

Windsor Historical Society Scrapbook Collection

Finding Aid

Windsor Historical Society
96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

Creators: Various individuals, community organizations, and public schools in Windsor, CT

Date Range: 1830s – 1990s, bulk dates 1880-1950

Extent: Approximately 75 scrapbooks

Accession#: Various

Scrapbooks: Personal and Social Memory Keepers

Scrapbooks, comprised of a variety of “scraps” or bits and pieces of ephemera representative of everyday life, can be thought of as artifacts of social history. The pastime of creating scrapbooks has been popular for over one hundred years. Some scrapbooks are more homogeneous than eclectic, containing just one type of artifact such as newspaper clippings, photographs, or advertising trade cards. Scrapbooks may have been created with a particular organizing theme or may represent autobiographical memory books. Women, children, community organizations, and even servicemen have created scrapbooks – it is a hobby enjoyed by many.

Pasting-up scrapbooks was a popular parlor activity during the latter half of the 19th century. Albums from this time period are characterized by a profusion of colorful floral or sentimental cutouts, chromolithographed advertising trade cards, small collectible cards with religious images and Bible verses, and greeting cards and calling cards. Many scrapbooks from this era did not contain explanatory writing or annotations.

By the 1920s, scrapbooks reflect the changes in social and cultural norms taking place in American society. The scrapbook has taken on the character of an archive of personal memorabilia. These individual memory books were frequently created out of a private or personal need, perhaps reflecting a sense of life’s unpredictability garnered during the World War I years. Early 20th century scrapbooks are typically a compendium or collage of invitations, programs, photographs, news clippings, and postcards. The souvenirs are often accompanied by handwritten dates, identifications, or notations.

After the second world war of the century, quite a number of scrapbooks exhibit the maker’s patriotic feelings and contain a juxtaposition of public and private elements. The increasing availability and use of personal cameras offered the opportunity to capture important moments with photographic film. Some scrapbooks were created to serve as an historical record of the activities of a community group or to preserve a family’s memories of a vacation trip or a child’s early years.

Scrapbooking is still popular in the 21st century as an outlet for personal expression and for preserving family memories. However, new elements include commercially produced embellishments, specialized computer software, and the proliferation of digital images.

Regardless of the changes in scrapbook styles and format, these volumes have maintained their position as one way to preserve a community's social and cultural history.

Scope and Contents

The Windsor Historical Society Scrapbook Collection is an artificial collection resulting from efforts to compile and catalog the diverse albums of personal memorabilia, newspaper clippings, and community history held at the Windsor Historical Society. The majority of the 75 volumes in the collection are scrapbooks created by Windsor, Connecticut residents between 1880 and 1950. The scrapbooks vary considerably in size, extent, and condition. In most cases the creator has been identified; a few volumes were compiled by more than one person.

The scrapbooks represent seven different thematic or format categories: Newspaper Clippings; Family History & Personal Memorabilia; Trade Cards, Greeting Cards, and Religious Cards; Community Organizations; Photographs; Windsor High School; and World War II. The largest group of scrapbooks in the collection, about 25 or one third of the volumes, is comprised primarily of newspaper clippings. Articles are from the *Hartford Daily Times* and the *Hartford Courant* as well as the *Windsor Herald*. Another third of the volumes were created by an assortment of clubs and organizations in Windsor. These include veterans groups, Windsor High School and its drama and musical groups during the 1920s and 1930s, Wilson Congregational Church, the Windsor Ballet, and Windsor's 350th Anniversary Committee. The remaining third of the collection is split between albums of late 19th century trade cards and greeting cards and personal books of memorabilia. Some of the local residents profiled are Daniel Howard, Marguerite E. Mills, Inez Searle, and the Clapp, Fyler, and Wolcott families. One scrapbook documents the filming of the movie *Parrish* in Windsor in 1960.

The scrapbook collection contains representative examples of the characteristic album styles created during the late Victorian era, the early 19th century, and the mid-20th century. A Microsoft Excel database provides information about the objects in the collection with descriptive fields including object number, title, a brief description, date range of the contents, and the type of subject matter.

Arrangement

The Scrapbook Collection Descriptive Inventory is arranged in Object Number order.

Related Materials in the Windsor Historical Society Collections

Associated Collections:

Helen R. Stevenson Collection of the Records of the Windsor Ballet and the Northern Connecticut Ballet of Windsor, Connecticut (2011.56)
Marguerite Elizabeth Mills Collection (1986.75)
Wilson Congregational Church Records (2010.44)
Windsor High School Records (2003.38)

Subject and Family Files:

Drama
Fire Companies – Windsor Fire Company
Goslee, Carlan
Grant family
Howard, Daniel
Mills, Marguerite E.

Organizations and Clubs
Wars – World War II
Weather -- Floods
Wilson, Leland P.
Windsor – Celebrations – 300th and 350th Anniversaries
Wolcott family

Subject Terms

Advertising cards – Connecticut – 19th century
Ballet companies – Connecticut
Howard, Daniel, 1864-1967
Schools – Connecticut – Windsor – Secondary education
Scrapbooks – Connecticut – 19th century
Scrapbooks – Connecticut – 20th century
Wilson Congregational Church (Windsor, Conn.) – History
Windsor (Conn.) – Church history
Windsor (Conn.) – Social life and customs
World War, 1939-1945

Custodial History

The efforts of several Windsor Historical Society volunteers were critical to the completion of this project. The scrapbooks had not been previously inventoried and were scattered throughout the Society's library and storage areas. The project included scrapbooks that are part of a larger collection as well as those that stand alone. Every book was assigned an object number; the "Found in Collection" accession number 2011.1 was used if the volume could not be attributed to an identifiable donor.

In early 2011, Barbara Tanguay reviewed many of the scrapbooks and prepared pre-cataloging descriptions. Sandra McGraw organized and described the albums and scrapbooks in the Windsor Ballet collection. During the summer of 2011, Sara Hawran cataloged all the volumes into PastPerfect and measured each one for protective CONSERPHASE storage boxes. Sara and Jenn Brasfield photographed the scrapbooks to provide a visual identification. Librarian Barbara Goodwin supervised the project and prepared the Descriptive Inventory List and finding aid in January 2013.

The Microsoft Excel inventory database provides information about the objects in the collection with descriptive fields including object number, title, a brief description, date range of the contents, and the type of subject matter.