

Public Opinion Center Records

MS – 110

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

Processed by:
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Introduction

The Public Opinion Center Records were accessioned into the Archives in 1976. They were received from a local Dayton organization as part of a larger collection. The records are contained in five Hollinger boxes and are located on second floor of the University library, Room 215. Span dates of the collection are from October, 1970 to September, 1975.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 2.5
Approximate number of items: 70

Literary rights in the unpublished writings of these papers have been dedicated to the public. The records are open to the public for research use without restrictions. Property rights in the Public Opinion Center Records reside in Wright State University. Archives and Special Collections reserve the right to duplicate or reproduce material in this collection. Citations for research purposes should refer to Archives and Special Collections, Wright State University.

History

The Public Opinion Center was located at 941 Third National Building, 32 North Main Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402, telephone: (513) 228-8134. This agency was begun in September, 1970 under auspices of the Dayton-Miami Valley Consortium (DMVC), a regional federation of institutions of higher education. The records were part of the Community Research Incorporated collection.

The parent organization of CRI was the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, at 333 West Fifth Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402. MVRPC executive director was Dale E. Bertsch. CRI board chairman was John Torley, who also served as president of the Dayton Malleable Iron Company. CRI was a non-profit organization established in 1957 by civic and business leaders. It foundered after Dr. Jephtha Canell resigned as director in 1974 to take over at DMVC.

The Public Opinion Center was the nation's first opinion survey agency operated for the public benefit of a single regional community. The Center was established as a DMVC project for:

1. Urban research purposes
2. Enhancing urban communications
3. Testing public acceptance of alternative public programs
4. Measuring attitudinal changes on certain kinds of issues
5. Reducing citizen alienation and increasing citizen awareness and participation in public decision-making. The Center sought to identify community sentiment and help public and civic agencies develop and evaluate policies and programs.

The Center also tried to assist government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community groups with advice, technical assistance, and performance of in-depth surveys to meet special needs. The Public Opinion Center relied on the student and faculty resources of DMVC institutions and on trained interviewers and supervisors from the community to conduct its surveys.

Base support for the Center was provided by a Charles F. Kettering Foundation grant to the DMVC. The grant covered the first fourteen months of operation, as part of a proposed three year pilot project to assess the utility of public opinion polling in the Dayton Miami-Valley area; The Public Opinion Center became defunct in 1976.

Scope and Content

The Public Opinion Center Records document the survey studies and compiled results of those studies done from 1970 to 1975. The issues dealt with are social, political and business in nature. Topics are wide-ranging and cover Dayton and surrounding area communities. Strengths are city and county government, and MVRPC surveys. Records are arranged chronologically by survey and include survey descriptions, survey questions, answers to survey questions, survey results and data sheets. Some studies give a broad overview of attitudes toward various issues; others are more specific in their approach. Statistics were used with varying frequency to supplement some of the studies.

CRI was one institution which preceded the Center. Both came under direction of MVRPC. The CRI records were mostly manuscript material from the defunct DMVC Community Services Office. There were efforts to place CRI in the protective custody of MVRPC. CRI was once an influential body that supplied local leaders with information on issues like county charter, formation of Wright State, local Model Cities fund applications, and Pilot Cities criminal justice program. City-wide Development Corporation, a quasi-public active agency active in downtown development, grew out of a CRI study and was directed by a former CRI staff member, William Schneider.

There is an obvious gap in an October, 1974 Dayton survey on the Effectiveness of Municipal Services in Box Four. This is remedied in an August, 1975 follow-up survey in Box Five. See Section Five, page 54 on "Police and Public Safety".

The collection consists of typed, bound or stapled sheets and provides invaluable research information about local attitudes in Dayton, Montgomery County, and other area communities. The material has been copied from the original survey reports. The records serve as extensive resource material for social, labor, and business historians and those interested in local history. Because they are recent records, some of the conclusions reached may still be valid today. Through these documents the researcher can trace the development of public attitudes in the Dayton-Miami Valley area during the first half of the 1970's.

Series Description

1. October 12, 1970 – June 22, 1971
Municipal, citizen, Dayton area surveys, special school survey.
2. June-July, 1971 – November 1972
County Commission survey, transportation, housing, schools, problems and needs, ombudsman, health services, tax, Dayton development and planning survey.
3. January 16, 1973 – December 14, 1973
Media, university student attitudes, local transit survey, schools, recreation, MVRPC surveys, regional cooperation surveys, local community surveys, city government survey.
4. October 1974 – November 1974
Marketing surveys – cable television and adult education, health care surveys, crime study, Dayton municipal services survey, county parks survey, local community voter's survey.
5. February 1975 – September 1975
Employment, museum surveys, downtown Dayton safety survey, local university image study.

