

Yellow Springs League of Women Voters

MS-249

Special Collections and Archives
Paul Laurence Dunbar Library
Wright State University

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of the Yellow Springs League of Women Voters were accessioned into the Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections in September 1992. They were donated by Julie Overton from the Greene County Public Library in Xenia, Ohio.

The papers in this collection date from 1946 to 1984 and fill 4 Hollinger Boxes and 28 file folders. Series 5 (Voter Bulletins) is on microfilm. The collection is arranged into 6 series as follows:

- Series 1: History
- Series 2: Organizational Directives
- Series 3: Voter Education
- Series 4: Newsletters
- Series 5: Issues
- Series 6: Voter Bulletins

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The records of the Yellow Springs League of Women Voters fall into six series: 1) History, 2) Organizational Directives, 3) Voter Education, 4) Newsletters, 5) Issues, and 6) Voter Bulletins.

Series 1 contains both published and unpublished histories of both the national and local league programs, including some personal correspondence concerning YSLWV activities, dated 1946-1980. Consists also of newsclippings concerning league activities from September 1937-May 1955. Includes several public relations brochures on the town of Yellow Springs, and one on Greene County, spanning 1956-1974.

Series 2 contains various records pertaining to the organization of the YSLWV including a description of unit organization during 1953-1953; suggested board organization; introductory pamphlets; inter-league council agreement; and a local league handbook; dated 1966-1975. Also includes by-laws and changes (December 1971-November 1977); informational publications from the national and state league programs (1956-1982); membership and financial records (1961-1980); and meeting minutes (1971-1981).

Series 3 includes information for voters encompassing voter registration qualifications, listing of representatives and candidates, various issues, demographic information, and the Yellow Springs Citizen Participation Plan, dated 1953-1978. Also contains notes from Candidates Meeting (November 1955-October 1969); the YSLWV Voter Service Activity Reports (1951-1981); and plat maps (1952-1955). The series also includes an undated slide informational presentation on "Who Really Runs Yellow Springs?"

Series 4 contains a fairly comprehensive collection of newsletters, the YSLWV "Local Leaguer," as well as a few issues of the Greene County LWV, "Leaguer", ranging from 1971-1981. Topics include an upcoming calendar of local, state, and national activities; financial status; reports on pending issues; and membership lists.

Series 5 consists of various files covering local issues studied by league members. Included are studies on low income housing, water for Yellow Springs, property tax issues, local conservation of natural resources, hospital bond issue, a community center survey, child welfare, local area development, apportionment, solid waste, public health, recycling, Greene County libraries, criminal justice, zoning in Miami Township, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base pollution, the Little Miami Interleague Group, air pollution, and landfill (1958-1984).

Series 6 contains sporadic collection of Yellow Springs and Greene County Voter Information Bulletins, from 1952-1983, publicizing candidates and issues, and other voter information.

BRIEF AGENCY HISTORY

The League of Women Voters of the United States (formerly, in 1946, the National League of Women Voters) evolved from the National American Woman Suffrage Association, following the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, granting women the right to vote. Consisting of 110,000 members, in 32 regional, 50 state, and 1250 local groups, the League is a voluntary organization of citizens, both men and women, 18 years old and over.

The League promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government by distributing information on candidates and issues, and campaigning to encourage registration and voting, without directing supporting or opposing specific candidates or political parties. Members also select and study public policy issues at local, state, and national levels, and take political action as deemed appropriate. National concerns include government, international relations, natural resources, and social policy.

The Yellow Springs League of Women Voters was established in 1934 with a membership of 25. In addition to promoting political responsibility, one of the founders, Mrs. Adeline Bassett, hoped that the League would provide a common ground to draw the Yellow Springs village people and the Antioch College permanent staff members, and their families, together under a worthy cause. So with the help of Opal Davis, a League delegate from Dayton, Mrs. Bassett founded the first league in the immediate local area, only 14 years after the National League was founded. Xenia, on the other hand, did not set up a league until the mid-1960's.

