MONROE COUNTY HISTORY CENTER
RESEARCH LIBRARY

Guide to the Mary Ellen Farmer Collection

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Repository: Monroe County History Center
Research Library
202 East Sixth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408
Phone: 812-332-2517
URL: http://monroehistory.org/about-the-library.php
Finding aid prepared by Sean Ettinger and Nicole Bieganski, 2014

Creator: Farmer, Mary Ellen (1917-1999)
Miller, Ruth

Title: Mary Ellen Farmer Collection

Dates: 1967-1984

Quantity: 5 boxes, 37 folders, 6 scrapbooks, 1 notebook

Abstract: The Mary Ellen Farmer Collection contains personal notes, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, and correspondence regarding the controversy surrounding the Carnegie Library building in Bloomington, Indiana. Mary Ellen Farmer, a local woman invested in the debate collected ephemera and compiled copious personal notes related to the situation. The Mary Ellen Farmer collection contains this compilation of materials as well as the materials of another woman invested in saving the Library, Ruth Miller. Both women also collected materials from "The Old Library, Inc." or T.O.L.I., a precursor organization to the reformation of the Monroe County Historical Society, each of which was focused on preventing the razing of the Library building.

Identification:

Languages: English

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

PREFERRED CITATION

Mary Ellen Farmer Collection, Monroe County History Center Research Library, Boxes #, Folders #/Scrapbook # or name.

RESTRICTIONS

RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS & USE

Monroe County History Center and Research Library staff may determine use restrictions dependent on the physical condition of manuscript materials. Restrictions may exist on reproduction, quotation or publication. Contact Monroe County History Center Research Library for more information.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mary Ellen Farmer (1917-1999) was a native and lifelong resident of Bloomington, Indiana. She was born in 1917 to Earl and Opal Thornton and attended Bloomington High School and Indiana University (BA, 1939). In August 1939, Mary Ellen married Ed Farmer. The Farmers moved into a house at 529 N. College Avenue in 1952 which is now known as The Farmer House Museum. Mary Ellen and Ed ran a heating and air conditioning business before Mary Ellen became involved in city government. Once involved, Mary Ellen joined the Indiana Historical Society, served on the executive committee of the Central Business District Project Area Committee, and became a member of the Monroe County Historical Society. She is cited as one of the leading figures who helped keep the Monroe County Carnegie Library from becoming a parking lot. She died in 1999, three years after her husband's death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

ARRANGEMENT

The Mary Ellen Farmer Collection is arranged into nine series by topic or format, as follows:

OUTLINE OF SERIES ARRANGEMENT

SERIES 1: OLD LIBRARY CONTROVERSY/THE OLD LIBRARY, INC. (T.O.L.I.) — (BOX 1)
SERIES 2: HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN — (BOX 1)
SERIES 3: MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY: ORGANIZATION AND BUILDING HISTORY — (BOX 2)
SERIES 4: MARY ELLEN FARMER – PERSONAL PAPERS — (BOX 2)
SERIES 5: HISTORICAL PRESERVATION – GENERAL — (BOX 2)
SERIES 6: RUTH MILLER MATERIALS — (BOX 3)
SERIES 7: CITY OF BLOOMINGTON – GENERAL — (BOX 3)
SERIES 8: MARY ELLEN FARMER SCRAPBOOKS — (BOX 4)
SERIES 9: OVERSIZE FLAT NEWSPAPER STORAGE — (BOX 5)

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES 1: OLD LIBRARY CONTROVERSY/THE OLD LIBRARY, INC. (T.O.L.I.): Collection of newspaper clippings, T.O.L.I documents and newsletters, and government/local correspondence related to the controversial 1970s debate in Bloomington about whether or not to raze the Monroe County Carnegie Library Building (The Old Library) to create a parking lot. Collected by Mary Ellen Farmer. *See also* Ruth Miller T.O.L.I. materials in Series 6. (12 folders)

SERIES 2: HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Newspaper articles, correspondence, surveys, and reports related to HUD's involvement with The Old Library controversy. Mary Ellen Farmer served on the Central Business District (CBD) