

Irvin G. Bieser Sr. Papers

MS – 232

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

Processed by:
Peter J. Unitt
May 1992

Introduction

The papers of Daytonian, Irvin Gruen Bieser Sr. were accessioned into several local archives, including those at the Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections. Other repositories for the Bieser papers include The Miami Valley Hospital, The Dayton Bar Association, The Frank M. Tait Foundation, The Montgomery County Historical Society, and The Discussion Club. These institutions may be contacted for material not contained in the collection at Wright State University, which was accessioned in December 1991. These were donated by Irvin G. Bieser Jr. via the Montgomery County Historical Society.

The Bieser papers in this archive are professional in nature, date from 1934 to 1961, and fill 5 Hollinger boxes containing 40 file folders. The collection is arranged into 8 series as follows:

- Series 1: Dayton Research Association
- Series 2: Dayton Peace Council
- Series 3: Draft Board
- Series 4: Chamber of Commerce
- Series 5: Public Library Citizens Advisory Committee
- Series 6: Community Research Incorporated
- Series 7: Dayton City Improvement
- Series 8: Vita and Obituary Notices

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Scope and Content

This collection represents only a portion of the Irvin G. Bieser, Sr. papers. Other papers are located with the archives mentioned in the introduction. The Wright State portion represents, via Bieser's involvement in them, several social, governmental, and business aspects of the city of Dayton, Ohio, in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. The series follow the natural chronological order of Bieser's involvement in each activity. For the most part, all the papers are of a professional, not personal nature. Many items of correspondence, although not directly referring to Bieser, were sent to him as a member of the addressed organization or committee. Several items contain originals of his signature. There are numerous reports, pamphlets, brochures, meeting minutes, etc., produced by or for the organizations with which Bieser was associated. There are a few contemporary newspaper clippings, but no photographs.

Series 1, The Dayton Research Association, contains a brief history of the Association to 1937, internal operating budget memos, letters from the managing director to the board of trustees, subscription statements, lists of contributors, Dayton newspaper clippings, booklets, bulletins (Facts), covering 1937-1940, an index of Association reports in three volumes, covering 1913-1933, and copies of individual reports, covering 1935-1940.

Series 2, The Dayton Peace Council, includes several booklets and brochures about the Peace movement, instructions for organizing councils at a local level, letters to and from the Congress, texts of radio addresses and information on German and Italian lecturers. Almost all items are dated in 1938.

Series 3, The Draft Board, has in it a file of circulars and memos from the National and State (Ohio) offices of the Selective Service System and work schedules for local Board Members (Board #15 for which Bieser was an attorney-advisor). There is also a small file of newspaper clippings, mostly listing the draft lottery numbers affecting Montgomery County and several issues of Selective Service, a medium of information between National and other components of the SSS. Last, there are several booklets containing all the SSS Regulations, the legal aspects of the system, and pamphlets to be handed to registrants, plus a rather interesting research study recommending adjustments businessmen should make to accommodate the "intensified national rearmament program." The series covers the period 1940-1946.

Series 4, The Dayton Chamber of Commerce, contains a Dayton, Ohio brochure, circa 1942-5, a series of monthly Dayton Government Digests, covering Aug. 30, 1944-May 20, 1947, issues #3-#33, with #s 24, 28, and 29 missing, correspondence about post-war (1946) increased city taxation, enacted in Toledo, and considered in Dayton.

Series 5, Public Library Citizen's Advisory Committee, is comprised of letters, meeting minutes, memoranda, a few copies of the monthly library brochure, some booklets on library law and a county survey, a chronology of the Dayton Public Library since 1802, committee by-laws, criteria for selection of a library site, selected architect's statements of capability and suggested questions to be posed to them by the committee, and assorted announcements and library information.

Series 6, Community Research Incorporated, includes Metropolitan Community Research and spans the period 1957 to 1961, with reports, results of their work, and a contemporary

section of the Journal Herald.

Series 7, Dayton City Improvement, or rather, New Dayton Committee, contains various study reports, an October 1958 copy of Labor Union calling for a no vote on the Expressway Bond issue, and information on the Metropolitan Heart Conference held 25 March 1958.

Series 8, Vita and Obituary Notices, Irvin G. Bieser, Sr. is a file of newspaper clippings associated with Mr. Bieser, including articles, obituaries and memorials.

