

Hal Barrett Papers

MS – 246

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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Introduction

The papers of Hal Barrett were accessioned into Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections on August 9, 1991.

The papers in this collection date from 1938-1990 and fill 3 Hollinger boxes and 45 file folders. The collection is arranged into 6 series as follows:

- Series 1: Labor Union
- Series 2: Scrapbook
- Series 3: *The Illuminator*
- Series 4: Music
- Series 5: Pastel Drawings
- Series 6: Other works

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Brief Biological Sketch

Harold “Hal” F. Barrett, Jr. was born in Dayton, OH on December 13, 1919, to Harold F. Barrett, Sr. and Carolyn (“Carrie”) Kaesemann. Young Barrett’s first marriage was to Grace Ethel Dressler in 1946. They had two children, Margaret Ann and Paul Harold. His second marriage was to Kathryn Mae Lohrentz in 1969. He gained two stepchildren, William H. Ehrstine and Gale Ann Worman. As of 1996, he had five grandchildren.

Barrett’s father was a sheet-metal contractor who became a homebuilder, but a Depression bank failure closed his father’s business in 1931, and stripped him of all of his business and real estate overnight. He packed up the family, which included 12 year old Hal, and began a desperate odyssey through the West in search of work. In the next few years, the family lived in Wichita, KS; Saline, KS; and Galva, KS, where the senior Barrett found work in an oil drilling equipment company as day shift bookkeeper and night shift machinist.

In 1935, his father returned to Dayton to take a job in the Delco Products tool room. Barrett would join the Delco Products assembly line after graduation from Fairview high school in 1937. In his spare time, young Barrett studied music composition with the late Dr. Louis Waldemar Sprague.

Barrett appreciated as a toolmaker, then literally became a “journeyman”, traveling first to Arizona and then to California, following the “trade”, during the last part of WWII. In 1944 he committed to the Presbyterian ministry and became a “pre-theolog”, sponsored by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake (later to become President of the World Council of Churches), and came under the care of the Los Angeles Presbytery. He then became a “divinity student” at Occidental College in Los Angeles, majoring in English and minoring in psychology.

In 1946, having run out of money (he used all his U.S. savings bonds to pay for his tuition and had no more left over for the second year of college), Barrett went to work for the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Station at Inyokern, CA, in the upper Mojave desert, as an ordnance inspector. During his work there he became a shop planner for five maintenance trades, an engineering aide, an Ordnance Classification of Defects writer, and an experimental machinist. He also was certified to teach shop math and “related technical subjects” for apprentices, largely in the metal trades.

As a “divinity student” still on the record, Barrett helped organize a “community church” for Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant families in the 10,000 population desert metropolis. (It had previously offered only a Navy “Divine Service”). Barrett and his wife at the time organized a girl’s and a boy’s choir, and Barrett also set up the first church school teacher-education program for the new multi-purpose church community. During the summers of 1946 and 1947, Barrett attended two week-long seminars at Chapman College in Los Angeles on “Choir organization and Direction”, which was led by Dr. John Finley Williamson, creator of the original Westminster Choir here in Dayton, OH, and also creator of the Westminster Choir College at Princeton University in Princeton, NJ.

In 1949, Barrett, his wife and first child, Peggy, moved to Altadena, CA, where Hal started working for the Pasadena Annex of USNOTS, where he worked nights and went to Pasadena City College by day to complete his “lower division” college work, earning in an AA degree in English (with a psychology minor) in 1950. At work, he was first an experimental

machinist, and then became a “Technical Source Inspector” for the Navy’s Bureau of Ordnance, doing hands-on detailed contract inspection of ordinance material manufactured in the private sector in the L.A. piedmont.

In 1949, he joined Local 1548 of the Machinists’ Union, became President of the local, and created and edited a monthly newsletter for that local called the *1548 Forward*. At the request of the Commanding Officer of the Annex, Barrett also created and directed a Christmas “Caroliers” choir, composed of NOTS employees, which sang every Christmas Eve throughout NOTS PasAnnex facilities, between 1950 and 1955.

In 1955 he was invited to become a full-time “West Coast Organizer” for District 44 (Government employees) (a *national* District) of the Intl. Assn of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL. He served five years as a field representative for DL44, creating a nationally-distributed newspaper, *The Federal Machinist News* with 17,000 national circulations, and acted as District education director for the District’s 60-odd locals throughout continental USA, Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and Alaska.

