art, Science & Industry
Museum of Art, Science & Industry

Folder 26: Map, manual and directory of Bridgeport
Map, manual and directory of Bridgeport

Folder 25: Libraries
Libraries

Folder 23-24: Landmarks. Includes photographs.
Landmarks. Includes photographs.

Folder 19-22: History. Includes photographs, postcards, maps
History. Includes photographs, postcards, maps

Folder 18: Fire department
Fire department

Folder 17: Ethnic Groups
Ethnic Groups

Folder 11-16: Churches
Churches

Folder 10: Cemeteries
Cemeteries

Folder 33-34: Wheeler Mansion. Includes swatches of fabric and wallpaper.
Wheeler Mansion. Includes swatches of fabric and wallpaper.

Folder 9: Business & Industry
Business & Industry

Folder 8: Biographies
Biographies

Folder 6-7: Barnum, P.T.
Barnum, P.T.

Folder 4-5: Barnum Museum
Barnum Museum

Folder 1-3: Associations and clubs. Includes booklets, 1826-1965
Associations and clubs. Includes booklets, 1826-1965