

The Dayton and Montgomery County  
Bicentennial Commission Records

MS – 55

Wright State University  
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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## Introduction

The Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission records consist of the records collected by the administrative offices of the commission. The records cover all aspects of the operations and functions of the commission. The time span for the records is 1974-1976.

These records were freely donated to the Wright State Archives in early 1977. Although the bulk of the records consist of unpublished material, there are many published, copyrighted items within the collection. Consideration of copyrights is therefore the responsibility of the user.

The records comprise 17.5 (Hollinger) boxes and are separated into five series:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Series I – Administrative Records              | 8 boxes   |
| Series II – Heritage '76 Committee Records     | 2 boxes   |
| Series III – Festival U.S.A. Committee Records | 4 boxes   |
| Series IV – Horizons '76 Committee Records     | 1 box     |
| Series V – Miscellaneous Items                 | 2.5 boxes |

There are no restrictions placed on the use of this collection.

## Brief Agency History

The Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission was created in March 1974 by a joint resolution passed by the Dayton City Commission and the Montgomery County Commission. The purpose of the Bicentennial Commission was to plan, promote, implement, and coordinate various activities, events, and functions in Dayton, Ohio and in the surrounding Montgomery County that would celebrate and mark the two hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The commission was granted status as a separate, 501 (C) (3), non-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service in July 1974. The commission thus derived the majority of its funding from grants obtained from various corporations, foundations, and individuals. After the close of the bicentennial year of 1976 the commission ended its three year life-span by ceasing operation early in 1977.

The Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission was composed of some thirty people who came to the commission from a wide assortment of backgrounds. The commission included individuals from the business, political, labor, and religious sectors of the community, along with people from various local universities, racial and ethnic organizations, and civic-minded groups. The military was also represented by people from nearby Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The Chairman of the commission was Louis Wozar, the president of Tait Incorporated, a local Dayton business firm. In addition, the commission included all the members of both the Board of county Commission of Montgomery County and the City Commission of Dayton, Ohio. A complete list of the Bicentennial Commission's members is located within the records.

In April 1974 the Bicentennial Commission authorized the hiring of an administrative staff of six people to handle the day to day operations of its activities. This administrative staff was headed by an executive director, Ms. Margo Evans. The staff offices were located in Suite 711 of the Reibold Building in downtown Dayton, Ohio. In addition to the executive director the staff included an office manager/secretary, a public relations manager, and three people who coordinated the various efforts of the numerous committees developed by the commission.

During the three years of its existence the commission followed the general guidelines put forth by the National American Revolution for the Bicentennial Commission. These guidelines suggested that planning for the Bicentennial celebrations and activities should be structured around three main categories, which the National Commission entitled Heritage '76, Festival U.S.A., and Horizons '76. These three categories would each deal with activities within a separate time frame. Heritage '76 would concentrate on those activities that dealt with the history of America, Festival U.S.A. would deal with present day events, and Horizons '76 would explore ideas that were to be implemented sometime in the future.

In following these national guidelines the Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission organized its activities, events, and functions under three broad

committees, each of which dealt with, and were titled by, the three main categories suggested by the National Commission. These committees were chaired by members of the Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission: the Heritage '76 committee by Jack Sullivan, the president of the Montgomery County Historical Society; the Festival U.S.A. committee by Philip Shardon, president of the Dayton Council on World Affairs; the Horizons '76 committee by Dr. Robert J. Kegerreis, president of Wright State University. A complete listing of the committee members is located within the records.

## Scope and Content

The Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission was organized into three major committees: Heritage '76 for historical projects, Festival U.S.A. for present day projects, and Horizons '76 for future projects. This organization, along with the papers of the central administration staff makes the records of the commission fall naturally into four series. A fifth series has been added to contain miscellaneous material. In planning projects for the Bicentennial the major three committees developed numerous sub-committees to handle individual projects. This collection contains these records that were located within the offices of the administrative staff of the commission and may not contain the complete records of every committee associated with the commission. Many out of the two dozen committees spawned by the commission were composed of, and chaired by, individuals outside the administrative staff. An effort does seem to have been made by individual committee chairmen to send copies of their records to the administrative offices. How complete this effort was has not been ascertained, therefore many of the committee records within this collection may contain gaps and missing material.