One of the earliest activities of the Yellow Springs League, which eventually became an annual event, was the establishment of the Candidates' Meeting. Held in October, the meeting allowed the voters to meet the candidates and listen to their platforms. It also gave the candidates a chance to communicate with people outside their own political party.

Another early important project was an effort to improve the methods of garbage disposal in Yellow Springs. In 1951, garbage was collected by six privately-licensed haulers that paid \$1.00 a year to the town for their license. They operated a variety of vehicles, from small, uncovered trucks, to horse-drawn carts. The haulers set their own collection schedules and fees. Once the garbage and trash was collected, it was hauled uncovered through the town and spilled into the open dump (at the present site of the swimming pool). After surveying 250 towns across the country as well as the local residents, and consulting with experts on health, dumps, rodents, and sanitary landfills, the League presented the village with suggested recommendations for improvement. The village soon adopted an ordinance to have garbage collected door-to-door by covered trucks, and transported to a sanitary landfill outside the village.

Other League involvement includes projects on the charter form of government (1944-1945), school building needs (1947), school financing (over several years), fluoridation (1955), bicycle safety (1969), and sewage treatment (1970's). Often, the Yellow Springs League would

participate in the Greene County Interleague Council to address county issues. In the mid-1970's, the Yellow Springs League attended the Little Miami Interleague Group to work on the Little Miami River project.

In spring of 1980, the Yellow Springs League merged with the Xenia League to form the Greene County League of Women Voters. In 1992, the Greene County League disbanded, and its members joined the Dayton League. Funds from the Greene League were given to Dayton with the understanding that they would be used to promote public knowledge of Greene County

References: Encyclopedia of Association, Vol 1 (1994).

Term paper, "Toward a Better Future, the History of the League of Women Voter of Yellow Springs," by Joanne Calkins, March 16, 1959.

Unpublished article on the Yellow Springs League, September 1979.

Telephone conversation with Julie Overton by Laura Romesburg, October 18, 1993.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Series I: History

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	National, Local Histories	1946-1980
	2	News clippings	Sept 1937-May 1955
	3	Yellow Springs, Greene County Pamphlets	1956-1974

Series II: Organizational Directives

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Local Structure, Purpose, Handbook	1952-1979
	2	By-laws and Changes	Dec 1971-Nov 1977
	3	National, state LWV Correspondence, Pamphlets, Newsletters	1956-1982
	4	Membership Yearbooks, Financial Reports, Financial Drives	1961-1980
	5	Financial Ledgers (on shelf)	1952-1969
	6	Meeting Minutes, Notes of YSLWV, Inter-league Council, Calendars, Agendas	1971-1981

Series III: Voter Education

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	1	Voter Information	1953-1978
	2	Notes on Candidates Meetings	Nov 1955-Oct 1969
	3	Voter Service Activity Reports	1951-1981
	4	Plat Maps	1952-1955
	5	Yellow Springs Slide Show	N.D.

Series IV: Newsletters

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	1	Yellow Springs "Local Leaguer"	June/July 1971 – December 1975
	2	Yellow Springs "Local Leaguer," Greene County "Leaguer"	Jan 1976-Feb 1980 May 1980-Apr 1981

Series V: Issues

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
3	1	Local Issue Positions	1958-1983

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
3	2	Appointment	N.D.
	3	Solid waste	1971-1974
	4	Public Health	1972
	5	Recycling	1972-1974
	6	Greene County Libraries	1973
	7	Criminal Justice	1974
	8	Miami Township Zoning Resolution	1974
	9	Wright Patterson AFB	1975-1981
	10	Little Miami Inter-service Group	1976-1984
	11	Air Pollution	1976-1983
	12	Landfill	1984
4	13	Loyalty, Security, ie. USAF Security Investigation, RE: Arabella Jones	N.D.

Series VI: Voter Bulletins (on Microfilm) 1952-1983