During the last two years of his assignment with District 44, Barrett lived in the Washington, D.C. area (Rockville, MD). He helped co-edit a neighborhood newspaper, *Twinbrook Times*; did freelance writing with Warren Adler, Inc. in Washington, D.C.; and campaigned for a Maryland Public Accommodations law. He also helped organize the Rockville Unitarian Church, having given up the Presbyterian ministry quest in favor of a “ministry” within the labor movement, in 1950, at which time he joined Neighborhood Church in Pasadena, CA, and became a Unitarian-Universalist.

In 1960, Barrett left the IAM&AW to work for the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., as a “foreign nationals training officer”. His work here was to plan and administer “contact” tours of English-speaking foreign nationals from various “third world” countries, and some not in that category, such as Japan. These “participants” were from various sectors of the political economy of their countries. Their mission was to learn as much as possible about American ideas for production and management of workers and material. Barrett worked with such persons from Japan, Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Central and South America; and also connected with various agencies in the United Nations and the Organization of American States. During this period, Barrett also lectured weekly on “Union Constitutions”, for foreign nationals, at American University, and on “Apprenticeship in the United States” at the Labor Department’s main auditorium in downtown Washington, where, through translators, his talk went to persons speaking as many as 8 different languages.

During this period, Barrett joined Lodge 12 of the AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees), a white-collar union much like the IAM’s blue-collar District 44. He served as delegate to the District of Columbia’s Central Labor Council, and created and edited a quarterly “opinion” “magazine” called *The Labor Angle*. Since Lodge 12, like District 44, IAM was a *nationally-distributed* “local”; the “magazine” was distributed throughout the USA. Barrett was also a member of the Labor Press division of the Washington local of the American Newspaper Guild, and also a member of the ILPA (International Labor Press Association).

In 1962, Barrett was “promoted” to become the San Francisco representative of the Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. During this time, responding to Labor Secretary Goldberg’s call for promoting equal opportunity for all in the workforce, Barrett precipitated a

political crisis between the California State Apprenticeship agency and the Federal agency, which got state-wide coverage by the "Bee" newspapers, and also national attention. He was invited by a representative of the Under Secretary of Labor to apply for a job as Executive secretary to the newly-legislated "National Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training", which he did, and was chosen for the job.

This brought Barrett back from California to Washington, where he settled for awhile in Bethesda, MD during an emotional divorce, and then in the District proper, and then in Falls Church, VA. To earn more money to help pay for the divorce, and maintain his responsibilities to his children, Barrett worked for awhile as a "credit-approval" clerk for Raleigh's Men's Haberdashery in downtown Washington, D.C.; did freelance writing for Warren Adler, Inc.; editing a commercial newspaper, called *Brimberg Phases*, for an electronics retailer; and worked for awhile co-editing a book with Joseph Corcoran on *Refrigeration* (a technical book).

In his work as Executive Secretary to ACEOAT, Barrett coordinated and administered conferences on the "equal opportunity for apprenticeship and training" issue in Washington, D.C.; New York City; Bridgeport, CT; Chicago, IL; and Los Angeles, CA. Working with the Under Secretary of Labor at that time, Jack Henning, the Committee developed national policy on the use of Federal funds in subsidizing, approving and recognizing Joint Apprenticeship Committees all over the nation. Barrett's energetic and aggressive promotion of the core "cause" resulted in narrowing-down the authority given to him in his job-description, and eventually drove Barrett to "retire" from the position, rather than to become what he called a "store-front red-hot white liberal token" figure-head for the program. The position (of Exec Secretary) was never refilled, allowed to "evaporate" out of existence, after Barrett left.

In 1967, Barrett went back to work for the IAM&AW as a "Grand Lodge Representative," and was assigned to Dayton, OH, to service the needs of a local attached to the Air Force Systems Command in "Area B" at Wright-Patterson AFB. This local had two "bargaining units," one a craft unit, the other a unit for the Base Police force. As a result of his work, a large, new local was formed, organized and recognized as a result of a "recognition election" in which IAM and AFGE were competing. At the time, this bargaining unit had about 3000 civilian "blue collar" employees. Barrett negotiated one of the first labor-management contracts with the Air Force at Air Systems Command HQs, and also was advocate for the first actual, formal arbitration hearing between a union and the Air Force under a labor-management agreement. (Presidential Executive Order 10988, issued in early 1960's, was first step in granting "recognition" to unions of government employees, after more than 70 years of agitating for such recognition).