The majority of the records in this collection relate to the activities of the administrative staff of the commission. The correspondence, minutes of meetings, and annual reports contained within these records help document the day operations of the administrative aspect of the commission, as do the records of the various committees within the administrative staff, i.e. public relations, finance, etc. Included in these records is a variety of published and unpublished material received by the staff from national, state, and local Bicentennial organizations. This material contains guidelines, newsletters, bulletins, and other such items that relate not only to the Bicentennial in Dayton and Montgomery County, but also to aspects of the Bicentennial on a state and national level as well. In addition, these records contain items relating to how various educational, religious, business, ethnic, and other types of groups and organizations in the Dayton area were involved in the Bicentennial. This material can provide some idea as to the breadth and scope of the administrative staff's activities.

The organizational items in the records of each of the three major committees; the minutes of meetings, memorandum, correspondence, project plans, etc, can give some idea about how each of these committees were organized, how plans for projects were developed, and how these projects were implemented. Additional information on individual projects and events can be obtained in the records relating directly to each of the various projects. The records of the Heritage '76 committee are especially strong on three projects; one to build a replica of a Wright flyer airplane, one to organize an airplane filled with historical exhibits entitled the Freedom Plane, and another project that brought to Dayton a nationally sponsored train containing historical exhibits called the Freedom Train. The Festival U.S.A. records deal mainly, but not exclusively with three types of events; an annual Arts Festival, the Fourth of July Parade of 1976, and an Aviation Festival. The final report of the Horizons '76 committee, published in December 1976, is the most pertinent record of that committee.

Further information on the commission's activities and on the Bicentennial in general can be obtained in the miscellaneous series of the collection. There is an extensive collection of newspaper clippings, photographs, and other such type of material contained within this series. Of particular interest is a tape and slide show developed for the Bicentennial by the commission.

Whenever it was possible the records in the collection were chronologically arranged. The first folder in most series and sub-series is usually entitled an "Organizational Folder" since this folder contains such material as minutes of meetings, memorandum, lists of committee members, flow charts, and other such organizational records. Whenever it was possible enclosures sent with letters have been left in the correspondence folders located throughout the collection.

## Series Description

### Series I: Administrative Records, 1974-1976

This series contains records that relate to the daily operations of the commission and its administrative staff. Many of the records are items that were received directly into the staff offices from outside organizations. Other records in the series are copies of various published and unpublished documents sent out from the staff offices. The series is separated into seven sub-series. Whenever it was possible the records were chronologically arranged.

#### Sub-series I – Commission Organizational Records, 1974-1976

Contains the commission's constitution, tax and budget information, proposals and goals, lists of members on staff, commission, and major committees, initiating correspondence from February 1974 to December 1974, and information relating to the Bicentennial communities in Montgomery County.

#### Sub-series II – Standards and Guidelines, 1974-1976

Contains standards and guidelines published by the National, the Ohio, and the Central Ohio American Revolutionary Bicentennial Commissions, along with material published by the Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission.

#### Sub-series III – Staff Reports, 1975-1976

Contains minutes of staff meetings, correspondence, endorsement requests, planning forms, and annual reports.

#### Sub-series IV – Administrative Committees

Contains lists of members, minutes of meetings, correspondence, news releases, surveys, and questionnaires relating to the Operating, Financial, Tourism, Bicentennial Committee Activities, and public Relations Committees.

#### Sub-series V – Outside Organizations, 1974-1976

Contains correspondence, memorandum, lists, calendars of events, and other records, received from and sent out to various national, state and local groups and organizations, including among others, schools, churches, civic and ethnic groups, businesses, and political organizations.

#### Sub-series VI – Bicentennial Publications, 1974-1976

Contains newsletters, news bulletins, pamphlets, brochures, newspapers and other types of material published by local, state and national Bicentennial organizations.

