



Newport Historical Society

Guide to the Odell M. Chapman Collection, 1882 – 1975

Newport Historical Society
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Descriptive Summary

<i>Collection Identifier</i>	MS.44.4
<i>Title</i>	Odell M. Chapman Collection
<i>Creator</i>	Newport Historical Society
<i>Date</i>	1882 – 1975
<i>Extent</i>	44 manuscript items, 1 scrapbook, 1 musical instrument
<i>Language</i>	Materials are in English
<i>Abstract</i>	This collection contains images, music books, sheet music, instruments, and documents relating to martial ensembles primarily of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Historical Note

Odell M. Chapman was a musician and machinist active in the manufacturing and musical communities of Connecticut and Rhode Island. He was born in 1887 in Ledyard, Connecticut, and died in Newport on January 14, 1966.

He began a career in manufacturing in the silk and cotton mills of Connecticut, serving as the superintendent of the Atwood Machine Company in Willimantic, Connecticut, by 1920. In Willimantic, Chapman also became a longtime leader of local drum corps. Willimantic contained a number of fife and drum groups, notably the city wide Willimantic Fife and Drum Corps originally led by Lyman Maine, Jr. Odell M. Chapman's involvement is dated to November 18, 1918 when he became manager and drum major of the Thread City Continental Fife and Drum Corps that either surpassed or replaced the Willimantic Corps. The Thread City Corps became well known throughout the state for their skill and presentation, earning a number of awards from the Connecticut Fifers and Drummers Association. In addition to managing the group, Odell M. Chapman made and maintained the corps' instruments, a few of which were over one hundred years old at the time of his leadership.

With this experience and interest, he began manufacturing and selling drums, band equipment, and music. His business, Chapman Drums, held endorsements from a variety of drum, fife and drum, and other martial ensembles throughout the New England and across the United States. A scrapbook in the collection contains a many of these endorsements as well as numerous advertisements for Chapman Drums.

With the coming of the Second World War, Chapman moved to Newport, Rhode Island to work at the Naval Torpedo Station. According to his obituary, he served there for ten years as a leading machinist. Chapman continued collecting and restoring historic instruments throughout his life, eventually creating this sizable collection. At an evening event of martial music in his honor, Odell M. Chapman donated his collection to the Newport Historical Society in 1944.

References

"Newport Historical Society Receives the Odell M. Chapman Drum Collection as a Memorial to his Name." From reprint of original article by *Newport Herald* dated February 9, 1944.

"Odell Chapman, Machinist, 78." From news clipping dated January 15, 1966. In Newport Historical Society Obituary Files.

"Popular Amusements: Fife and Drum Corps." In *A Modern History of Windham County, Connecticut: A County Treasure Book Volume 2*, edited by Allen B. Lincoln. Windham County, CT: S.J. Clark Publishing Company, 1920. Pages 964-965.

Scope and Content

Images, written and printed music, (instruments,) and documents relating to Odell M. Chapman, his musical pursuits, and martial musical ensembles of New England and the United States more broadly. The collection consists mainly of images of drum and band ensembles throughout Connecticut and Rhode Island as well as images of products manufactured by Odell M. Chapman’s musical supply business, such as drums, fifes, and drumsticks. The remainder of the collection is made of written material, including both handwritten and published books of music for drums and band instruments, a brief history of the Mattatuck Drum Band written by contemporary band leader Charles S. Miller, and transcripts of a weekly radio program featuring the music of Odell M. Chapman’s band.

Organization

The Odell M. Chapman Collection is organized into one series, arranged in one series, alphabetical by type:
1. Music files, 1882-1975.

Subject Access

<i>People</i>	Chapman, Odell M. Downing, Fred P. Fancher, Frank S.
<i>Organizations</i>	Newport Historical Society
<i>Subjects</i>	Drum--Instruction and study Fife and drum corps music Musical instruments industry

<i>Form/Genre</i>	advertisements fifes photographs sales catalogs scrapbooks sheet music
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Access and Use

<i>Physical Access</i>	This collection is housed on site at the Newport Historical Society. Researchers can be seen by appointment during operating hours.
<i>Reproduction & Use</i>	<p>NHS allows monitored personal photography of manuscript and artifact collections for research use only, with some limitations and restrictions. Fees apply. See our Personal Photography Policy and Agreement for more details.</p> <p>NHS also offers digital scans of collections material for educational, commercial or personal use. Fees apply.</p> <p>Personal photography or purchase of digital prints and scans does not imply permission to reproduce or publish these materials. Images from the NHS collections may be reproduced only with written consent of the Newport Historical Society. Permission is granted for one time, non-exclusive use only. All subsequent and additional use requests must be made in writing.</p> <p>We reserve the right to restrict photography of copyrighted, culturally sensitive or physically endangered materials.</p>
<i>Citation</i>	Odell M. Chapman Collection, MS.44.4, Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Administrative Information

<i>Processor</i>	Processed by Renee L. Erb, October 30 2013.
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Descriptive Rules

Finding aid based on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS)

Accession Info

Gift of Odell M. Chapman

Accession Number: 44.4

Inventory