As part of his work as a worker educator, Barrett served on an Advisory Committee for Sinclair Community College in Dayton in 1976-77, leading to the organization of a Labor Studies Department at that school. Barrett was invited to become the first chairperson for that Department. He retired early from the IAM and accepted that responsibility, developing its working curriculum, promoting the department in the community, and class-room testing the curriculum, before he retired from that job in 1983.

Since his retirement, Barrett created a music program for First Unitarian Church of Dayton, was choir director and house composer for that church, and also served for five years as Religious Education Director, and as creator/editor of *The Illuminator*, a monthly newsletter distributed nationally. He was designated a wedding officiate for First Unitarian Church in 1983,

and since that time, as an occasional officiate, has performed 34 weddings up to mid-1996. Barrett served the Unitarian-Universalist Association nationally by serving on the international Executive Board of the U-U United Nations Office in New York City, and on the international Board of Directors for the U-U Musicians Network, for which, for one year (1995) he was editor of its quarterly journal, *UUMN NOTES*. By 1995, Barrett had composed and copyrighted over 80 musical works, many of them having been publicly performed in the USA and in Canada. Five of Barrett's hymns/songs have appeared in one or another of three hymnals or songbooks published by the UUA, and the UUMN. Barrett was on the editorial panel for publishing *Sing Your Peace*, by the U-U Peace Network, in 1990. Hal is being "mentored" in his composing work by Dr. Tom Benjamin, at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, MD.

Barrett also helped organize a peace group initially known as "DACARE" (Dayton Area Citizens for Arms Race Education), served as a propagandist and community organizer for this group, which changed its name to "Dayton Citizens for Global Security" for about 7 years, and then, in 1996, changed it to "Dayton Peace Action". It was active all during the Cold War as a "mainline" organization vigorously dissenting from the Reagan international strategies of that time, and has remained active in the wake of that period as well. During the "Cold War," Barrett lectured widely in the area on the "economics of the arms race"; conducted a vigorous public debate with Bill Wild (in the Dayton Journal-Herald's "Letters to the Editor" column), on issues associated with the nuclear arms buildup; and later was invited by the newspaper to serve on the "Board of Community Contributors" in 1988, and also made two contributions to a standing-head column called Perspectives, in the newspaper, for religious editorializing.

Barrett has also been active in the Dayton Music Club as a composer-member; (serving a three-year term as member of its Board of Directors); on the Boards of the Southwestern Ohio Epilepsy Association, the Montgomery County Mental Health Association; and a supporting contributor to the Arthritis Foundation, the Dayton Art Institute (where he served on the Board of the DAI Guild for three years), The Miami Valley Arts Council, Hospice of Dayton, the Miami Valley Gerontology Council, the NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League), and Planned Parenthood (as an "advocate").

Barrett received many honors and awards throughout his lifetime. He became a Commissioned Kentucky Colonel in 1976, received a Certificate of Recognition for Meritorious Service to the United States Government Department of Labor in 1962, an honorary member of Sigma Zeta Psi in 1950, (for "creative writing"), and is listed in *Who's Who in Labor* (1976), *Who's Who in Writers, Editors and Poets, U.S. and Canada* (1988, and all subsequent reissues through 1996), *The International Book of Honor* (1991), and *2000 Notable American Men* (1992).

Barrett currently resides in Dayton, Ohio, and is very involved in community activities.

Scope and Content

Series 1 is a collection of correspondence, reports, essays, articles, and personal papers connected with Barrett's life in the labor union. The first part of the series is a short manuscript focusing on Barrett's work during a critical period of growth of unionism in the public sector of the United States. The volume specifically points to his experiences as a labor journalist, educator, organizer, and advocate. The manuscript is titled, "Working in the Vineyard...for a Taste of Bitter Wine." There are three sections to the manuscript with dates spanning from 1953-1962. The last section of the manuscript contains a collection of *Federal Machinist News*, of which Barrett was the creator and working editor from 1957-1960. Barrett is missing Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 4; Nos. 3, 10, and 11. It ran from May 1958 to May 1960.

The rest of the series contains articles and correspondence, a paper submitted in competition for the Thomas A. DeSciscolo Federal Labor Relations Writing Competition in 1978, and a paper written for a seminar on Full Employment while teaching at Sinclair Community College in 1979. The span dates for the entire series run from 1953 to 1988. It is arranged so that the short manuscript has its own folders while the remainder of the series is arranged chronologically.

Series 2 is a Scrapbook of editorials and newspaper clippings arranged in chronological order. Series 2 consists of copies of editorials Barrett has written and published beginning in 1982 until 1990. Topics range from armed intervention in El Salvador to anti-union bias.