Sub-series VII – Commercial Catalogs (No Dates), 1974-1976

Contains various catalogs of Bicentennial souvenirs and memorabilia including jewelry, medals, coins, stamps, flags, buttons, films, books, costumes, and others.

Series II: Heritage '76 Committee, 1974-1976

This series contains records directly relations to the planning, promoting and implementation of various projects and activities undertaken by the Heritage '76 committee. The series is separated into two sub-series; one comprising organizational records, the other comprising the records of various projects developed by the committee. Whenever it was possible the records were chronologically arranged.

Sub-series I – Organizational Records, 1974-1976

Contains committee member list, minutes of meetings, memorandum, correspondence, project plans and ballots, financial and grant information and publications.

Sub-series II – Project Records, 1974-1976

Contains records relating to nine different projects planned and/or carried out by the Heritage '76 committee or by various sub-committees.

Series III: Festival U.S.A. Committee, 1974-1976

This series contains records directly relating to the planning, promoting, and implementation of various projects and activities undertaken by the Festival U.S.A. committee. The series is separated into five sub-series; two relating to the three major types of projects developed by the committee. Whenever it was possible the records were chronologically arranged.

Sub-series I: Organizational Records, 1974-1976

Contains committee member list, minutes of meetings, memorandum, and correspondence.

Sub-series II: Promotional Items Received by Festival U.S.A. Committee (N.D.)

Contains various promotional correspondence flyers, brochures, etc. from theater, film, dance, musical, military, and other types of arts groups and individuals.

Sub-series III: Arts Related Projects Records, 1974-1976

Contains minutes of meetings, correspondence, memorandum, and other records on thirteen different arts related projects planned and/or carried out by the Festival U.S.A. committee, or various sub-committees.

Sub-series IV: 1976 Fourth of July Parade, 1975-1976

Contains minutes of meetings, correspondence, memorandum, participant information, list of reviewing stand dignitaries and other records on the Dayton, Ohio 1976 Fourth of July parade.

Sub-series V: Aviation Festival

Contains minutes of meetings, correspondence, memorandum, calendars of events, news releases and other records on the Aviation Festival held in Dayton, Ohio in July, 1976.

Series IV: Horizons '76 Committee, 1974-1976

This series contains the minutes of meeting, lists of members, correspondence, memorandum, goals, news releases, financial and grant information, final report, and other records directly relating to the Horizons '76 committee. Whenever it was possible the records were chronologically arranged.

Series V: Miscellaneous Items, 1974-1976

Sub-series I: Newspaper Clippings, 1974-1976

Contains unprocessed collections of newspaper clippings arranged by files into chronological order, cartoons, and a copy of the Bicentennial edition of The Dayton Daily News, July 4, 1976.

Sub-series II: Photographic and Audio Material, N.D.

Contains various photographs of different sizes, black and white and color, arranged by file in the order in which they were received, slides and tapes of a Bicentennial slide show developed by the Heritage '76 committee, and one 45 rpm phonograph record.

Sub-series III: Miscellaneous Paraphernalia, N.D.

Contains various items such as bumper stickers, logo contest entries, a blank certificate of appreciation from the commission and a guest book dating from July to August 1976 of unknown origins.