Container Listing

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Proposed Citizen Op. Survey, #70-1 on City Service	Oct. 12, 1970
	2	Public Opinion Survey, City of Dayton, Ohio	Dec. 15, 1970
	3	Regular Public Opinion Survey of the Dayton Area	Feb. 1971
	4	Regular Public Opinion Survey of the Dayton Area	Mar. 26, 1971
	5	Citizens Research, Public Opinion Survey on School Systems in Dayton, Ohio	Apr. 10, 1971
	6	Fair-River-Oaks Council (FROC) Survey	Apr. 17, 1971
	7	Regular Public Opinion Survey of the Dayton Area	May 24, 1971
	8	Public Opinion Survey of the Dayton Area, #108	Jun. 22, 1971
2	1	Public Opinion Survey for the Montgomery Co. Commission	Jul. 16, 1971
	2	Public attitudes toward transportation in Dayton, Ohio	Jul. 21, 1971
	3	Housing Choice Survey	Sept. 1971
	4	Public Opinion Survey of Dayton, #113	Oct. 16, 1971
	5	How Dayton Views the Public Schools	Nov. 1971
	6	Prelim. Report on Public Opinion Survey of Dayton	Nov. 5, 1971
	7	Report on Public Opinion Survey of Dayton, Ohio	Nov. 19, 1971
	8	The Ombudsman: Most Residents Understand His Job	Dec. 3, 1971
	9	High Interest in Arena Proposal Shown by Dayton	Mar. 10, 1972
	10	Problems and Needs in Dayton: A follow-up survey	Mar. 20, 1972
	11	News Media	Mar. 28, 1972
	12	Health Services	Mar. 29, 1972
	13	Four Views of the Dayton Schools: Pluralism in action	May 1972
	14	Discipline in Dayton's Middle and High Schools	June 1972
	15	The Present and Future of Downtown Dayton -12 items	Jul. – Aug. 1972
	16	Attitudes toward increase in Dayton's City Income tax	Aug. 1972
	17	Neighborhood Safety	Aug. 23, 1972
	18	Ombudsman Reaches Awareness Plateau	Sept. 8, 1972
	19	Educational Issues and Communication Methods	Nov. 1972
3	1	Are Citizens Aware of the Ombudsman?	Jan. 16, 1973
	2	Sources of Government News	Feb. 2, 1973
	3	County-Wide Data on Local Government News	Feb. 5, 1973
	4	Report on Student Attitudes Toward Various Aspects Of Life at Wilberforce University	Feb. 1973
	5	Student Rights: Public Awareness and Attitudes	Mar. 5, 1973
	6	Awareness of the Student Rights Center and Attitudes On its Effectiveness	Mar. 26, 1973
	7	Attitudes on Mass Transit Mode in Dayton & Oakwood	Mar. 1973
	8	Community Attitude Survey for Yellow Springs (6)	Jun. 1973
	9	Awareness of Dayton's Community Schools	Jul. 30, 1973
	10	Public Awareness of the Ombudsman	Sept. 11, 1973

	11	Regional Cooperation, A series of reports based on Sample Surveys of the General Public (9)	Sept. 1973
	12	Survey of Public Opinion for the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (13 items)	Sept. 1973
	13	Development of the State Farm: Public Opinion	Sept. 1973
	14	Recreation in Oakwood: Attitudes of Residents	Sept. 1973
	15	Public Opinion on Recreation in Kettering	Oct. 1973
	16	Public Survey of Attitudes Toward Cable Television In Centerville, Kettering, etc.	Oct. 1973
	17	Survey of Officials and MVRPC Representatives (20)	Oct. – Nov. 1973
	18	Sources of News	Nov. 16, 1973
	19	Review of Dayton Area Public Opinion	Jul. – Dec. 1973
	20	How Dayton Views Its City Government (9 items)	Dec. 1973
4	1	Interest in Taking Courses over Television	Sept. 1974
	2	Awareness and Viewership of the Xenia area	Sept. 1974
	3	Video Magazine	Sept. 1974
	4	Public Knowledge of Health Care for Children	Sept. 1974
	5	Effectiveness of Municipal Services, Dayton (7 items)	Oct. 1974
	6	Attitudes toward the schools in Mad River Township School district	Nov. 1974
	7	Attitudes of Dayton View Residents	Mar. 1974
	8	Attitudes toward cable television surveys, var. counties	Mar. 1974
	9	Views on Mental Retardation from Montgomery Co.	July 1974
	10	Attitudes toward the Middle Hills Res. Area	Jul. 1974
	11	Public Opinion toward the Park Reserve System	Jul. 1974
	12	Attitudes of a sample of registered voters toward Municipal Services and Activities, Kettering	Jul. 26, 1974
	13	Attitudes toward Redevelopment in Xenia	Aug. 1974
	14	Attitudes toward college courses for adults	Aug. 1974
5	1	Courses via television: Market Analysis	Feb. 1975
	2	Greene-Clinton Co. Mental Health Board Referral Survey	Mar. 1975
	3	Survey of members of the Downtown Dayton Assoc. On downtown safety	May 12, 1975
	4	Miami Valley Employment Survey	July 1975
	5	Effectiveness of Municipal Services in Dayton, Ohio	Aug. 1975
	6	Attitudes of Cable television subscribers	Sept. 1975
	7	Courses via Cable: A market analysis	Sept. 1975
	8	Public Opinion About the Dayton Museum of Natural History	Sept. 1975
	9	Image Study for Central State University	Sept. 1975