

Commercial Category

B. R. Harrah & Sons

Processed by
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Introduction

The records of B. R. Harrah & Sons, a Springfield-based construction and contracting business, were donated to the Clark County Historical Society in 2014. The records of the business are dated between 1947 and 1962, with two brief related sets of files from later dates. One of these is a set of construction records dated 1988 from Harrah-Weidauer, a business run by the son of one of the members of B. R. Harrah & Sons. The other is a set of blueprints dated 1983. It is not clear where the 1983 blueprints originated from, but it is assumed that they are either from Harrah-Weidauer, or from Ward Harrah Construction, the business that spun off of B. R. Harrah & Sons after the death of B. R. Harrah.

The collection consists of 3 record center boxes, 3 oversized files, and 1 small clamshell box. In total the collection contains 69 file folders, 45 payroll books, 1 scrapbook, and loose blueprints for 43 structures. The collection is arranged into the following 7 series:

- Series 1: General Project Records
- Series 2: General Business Correspondence
- Series 3: Contractor's License
- Series 4: Army Records
- Series 5: Payroll Records
- Series 6: Scrapbooks
- Series 7: Blueprints

Biography

B. R. Harrah & Sons stated in 1970s Springfield city directory advertisements that the business was founded in 1935. The company did not begin appearing in the city directory under that name until 1949, but Belfer R. Harrah, who the company is named after, was working as a carpenter and contractor in the Springfield area since at least 1924. By 1938, his son Ward Milton Harrah was being listed as a helper of Belfer. While not known as “B. R. Harrah & Sons” at the time, it is reasonable to assume that Belfer and his sons were working together on local construction projects in 1935, if not earlier.

The 1949 appearance of B. R. Harrah & Sons in the city directory gave the company’s address as 2805 Maplewood Avenue, the residence of Ward Milton Harrah. Ward Harrah had recently taken classes at Command & General Staff College, and appears to have claimed the business at his address upon returning to Springfield after completing his education. The business moved to 325 Old Columbus Road in 1955. This was outside of city limits at the time, and B. R. Harrah & Sons temporarily stopped showing up in city directories. Ward Harrah stopped being listed in the directories at this time as well; it is assumed that he relocated to 325 Old Columbus Road, and the company address moved with him. Based on advertisements placed in the directories in later years, B. R. Harrah & Sons remained at 325 Old Columbus Road for the remainder of its existence. Belfer Harrah passed away at the end of 1978, and the company seems to have ceased to exist shortly afterwards. By 1980, the company was no longer being advertised in the city directory.

It appears that at this point, Belfer Harrah’s sons began performing contracting services independently. James E. Harrah, the younger of the two sons, was listed as a contractor, not attached to any company, starting in the 1982 Springfield directory. Ward Harrah seems to have continued to offer contracting services from his home, as a 1986 invoice found in this donation was addressed to “Ward Harrah Construction”, still located at 325 Old Columbus Road.

While not directly involved with B. H. Harrah & Sons, it is worth noting that Randy (“Rand”) Harrah, son of Ward Harrah, started his own contracting business in the Springfield area as well. This was initially known as Harrah Construction, and later as Harrah-Weidauer General Contractors.

Scope and Content

The bulk of this collection consists of the records of local construction projects by Springfield-based contractors B. R. Harrah & Sons. Some of the more significant records include blueprints, correspondence, and in one case, a scrapbook. The collection spans from 1947 to 1962, with two additional files from 1983 and 1988 originating from businesses related to B. H. Harrah & Sons. Several projects represented in this collection utilized Yellow Springs architect Max G. Mercer, and correspondence from him can be found throughout the collection. Payroll records are also included, providing employee names and pay rates. A small collection of material originating from Ward Milton Harrah's career as an Army officer is included as well.

The records fall between two significant dates in the history of the business. The earliest records, from 1947, coincide with the main business address moving to Ward Milton Harrah's residence, at 2805 Maplewood Avenue. Except for the couple of outliers listed above, the records end in 1962, shortly after Belfer R. Harrah retired and relocated to Sebring, Florida.

The original donation included records dated 1986 to 1992 originating from Harrah-Weidauer, a contracting business separate from B. R. Harrah & Sons run by Randy ("Rand") Harrah, son of Ward Harrah. However, these records consisted almost entirely of invoices and utility bills, which were not incorporated into this collection.

This collection is divided into the following 7 series:

Series 1, General Project Records, consists of packets created by B. R. Harrah & Sons containing broad collections of records, divided by individual project. These packets include, among other things, blueprints, specifications, correspondence, and notes.

Series 2, General Business Correspondence, consists of correspondence unrelated to specific construction projects. This series only contains a single piece of correspondence from Antioch College. Correspondence regarding specific projects can be found in Series 1.

Series 3, Contractor's License, consists solely of the 1952 contractor's license issued by the city of Springfield to B. R. Harrah & Sons.

Series 4, Army Records, consists of records originating from Ward Milton Harrah's career as an Army officer. These include material from classes taken at Command and General Staff College, publications, and correspondence.

Series 5, Payroll Records, consists of weekly payroll record books for individual employees, as well as summary books listing hours worked and amount paid per week for all employees. Some of the summary books further break down each employee's hours by project.

Series 6, Scrapbook, consists of a single scrapbook documenting the construction of the addition to Christiansburg-Jackson School in Champaign County. Notable material includes photos taken during the construction, and a program from a dedication ceremony for the addition.

Series 7, Blueprints, consists of loose blueprints that were not part of the record packets in Series 1. However, some of the blueprints in this subseries do correspond to projects represented in Series 1.

**Commercial Category
B. R. Harrah & Sons
Box 1**

Series 1: General Project Records

File	Description
1	Antioch College (Horace Mann Library remodel, 1 of 2)
2	Antioch College (Horace Mann Library remodel, 2 of 2)
3	Birch subdivision, Yellow Springs (J. K. Williams residence)
4	505 N. Broadmoor Blvd., Springfield (Martin Levine residence addition)
5	S. Broadmoor Blvd., Springfield (Walter D. and Thelma L. Block residence)
6	Broadmoor (J. R. Johnson residence)
7	1223 Cedarview Dr., Springfield (Sherwood R. Moran residence addition)
8	W. Dover Rd., Springfield (Fred R. Leventhal residence)
9	1019 N. Fountain Ave., Springfield (Alpha Delta Pi sorority house addition)
10	1717 N. Fountain Ave., Springfield (Mike Peterson residence addition)
11	114 E. High St., Springfield (Bancroft Hotel remodel)
12	Limestone and Walnut St., Yellow Springs (Yellow Springs Elementary School addition, 1 of 5)
13	Limestone and Walnut St., Yellow Springs (Yellow Springs Elementary School addition, 2 of 5)
14	Limestone and Walnut St., Yellow Springs (Yellow Springs Elementary School addition, 3 of 5)
15	Limestone and Walnut St., Yellow Springs (Yellow Springs Elementary School addition, 4 of 5)
16	Limestone and Walnut St., Yellow Springs (Yellow Springs Elementary School addition, 5 of 5)
17	2001 Maiden Lane, Springfield (Koeing residence addition)
18	E. Main St., Springfield (Country Kitchen restaurant)
19	2043 Memorial Dr., Springfield (St. Mark Methodist Church addition)
20	2043 Memorial Dr., Springfield (St. Mark Methodist Church construction)
21	2027 Miracle Mile, Springfield (Conley Wells residence repairs)
22	Northridge Dr., Westchester Park (Harry Leventhal residence)
23	Pembroke Rd., Springfield (Noel Pancake residence)
24	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition, 1953, 1 of 4)
25	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition, 1953, 2 of 4)
26	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition, 1953, 3 of 4)
27	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition, 1953, 4 of 4)
28	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition, 1957)
29	226 Roseland E. (William Soltis residence)

30	Route 40 East (Melody Drive In / Cruise In, 1953)
31	Route 40 East (Melody Drive In / Cruise In, 1959)
32	St. Paris Pike, Springfield (Albert C. Backert residence)
33	1702 Salem Ave., Springfield (Walter E. Bradford residence)
34	State Route 70, Springfield (Northwestern Elementary School)
35	State Route 70, Springfield (Northwestern High School)
36	2340 Van Buren Ave., Springfield (Town and Country School addition)

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Box 2

File	Description
37	602 N. Wittenberg Ave., Springfield (Kappa Delta sorority house addition)
38	S. Wittenberg Blvd., Springfield (John A. and Alice Hinton residence)
39	1665 Walnut Terrace, Springfield (M. E. and Nellie M. Snodgrass residence)
40	Woodlawn and McCreight Ave., Wittenberg College, Springfield (Beta Theta Pi chapter house, 1 of 2)
41	Woodlawn and McCreight Ave., Wittenberg College, Springfield (Beta Theta Pi chapter house, 2 of 2)
42	Woodview, Springfield (William Herman Rump residence)
43	Yellow Springs St., Springfield (Mt. Zion Baptist Church addition)
44	Unknown Springfield address (Morgal Machine Tool Company addition)
45	Unknown Springfield address (Shawnee High School Foods Lab)
46	Unknown Springfield address (Woodrow West residence)
47	Unknown Yellow Springs address (American Humanist Association National Headquarters, 1 of 5)
48	Unknown Yellow Springs address (American Humanist Association National Headquarters, 2 of 5)
49	Unknown Yellow Springs address (American Humanist Association National Headquarters, 3 of 5)
50	Unknown Yellow Springs address (American Humanist Association National Headquarters, 4 of 5)
51	Unknown Yellow Springs address (American Humanist Association National Headquarters, 5 of 5)
52	Unknown Yellow Springs address (Kenneth W. Hunt residence)
53	Unknown address (Chakeres Theatres)
54	Unknown address (Harry Good residence)
55	Unknown address (Hustead Elementary School, 1 of 5)
56	Unknown address (Hustead Elementary School, 2 of 5)
57	Unknown address (Hustead Elementary School, 3 of 5)
58	Unknown address (Hustead Elementary School, 4 of 5)

59	Unknown address (Hustead Elementary School, 5 of 5)
60	Unknown address (Indianapolis Switch & Frog Warehouse repairs)
61	Unknown address (Mitchell Hills Country Club addition)
62	Unknown address (Resolution to borrow from Lagonda National Bank)
63	Unknown address (Roanoke residence)

Series 2: General Business Correspondence

File	Description
1	Antioch College

Series 3: Contractor's License

File	Description
1	Springfield contractor's license

Series 4: Army Records

File	Description
1	Command and General Staff College class material, 1 of 2
2	Command and General Staff College class material, 2 of 2
3	Organized Reserve Corps correspondence
4	Organized Reserve Corps publications

**Commercial Category
B. R. Harrah & Sons
Box 3**

Series 5: Payroll Records

File	Description
1	1947, 1950 General payroll record
2	1948-49 General payroll record
3	1950-52 General payroll record
4	1952-54 General payroll record
5	1953 General payroll record
6	1954 General payroll record
7	1954-55 General payroll record
8	1956-58 General payroll record
9	1958-59 General payroll record
10	Baumgardner, James E. 1956 payroll record