Series 3 is titled *The Illuminator* and is arranged in chronological order. Series 3 is a collection of journals called *The Illuminator*, which is a newsletter for members and friends of the First Unitarian Church of Dayton. There is a complete set with a time span from September 1982 to June 1987.

Music is the name of Series 4 and it is a collection of music books and song books that Barrett has either written or compiled, and then published. It is arranged in chronological order from 1938 to 1990. A songbook called "All Together, Now!" 8 pieces for liberal religious expression, is only one of 8 books in this series. Others include songs for family occasions, holidays, and concerts.

Hal Barrett's Pastel Drawings, Series 5, is a unique collection in an art sketch book. Barrett called this sketchbook his "travelin' companion-for pastel work." Also in the sketchbook are some loose sketches, one of which is very interesting of his son, Paul Barrett. The sketchbook itself is dated 1977, but other drawings are dated up to 1984.

Series 6 consists of miscellaneous materials and other works. These include Barrett's published booklets of short stories he wrote for his grandchildren; a manual, *Principles of Church Newsletter Planning, Design, Writing and Production*; and a handbook for political action, *Networking: Antidote for Isolation*. Also in the series is a booklet of poetry with charcoal sketches of Field Work for Union called "The Wanderer." "The Wanderer" is a "reflection of the secret heart on the moody-mundane-magnificence of the workday world of a traveling union representative in love with life." There is a collection of comment pages to *The Illuminator* from 1982-1987, his own biographical sketch, sermons, and poetry. This series is arranged in chronological order. The span dates of this series run from 1938 to 1990.

Container Listing

Series I: Labor Union

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
		Working in the Vineyard...for a Taste of Bitter Wine	
1	1	Overview	
	2	The 1548 Forward	1953-55
	3	In <<the field>>	1955-57
	4	The Washington Years	1957-62
	5	International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers – Local Lodge 830	Feb. 28, 1972
	6	“The Scope of Bargaining in the Federal Sector – A Union View”	1978
	7	“Full Employment: A Way to Vindictive Capitalism”	Aug. 4, 1979
	8	Correspondence with Tom Ducey, General Secretary – Treasurer, International Assoc. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	Jan. 29, 1990
	9	“The View from the Mountain top, IAM 859”	n.d.

Series II: Scrapbook

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	10	Scrapbook	8/1959-9/12/1979
	11	Scrapbook	10/1979-10/15/1981
	12	Scrapbook	11/14/1981-3/10/1983
	13	Scrapbook	4/20/1983-10/23/1983
	14	Scrapbook	11/6/1984-12/24/1988
	15	Scrapbook	n.d.

Series III: *The Illuminator*

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	16	<i>The Illuminator</i>	9/1982-8/1983
	17	<i>The Illuminator</i>	9/1983-July/Aug. 1984
	18	<i>The Illuminator</i>	8/1984-June/Summer 1985
	19	<i>The Illuminator</i>	8/1985-Summer 1986
	20	<i>The Illuminator</i>	8/1986-May/June 1987

Series IV: Music

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	1	“By These Good Images”	1988
	2	“All Together, Now!”	1989
	3	“The Fruit of the Spirit”	1989
	4	“I Have a Dream”	1989

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	5	“Songs for Family Occasions”	1989
	6	“Concertizing”	1990
	7	“Keying-In”	1990
	8	“sing Your Peace Songbook”	1990
	9	“A Portfolio of Music Texts”	n.d.
	10	“Sample Scores”	n.d.

Series V: Pastel Drawings

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	11	Pastel Drawings Sketch Book	1977

Series VI: Other Works

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
3	1	Biography/Bio-data	1919-1993
	2	“The Song of My Heart”	1944
	3	Short Stories	Various
	4	Performance Review, Sinclair College	1978-79
	5	Sermons	1980-81
	6	<i>The Illuminator</i> , Comment Pages	1982-87
	7	“A Labor Approach to Labor Relations”	1983
	8	United Nations Sunday Sermons	1986
	9	“The Collected Poetry of Hal Barrett, Jr.”	1987
	10	<i>Conference Call</i>	1987
	11	“Principles of Church Newsletter Planning, Design, Writing, and Production	1987
	12	“The Wanderer”	1987
	13	“Earth, You Are My Haunted Home”	1989
	14	“Networking: Antidote for Isolation”	n.d.
	15	Saying Goodbye to Katy: A compilation of e-mail letters following Katy’s death	7/7/98