Biographical Sketch

Irvin Gruen Bieser, Sr. was the third of four children born to Charles W. Bieser and Louise Gruen. To appreciate Irvin, it is instructive to know about his father, in whose footsteps he apparently trod. Born in 1867, Charles was reared in Dayton and joined his father's business. The 1909 History of Dayton and Montgomery County, by Drury, records Charles' impressive service as clerk of probate, common pleas and circuit courts, as well as political activity in local and state republican committees. He was a delegate at state conventions 21 times, including the one which nominated Taft. In 1907, he founded Everybody's Book Shop at 21, 23 West 5th St., and served as director of the Union Trust Company, the Dayton Building and Loan and the Gruen Watch Company in Cincinnati. He was the Postmaster of Dayton at the time of the 1913 flood and orchestrated reconstruction of the Post Office building after it. He also belonged to numerous fraternal organizations. In the 1932 Dayton and Montgomery County Resources and People, he is characterized as an "organizer and leader in securing for Dayton its present form of government."

Irvin was born in Dayton on June 15, 1902. He prepared at Steele High School in Dayton, received an S.B., cum laude, from Harvard College in 1924, and an L.L.B. from Harvard Law School in 1927. He was admitted to the Ohio Bar and joined the oldest law firm in Dayton, McMahon, Corwin, Landis, and Markham. During the 1930s and 1940s he was a frequent courtroom lawyer and appeared twice before the United States Supreme Court. In later life he practiced mostly corporate and probate law, eventually became a senior partner and reorganized the firm into its present form as Bieser, Greer, and Landis. He served as President of the Dayton Bar Association for the 1957-1958 period. On April 14, 1936, he married, in Piqua, Ohio, Catharine Mary French. They had two children, Catharine Rockwell, born in 1937, and Irvin G. Jr., born in 1941. Like his father, Irvin G. Bieser Sr. became a leader in the community. He was the director of several corporations, including the Dayton Power and Light Company, the City Transit Company, Midwest Securities Investment Inc., George Pflaum Publishing Company, and others. For an unequalled 46 years he was a member of the Board of Trustees of Miami Valley Hospital, serving as President from 1948-1954. He was a founding trustee and President of Hospital Care Corporation (now Blue Cross Corporation of Southwest Ohio), the first such care plan in the region, serving from 1939 to 1979. The Frank M. Tait Foundation benefited from his service as trustee and president from 1980 to 1989, as did the Dayton Art Institute and the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra Association, the Young Womens Christian Association, the Public Orchestra Association, the Young Womens Christian Association, the Public Library, the Harvard Club of Dayton and the Lawyers Club. He also followed his father's example of involvement in government, working with the Chamber of Commerce, the Dayton Research Association, Community Research Incorporated, and Dayton City Improvement. In connection with the Second World War, he served on the Dayton Peace Council and the Draft Board. Somehow, in the midst of all this, Irvin found time for worldwide travel with his lifelong companion. He died at the age of 87 on September 15, 1989 following a stroke, at the Miami Valley Hospital he had served for so much of his life.

Agency Sketches

THE DAYTON RESEARCH ASSOCIATION:

In 1912, John H. Patterson founded and funded the Dayton Bureau of Municipal Research, which operated briefly until interrupted by the First World War. In 1922, Patterson established The Dayton Foundation with an endowment of \$250,000 by himself, Robert Patterson Sr., and Mrs. H.G. Carnell. The following year, Patterson's friend, Dr. D.F. Garland, organized The Dayton Research Association, which was funded by the greater part of the Foundation's income. It was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization to "promote the welfare of the city by collecting, compiling, and interpreting information and statistics for its social, charitable, and governmental agencies. In August 1926, the director resigned to become Secretary for the Dayton Community Chest, whence came financial support for the next 3 years. Organized with 7 trustees, the decision was made in 1927 to amend this number to 9. The following year, with both Garland and John H. Patterson deceased, the new Foundation decided that The Association trustees allowed rose to between 12 and 25, all of whom must be elected to their position. It was at this critical point that Irvin G. Bieser Sr. became a trustee and Treasurer for the Association, serving in this capacity until December 1941, when community interest and support was distracted" by the war. Even without the war, there were continuous problems with funding and, in 1941, an effort to merge the Association with the newer Public Advisory Committee, which was more of a campaign group than a research body. In any case, it was abandoned during the war and all assets were finally liquidated on 3 May, 1945, the last check for \$231.51 going to the original benefactor, the Dayton Foundation. The records were turned over to the Government Research Bureau of the Dayton Chamber of Commerce.