11	Baumgardner, James E. 1957-58 payroll record
12	Eipper, Charles 1952 payroll record
13	Freysinger, Paul Edgar 1950 payroll record
14	Freysinger, Paul Edgar 1951 payroll record
15	Gordon, Charley 1950 payroll record
16	Gordon, Charley 1951 payroll record
17	Gordon, Charley 1952 payroll record
18	Gordon, Charley 1952-53 payroll record
19	Gordon, Charley 1954-55 payroll record
20	Gordon, Charley 1955 payroll record
21	Gordon, Charley 1956 payroll record
22	Grout, Roger A. 1958 payroll record
23	Hawke Jr., Alden G. 1955 payroll record
24	Hawke Jr., Alden G. 1956 payroll record
25	Hawke Jr., Alden G. 1957-58 payroll record
26	Hawke Jr., Alden G. 1958 payroll record
27	Hawke Jr., Alden G. 1959 payroll record
28	Rafferty, Merlin Walter 1952 payroll record
29	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1950 payroll record
30	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1951 payroll record
31	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1954-55 payroll record
32	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1955 payroll record
33	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1956 payroll record
34	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1957-58 payroll record
35	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1958 payroll record
36	Weidauer, Lloyd Howard 1959 payroll record
37	Multiple employees 1950 payroll record (Bortner, Paul and Ober, William)
38	Multiple employees 1950 payroll record (Giffin, Brown, Freysinger)
39	Multiple employees 1951 payroll record (Brown, James E. and Rafferty, Merlin Walter)
40	Multiple employees 1953 payroll record (Rafferty, Merlin Walter and Weidauer, Lloyd H.)
41	Multiple employees 1953 payroll record (Weidauer, Lloyd Howard and Ullery, Russell C.)
42	Multiple employees 1954-55 payroll record (Colvin, Baumgardner, Nelson, Watts, Weidauer)
43	Multiple employees 1956 payroll record (Nelson, John W., and Burnett, Richard F.)
44	Multiple employees 1959 payroll record (Baumgardner, James Edward and Sowards, Ira)
45	Multiple employees 1959-60 payroll record (Grout, Roger A. and Adkins, Glenn R.)

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Box 4**

Series 6: Scrapbook

File	Description
1	Christiansburg-Jackson School addition (1953)

**Commercial Category
B. R. Harrah & Sons
Oversized files 1,2,3**

Series 7: Blueprints

File	Description	Location
1	Antioch College (Wright Field)	File 1
2	409 S. Broadmoor (W. West residence addition)	File 3
3	S. Broadmoor Blvd. (William Soltis residence)	File 3
4	Broadmoor (J. R. Johnson residence)	File 1
5	1223 Cedarview Dr., Springfield (Sherwood R. Moran residence addition)	File 1
6	1223 Cedarwood Dr., Springfield (Sherwood Moran residence addition)	File 2
7	2530 Columbus Ave. (Vining Broom Co.)	File 2
8	W. Dover Rd., Springfield (Fred Leventhal residence)	File 2
9	E. Enon Rd. (Frederick L. Swetland residence addition)	File 1
10	2150 Fountain Blvd. (Krauss)	File 1
11	2709 E. High St. (Harry Chakeres residence addition)	File 1
12	E. Main St., Springfield (Country Kitchen restaurant)	File 1
13	510 Northwood Dr. (William Greene residence)	File 2
14	Oak Knoll Dr. (Lawsen Schneider residence)	File 1
15	Pembrook Rd.? (Noel Pancake residence)	File 2
16	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition)	File 1
17	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition)	File 3
18	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School addition)	File 3
19	R. R. 1, St. Paris (Christiansburg-Jackson School)	File 2
20	220 Roseland E. (R. Ammon residence)	File 2
21	Route 40 East (Melody Drive In)	File 1
22	St. Paris Pike? (Albert C. Backert residence?)	File 1
23	Signal Hill Rd. (Charles Crabill House)	File 1

24	Tanyard Rd. (T. C. Lloyd residence)	File 2
25	Tanyard Rd. (T. C. Lloyd residence)	File 2
26	Tanyard Rd. (T. C. Lloyd)	File 1
27	Westwood Hills (Clem Beals residence)	File 2
28	S. Wittenburg Blvd., Springfield (John A. and Alice Hinton residence)	File 2
29	Woodview (William Herman Rump residence)	File 2
30	Woodview (William Herman Rump residence)	File 2
31	Youngstown (William Soltis residence)	File 3
32	Unknown Springfield address (Brickman)	File 1
33	Unknown Springfield address (Frank J. Collins office building)	File 2
34	Unknown Springfield address (Jim Harrah)	File 1
35	Unknown Springfield address (William Herman Rump residence)	File 1
36	Unknown Springfield address (Woodrow West residence)	File 2
37	Unknown Yellow Springs address (Daniels residence)	File 1
38	Unknown Yellow Springs address (Kenneth W. Hunt residence)	File 2
39	Unknown address (Chapter House)	File 3
40	Unknown address (Davidson residence)	File 2
41	Unknown address (Harry Good)	File 1
42	Unknown address (Roanoke residence)	File 1
43	Unknown address, unknown building	File 1