Container Listing

| <u>Box</u>                              | <u>File</u> | <u>Description</u>  | <u>Date</u> |
|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| <b>Series I: Administrative Records</b> |             |   |             |
| 1                                       | 1           | Organizational folder   | 1974-1975   |
|   | 2           | Master lists of members   | 1974-1976   |
|   | 3           | Initiating communities in Montgomery County                                       | 1974        |
|   | 4           | Bicentennial communities in Montgomery County                                     | 1974-1976   |
|   | 5           | General information from the National American Revolution Bicentennial Commission | 1974-1976   |
|   | 6           | General information from the Ohio American Revolution Bicentennial Commission     | 1974-1976   |
|   | 7           | Central Ohio Bicentennial Guide   | 1974-1975   |
|   | 8           | Published Bicentennial Guides   | 1974-1975   |
| 2                                       | 1           | Staff meeting minutes   | 1975        |
|   | 2           | Staff meeting minutes   | 1976        |
|   | 3           | General staff correspondence  | 1975        |
|   | 4           | General staff correspondence  | 1976        |
|   | 5           | Endorsement requests  | 1975-1976   |
|   | 6           | Project planning forms  | 1975-1976   |
|   | 7           | Commission annual reports   | 1975,1976   |
| 3                                       | 1           | Operating committee   | 1974-1975   |
|   | 2           | Finance committee   | 1974-1976   |
|   | 3           | Funding/Grant information   | 1974-1975   |
|   | 4           | Tourism committee   | 1975-1976   |
|   | 5           | Bicentennial Communities Activities committee                                     | 1974-1975   |
|   | 6           | Public Relations committee – Organizational folder                                | 1974-1976   |
|   | 7           | Public Relations committee – Correspondence                                       | 1974-1976   |
|   | 8           | Public Relations committee – News releases  | 1974-1976   |
|   | 9           | Public Relations committee – Media Packets  | n.d.        |
|   | 10          | Public Relations committee – Misc. records  | 1974-1976   |
|   | 11          | Public Relations committee – Bicentennial orgs.                                   | 1975-1976   |
| 4                                       | 1           | Bicentennial Information Network (BINET)  | 1974-1976   |
|   | 2           | American Issues Forum   | 1975-1976   |
|   | 3           | Correspondence with local schools   | 1974-1976   |
|   | 4           | Cursory School Program  | 1975-1976   |
|   | 5           | Local School Bicentennial projects  | 1974-1976   |
|   | 6           | Miscellaneous School Programs   | 1975-1976   |
|   | 7           | Correspondence with local universities  | 1975-1976   |
|   | 8           | Items related to Jewish religion and the Bicentennial                             | 1975-1976   |
|   | 9           | Correspondence with Christian organizations                                       | 1975-1976   |
|   | 10          | Christian publications on the Bicentennial  | 1975-1976   |

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|---|----|---|------------|
| 5 | 1  | Discover America Travel Organization  | 1975-1976  |
|   | 2  | Bicentennial conferences  | 1975-1976  |
|   | 3  | Logo contest  | 1974       |
|   | 4  | Bicentennial medallion  | 1975-1976  |
|   | 5  | Volunteers  | 1975-1976  |
|   | 6  | Woman's Coalition   | 1974-1976  |
|   | 7  | U.S. Conference of Mayors   | 1974       |
|   | 8  | Local Businesses  | 1974-1976  |
|   | 9  | Bicentennial Junior Committee of Correspondence                                 | n.d.       |
|   | 10 | Local Service Organizations   | 1975-1976  |
|   | 11 | Ethnic Affairs  | 1975-1976  |
|   | 12 | National Bicentennial Ethnic Racial Council                                     | 1974-1976  |
|   | 13 | Collectors  | 1974-1976  |
|   | 14 | Military  | 1974-1976  |
| 6 | 1  | General publications by Dayton and Montgomery<br>County Bicentennial Commission | 1975-1976  |
|   | 2  | Publications from other Bicentennial Organizations<br>In Ohio                   | 1974-1976  |
|   | 3  | Misc. National Bicentennial Commission publications                             | 1974-1976  |
|   | 4  | Misc. Bicentennial publications   | 1974-1976  |
|   | 5  | <u>Fife and Drum</u> newspaper  | 1975, 1976 |
|   | 6  | Bicentennial News newsletter  | 1974-1976  |
| 7 | 1  | <u>Bicentennial Times</u> newspaper   | 1974       |
|   | 2  | <u>Bicentennial Times</u> newspaper   | 1975       |
|   | 3  | <u>Bicentennial Times</u> newspaper   | 1976       |
|   | 4  | Peoples Bicentennial Commission publications                                    | 1974-1976  |
|   | 5  | <u>Hoosier Minuteman</u> newspaper  | 1975, 1976 |
|   | 6  | <u>Antioch Review</u> Bicentennial issue  | 1976       |
|   | 7  | Bicentennial issue <u>Time</u> magazine   | n.d.       |
| 8 | 1  | Misc. items from Bicentennial Commissions of various<br>Cities in Ohio          | 1975-1976  |
|   | 2  | Misc. items from various Bicentennial Commissions<br>in U.S.                    | 1975-1976  |
|   | 3  | Commercial Catalogs – jewelry, medals, coins, and<br>stamps                     | n.d.       |
|   | 4  | Commercial Catalogs – flags, buttons, patches, misc.                            | n.d.       |
|   | 5  | Commercial Catalogs – films and costumes  | n.d.       |
|   | 6  | Commercial Catalogs – books and other publications                              | n.d.       |
|   |    | <b>Series II: Heritage '76 Committee</b>  |            |
| 9 | 1  | Organizational folder   | 1974-1976  |
|   | 2  | Correspondence  | 1974-1976  |

