



William W. Biddle Papers (C4805)

Collection Number: C4805

Collection Title: William W. Biddle Papers

Dates: 1929-1972

Creator: Biddle, William Wishart, 1900-1973

Abstract: Research, publications, business papers, and educational materials of a professor and consultant in the field of community development. Biddle designed and directed the Community Dynamics program at Earlham College and later held a professorship in regional and community affairs at the University of Missouri.

Collection Size: 13.75 cubic feet, 6 oversize items, 5 oversize volumes
(381 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *William W. Biddle Papers* (C4805); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Cary Lee on May 14, 1975 (Accession No. CA3960).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the William W. Biddle Papers can be found in the following collections:

[*Arthur Hugh Denney Papers*](#), (CA4980)

Processed by: Autumn Cuddy, September 4, 2026

Historical Note:

William Wishart Biddle was born on June 19, 1900, in Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Chalmers Biddle and Margaret W. Wishart. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and philosophy from Pomona College in Claremont, California, in 1923, then moved to New York City to attend Union Theological Seminary, 1924-1926. After, Biddle received his masters and doctorate degrees in social and educational psychology from Columbia University in 1928 and 1932, respectively. He married music teacher Loureide Jeannette Cobb (1902-1996) on July 9, 1924, and had two children, Bruce (1929-2016) and Katherine (1930-2019). William Biddle died in Columbia, Missouri, on February 22, 1973.

Biddle was an education instructor at Colgate University from 1934-1935, before taking a position as head of the psychology and education department at the Milwaukee State Teachers College, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he stayed until 1944. Subsequently, he held several specialist positions, including Senior Health Specialist and Regional Chief for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, Community and Cooperative Services (1944-1947), and Director of Community Dynamics and Professor of Social Psychology at Earlham College in Indiana (1947-1960). The Community Dynamics program at Earlham College was one of the first of its kind, with Biddle recruited by University President Tom Jones specifically to design and direct its creation and operation. The purpose of the program was to improve liberal arts education, serve community need, carry on research in human relations, and contribute to educational integration.

Biddle also provided consultant services for the National Training Laboratories' Community Leadership Training Laboratory, the Health and Welfare Council of National Capital Area, and the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church between 1958 and 1960. He continued work with the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church into the 1960s, serving as Secretary of Church and Community Cooperation and as Associate Chairman in charge of Community Development for their Institute of Strategic Studies. In 1967, Biddle accepted a position as professor of regional and community affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia. His son, Bruce, was already on the University of Missouri faculty as a professor of psychology and sociology and serving as director of the Social Behavior Research Center. By Biddle's retirement in 1970, the University of Missouri was one of two universities in America with a graduate program in community development.

Dr. Biddle published several works on education and community development, including *Propaganda and Education* (1932), *The Cultivation of Community Leaders* (1953), *Growth Toward Freedom* (1957), *Community Development Process* (co-authored by Loureide J. Biddle, 1965), *Encouraging Community Development* (with Loureide, 1967), *The Development of People* (1970), a chapter entitled, "The Developmental Concept" for *Community Structure and Analysis* (1959), and countless articles.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 14 series with 8 subseries:

- Associations
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- Peace Corps
- Projects
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 - Indiana
 - Jamaica
 - Kentucky
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 - Puerto Rico
 - Washington D.C.
- Publications
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- United Presbyterian Church
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- Oversize Materials
- Oversize Volumes

Scope and Content Note:**Associations**

This series contains business materials of professional associations and organizations related to community development, sociology, volunteerism, world health, and religious and cultural backgrounds, 1950s-1960s. These organizations are those with which Dr. Biddle either maintained membership or a regular correspondence and exchange of resources.

Business Records

This series contains materials related to the entirety of Biddle's professional career, including curricula Vita rum, news clippings, publication lists, community development contacts and resources, and the papers of the Ecumenical Center for Planning and Development, 1930s-1970. Also included in this series are miscellaneous professional papers of Biddle's wife, Loureide Cobb Biddle, 1964, and two publications by Biddle's son, Bruce Jesse Biddle, 1961, 1964.

Correspondence

This series consists of letters to and from Biddle and family, friends, colleagues, students, and educational and research institutions, 1932-1972.

Department of Agriculture

This series includes materials pertaining to Biddle's work as a senior health specialist and regional chief for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Security Administration, Community and Cooperative Services (CCS), 1944-1947. Materials include publications, training materials, and statistical information on the development of rural communities and leadership training for rural clergy.

Earlham College

This series contains materials related to Biddle's tenure as director of the Community Development Program at Earlham College in Indiana, 1947-1960. Records include information on the Community Development Program and students, news clippings, contact sheets, financial records, general files, scrapbooks, and correspondence. Also included are papers regarding Loureide Biddle's work with international Earlham students in her capacity as an advisor and educator. Four scrapbooks of Earlham College's Community Development program can be found in **Oversize Volumes**.

Peace Corps

This series consists of materials pertaining to programs and operations of the Peace Corps and the Office of Economic Opportunity, 1960-1966. Materials include correspondence, publications, press, and program files. A map of Peace Corps programs offered by higher education institutions can be found in **Oversize Materials**.

Projects

This series consists of materials pertaining to community development projects undertaken across North America, including **California, Indiana, Jamaica, Kentucky, New Mexico, New York, Puerto Rico, and Washington D.C.** Project files include research maps, project logs, correspondence, news clippings, articles, staffing records, field notes, statistics, reports, and other miscellaneous records, 1949-1970. Additional maps of the California and Puerto Rico service area can be found in **Oversize Materials**.

Publications

This series consists of brochures, pamphlets, bulletins, periodicals, articles, books, resource guides, and other published materials regarding community development, propaganda, and education, 1955-1972.

Research

This series contains news clippings, publications, workshop materials, articles, outlines, and notes regarding research on community development, race relations, politics, power, war, and college student concerns, 1960s. Included in this series is a collection of flyers, brochures, newsletters, correspondence, and other material describing community development programs offered by colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and England, 1966.

United Presbyterian Church

This series contains materials related to Biddle's work in various leadership and consultation roles for the United Presbyterian Church's Board of National Missions, 1958-1967. Record types include meeting minutes, executive committee records, affiliated committees, press, photographs, outreach, financial and travel records, and correspondence.

University of Missouri

This series contains materials from Biddle's years as a professor at the University of Missouri, 1967-1970. Materials include records of the community development educational program, employment paperwork, training materials, and a selection of papers of Arthur Dunham, a fellow community development educator.

Writing

This series contains speeches, articles, books, quotations, and other material written by William W. Biddle for personal or professional use, 1929-1970. Writings primarily discuss aspects of propaganda, social psychology, community development, leadership, and education. A Braille translation of Biddle's *The Pastor as Encourager of Community Development* can be found in **Oversize Volumes**.

Oversize Materials

This series contains six maps charting community development educational program locations and the sites and service areas of community development projects in 1955 and the 1960s.

Oversize Volumes

This series contains four scrapbooks of the Community Development program at Earlham College, 1955-1960, which include press, photographs, publications, and other mementos. Also included is a braille translation of *The Pastor as Encourager of Community Development*, 1966.

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