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for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ City of Toledo, Commission on Publicity and Efficiency, 1916-1963 ◀
MSS-030

Size: 1 linear foot

Provenance: City of Toledo, Commission on Publicity and Efficiency

Access: open

Related Collections:

Processing Note:

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Completed by: Paul M. Gifford, September 1986

Finding aid revised by: Kim Brownlee, March 2004

**City of Toledo, Commission on Publicity and Efficiency
1916-1963**

Introduction

This collection, with manuscript dates from 1916 to 1963, and other material dating from 1895-1965, consists of minutes, compilations of laws, and miscellaneous items. It documents the activity of a city commission whose purpose was to research municipal operations, to make recommendations to the city council, to publish a journal, and to provide information about the city to the public. The most significant record in the collection, and likely to be the most useful to researchers, is the series of minutes.

There are no restrictions to the use of this collection.

City of Toledo, Commission on Publicity and Efficiency 1916-1963

Biographical/Historical Sketch

On May 28, 1914, Isaac Kinsey, a member of the Toledo Charter Commission, introduced a resolution calling for a "bureau of municipal research." Kinsey's bureau, consisting of five mayoral appointees serving without compensation, would investigate city departments and offices in order to determine "the efficiency or the non-efficiency with which the work of the city is being carried on." It would then make its reports available to the public.

In November 1914, the Charter of the City of Toledo was approved, and with it the Commission on Publicity and Efficiency was established. It expanded Kinsey's original proposal. The new commission would, besides investigating city departments for their efficiency in rendering public service; make semi-annual reports; make recommendations to the city council; publish reports in the city journal; acquire information pertaining to the "improvement of civic conditions;" to edit and print municipal reports and documents; and to act as an information-gathering body for the city. The Toledo City Journal was to be the official journal of record for the city, and the Commission was to be responsible for its production. The first Commissioners, appointed by Mayor Charles M. Milroy, were S.O. Richardson, Jr., Charles F. Weiler, Henry O. Shewell, Jesse D. Hurlbut, and Irving E. Macomber. The group held its first meeting in the Mayor's office on February 10, 1916, and published the first issue of the journal on February 26. Within a few years of its inception, the Commission organized a library.

According to its minutes, the Commission continued to operate in the manner required by its mandate. In September 1975, Toledo voters adopted an amendment to the city charter that effectively dissolved the Commission as of January 1, 1976, and the members met for the last time on November 20, 1975. The Commission's historical records were divided between the University of Toledo Library, Toledo Public Library, and Bowling Green University Research Center.

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Scope and Content Note

The collection of the Commission on Publicity and Efficiency includes minutes of its meetings from 1916-1963 and some scattered items produced or collected in the normal course of its activity. The important item, of course, is the series of minutes. Remaining material is both small in number and relatively insignificant in its information value. Researchers will find the minutes to be the most useful part of the collection.

The minutes not only document the regular activity of the Commission, they present material of an informational nature as well. Before publication, members presented reports on various topics for discussion. Since the content of these reports may differ from the final, published product, the research may find these discussions useful. The Toledo City Journal, of course, should be consulted for the published reports.

As implied by the Commission's name, most of its research was directed at systems analysis, services, and financing of existing or proposed city agencies. Public utilities--street railways, electric power companies, and sewage disposal--were frequently considered. Other areas of concern included building construction, street paving and construction, organization of the police department, unionization of city employees, and many other issues which need not be listed here.

Other material in this collection includes miscellaneous published items. Of some interest here is a compilation, partly in manuscript form, of city statutes regulating street railways and public utilities.

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Statement of Provenance

When the Commission on Publicity and Efficiency disbanded in 1975, a portion of its library and records were brought to the University of Toledo Library. John M. Morgan, member of the Commission and librarian at the University of Toledo, was responsible for this undertaking.

As a city agency, the minutes and publications of the Commission on Publicity and Efficiency are public records and thus are not affected by copyright laws.

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Folder List

Folder	Arrangement
	Minutes: Feb. 10, 1916-Nov. 23, 1932 Jan. 3, 1933-Dec. 7, 1959 Jan. 4, 1960-1963
1	Memoranda, 1950, 1963
2	Charter Commission-Journal, 1913-1914
3	Charter of the City of Toledo, adopted 1914, amended 1918
4	Statutes and ordinances regulating street railways and public utilities, 1895-1913
5	Laws regulating construction of buildings and installation of plumbing, 1916
6	Report on 1938 street lighting survey
7	Map
8	A brief history of Toledo
9	Scrapbook, street railway controversy, 1915-1916
10	Scrapbook, street railway controversy, Nov. 1916-Apr. 1917
11	Scrapbook, street railway controversy, May-Sept. 1917
12	Scrapbook, street railway controversy, n.d.