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|    | 3  | Project plans/Grant applications                  | 1974-1976     |
|    | 4  | Ballots on planned projects                       | n.d.          |
|    | 5  | Miscellaneous publications                        | 1974-1976     |
|    | 6  | Slide show  | 1975-1976     |
|    | 7  | Speakers Bureau                                   | 1975-1976     |
|    | 8  | Plaza Display project                             | 1974          |
|    | 9  | Bicentennial Van project                          | 1975          |
| 10 | 1  | Freedom Train project organizational folder       | 1976          |
|    | 2  | General information on Freedom Train              | n.d.          |
|    | 3  | Souvenir Freedom Train newspaper                  | May/June 1975 |
|    | 4  | Freedom Plane project organizational folder       | 1975-1976     |
|    | 5  | Freedom Plane project – Correspondence            | 1976          |
|    | 6  | Wright Flyer project organizational folder        | 1976          |
|    | 7  | Wright Flyer project – Correspondence             | 1976          |
|    | 8  | Flight into the Past project                      | 1976          |
|    | 9  | River Corridor project                            | 1974-1976     |
|    | 10 | Mystery Letter project                            | 1975-1976     |
|    | 11 | Misc. papers on Dayton history                    | n.d.          |
|    |    | <b>Series III: Festival U.S.A. Committee</b>      |               |
| 11 | 1  | Organizational folder                             | 1974-1976     |
|    | 2  | Correspondence                                    | 1974-1976     |
|    | 3  | Arts Festival sub-committee organizational folder | 1975-1976     |
|    | 4  | Information from the Ohio Arts Council            | 1975-1976     |
|    | 5  | Promotional items – theater groups                | n.d.          |
|    | 6  | Promotional items – films                         | n.d.          |
|    | 7  | Promotional items – exhibits                      | n.d.          |
|    | 8  | Promotional items – dance groups                  | n.d.          |
|    | 9  | Promotional items – musical groups                | n.d.          |
|    | 10 | Promotional items – poetry                        | n.d.          |
|    | 11 | Promotional items – military groups               | n.d.          |
|    | 12 | Promotional items - miscellaneous                 | n.d.          |
| 12 | 1  | Bicentennial Creative Arts Contest                | 1975-1976     |
|    | 2  | Traveling Arts Showcase                           | 1975-1976     |
|    | 3  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Annual Arts Festival Showcase     | 1975          |
|    | 4  | Showcase questionnaires                           | 1975          |
|    | 5  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Arts Festival Showcase     | 1976          |
|    | 6  | Showcase questionnaires                           | 1976          |
|    | 7  | Poster project organizational folder              | 1974-1976     |
|    | 8  | Poster project correspondence                     | 1974-1976     |
|    | 9  | Paul Laurence Dunbar Tribute project              | 1975-1976     |
|    | 10 | Black Snow Theater project                        | 1975-1976     |
|    | 11 | Floating Theater project                          | 1976          |
|    | 12 | Paper Airplane project                            | 1976          |