DAYTON PEACE COUNCIL:

In the late 1930s, there was a nationwide peace movement formed to persuade the U.S. government not to enter the war that was about to erupt in Europe. The National Peace Council in Washington D.C., under the leadership of Walter W. VanKirk, urged the formation of local councils throughout the nation. Irvin G. Bieser, Sr. became convinced that a single effort united within a national organization would be preferable to smaller less effective groups like the World Affairs Council and the Emergency Peace Campaign Committee that already existed in Dayton. He united the two and started the Dayton Peace Council, serving as its president, starting in 1938. Their goal was to educate people to the possibly dire consequences of entering such a conflict and to lobby members of Congress.

THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE DAYTON AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Dayton, Ohio has had a public library since 1802, but it has often had to expand or change locations over the years. One such change was contemplated in the late 1950s and special committees were formed by the Board of Trustees to plan and organize the effort. In January 1957, as a prominent Dayton attorney, Irvin G. Bieser Sr. was invited to serve on what was initially known as the Citizens Advisory Committee, then the Public Legal and Site subcommittee, responsible for selecting a site and overseeing the necessary legal work. On August 29, 1960, ground was broken for the Main Dayton and Montgomery County Public Library.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH INCORPORATED:

Organized in 1957 as Metropolitan Community Studies, Inc., for the sole purpose of performing research studies on local government problems in the general area of Dayton, Ohio, the name was changed to Community Research, Inc., in May 1960. This was mainly to demonstrate the fact that the organization was not prejudiced toward the adoption of any particular form of local government. Its own regulations forbade engaging in any promotional or political action programs. Its studies were, however, made available to the public and local government officials, for educational or advisory purposes. It was a private non-profit organization, supported entirely by private contributions, non-partisan, and not connected with local government.

NEW DAYTON COMMITTEE (DAYTON CITY IMPROVEMENT):

This late 1950s, early 1960s committee described itself as being involved in studies of community problems, which they would analyze in order to avoid potential problems that might occur in broader area of urban development. They would recommend practical solutions, serving as a citizens' study group and an advisory body for the Dayton City Commission. They also espoused charitable and educational purposes in the entire area of urban development. In order to avoid duplicative efforts, they affected liaisons with other groups, who were similarly engaged. They did not lobby nor involve themselves in the legislative process.

Container Listing

Series I: Dayton Research Association			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Correspondence	1934
	2	Correspondence	1935
	3	Correspondence	1936
	4	Correspondence	1937
	5	Correspondence	1938
	6	Correspondence	1939
	7	Correspondence	1940
	8	Correspondence	1941-45
2	1	"Facts" Bulletins	Jul. 1934-Nov. 1938
	2	"Facts" Bulletins	Jan. 1939-Jul. 1941
	3	"Facts" Reports	1935
	4	"Facts" Reports	1937
	5	"Facts" Reports	1938
	6	"Facts" Reports	1939
	7	"Facts" Reports	1940
	8	"Facts" Reports	1941
	9	Index of Reports	1914-1933
	10	News Clippings	1937-1941
Series II: Dayton Peace Council			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
3	1	Correspondence	
	2	Material from National Council	
	3	Booklets on Neutrality, etc.	
Series III: Draft Board			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
3	4	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1940
	5	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1941
	6	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1942
	7	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1943
	8	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1944
	9	Correspondence, Circulars, and Bulletins	1945
	10	Selective Service Newsletter	Apr. 1942-Dec.1946
	11	Newspaper Clippings (Members and Lottery Lists)	
	12	Selective Service Regulations, Legal Aspects, etc.	

Series IV: Chamber of Commerce			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
4	1	Dayton Government Digest, #3-33	8/30/44-5/20/47
	2	Plans & Reports of Department of Governmental Affairs	1944-1946
	3	Continuation of File 2	
	4	Correspondence	1942-1946
Series V: Public Library Citizens Advisory Committee			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	1	Correspondence	1957-1960
	2	Brochures, Annual Reports, etc.	1954-1960
Series VI: Community Research Incorporated			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	3	Metropolitan Community Research (misc. papers)	1958-60
	4	Community Research Incorporated (misc. papers)	1960-76
Series VII: Dayton City Improvement			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	5	Miscellaneous documents, reports, news clips	1934-59
Series VIII: Vita and Obituary – Irvin G. Bieser			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	6	Notices, memorials, obituaries	1941-1989