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|    | 13 | Bell Ringing project                          | 1975-1976       |
|    | 14 | Olympiad project                              | 1976            |
|    | 15 | Time Capsule project                          | 1976            |
|    | 16 | Star Trek Convention project                  | 1975            |
| 13 | 1  | Organizational folder                         | 1975-1976       |
|    | 2  | Correspondence                                | 1975-1976       |
|    | 3  | Information on parade participants            | 1976            |
|    | 4  | Participant information forms                 | 1976            |
|    | 5  | Parade order of march                         | 1976            |
|    | 6  | Reviewing stand dignitaries                   | 1976            |
|    | 7  | Miscellaneous parade records                  | 1975-1976       |
| 14 | 1  | Organizational folder                         | 1974-1976       |
|    | 2  | Correspondence                                | 1974-1976       |
|    | 3  | Calendars/Lists of events                     | 1976            |
|    | 4  | Grant applications                            | 1975-1976       |
|    | 5  | News releases                                 | 1976            |
|    | 6  | Promotional material                          | 1976            |
|    |    | <b>Series IV: Horizons '76 Committee</b>      |                 |
| 15 | 1  | Organizational folder                         | 1974-1976       |
|    | 2  | Memorandum                                    | 1974-1976       |
|    | 3  | Correspondence                                | 1974-1976       |
|    | 4  | Questionnaires                                | 1974-1975       |
|    | 5  | Proposed goals                                | 1974-1975       |
|    | 6  | News releases                                 | 1975-1976       |
|    | 7  | Budgets/Grant applications                    | 1975-1976       |
|    | 8  | Misc. publications                            | 1974-1976       |
|    | 9  | Final report                                  | 1976            |
|    |    | <b>Series V: Miscellaneous Items</b>          |                 |
| 16 | 1  | Newspaper clippings                           | Mar.-Dec. 1974  |
|    | 2  | Newspaper clippings                           | Jan.-Jun. 1975  |
|    | 3  | Newspaper clippings                           | Jul.-Dec. 1975  |
|    | 4  | Newspaper clippings                           | Jan.-Jun. 1976  |
|    | 5  | Newspaper clippings                           | Jul.-Sept. 1976 |
|    | 6  | Newspaper clippings                           | Oct.-Dec. 1976  |
|    | 7  | Newspaper cartoons                            | 1974-1975       |
|    | 8  | Bicentennial edition of the Dayton Daily News | July 4, 1976    |
| 17 | 1  | Photographs – Misc. Activities                | n.d.            |
|    | 2  | Photographs – Misc. Activities                | n.d.            |
|    | 3  | Photographs – Arts Activities                 | n.d.            |
|    | 4  | Photographs – Aviation Festival Activities    | n.d.            |
|    | 5  | Photographs – Awards Ceremonies               | n.d.            |

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|------|-----|---|------------------|
|      | 6   | Photographs – Defense Electronics Supply Center   | n.d.             |
|      | 7   | Photographs – Frigidaire  | n.d.             |
|      | 8   | Photographs – Memorials   | n.d.             |
|      | 9   | Photographs – Patriotism  | n.d.             |
|      | 10  | Photographs – Negatives   | n.d.             |
|      | 11  | Photographs – Miscellaneous   | n.d.             |
|      | 12  | Slides – Slide Show   | n.d.             |
|      | 13  | Slides – Miscellaneous  | n.d.             |
|      | 14  | Reel to Reel tape recording – Slide Show  | n.d.             |
|      | 15  | 45 rpm phonograph record – “Credo of an American Cavalier”                                  | 1975             |
| 18   | 1   | Guest Book  | July-August 1976 |
|      | 2   | Blank Certificate of Appreciation from Dayton and Montgomery County Bicentennial Commission | n.d.             |
|      | 3   | Bumper stickers   | n.d.             |
|      | 4   | Logo samples  | n.d.             |
|      | 5   | Logo contest entries  | n.d.             |
|      |     | <b>**Oversize Material**</b>  |                  |
| L. 2 | F.5 | Event posters, citations  | n.d.             |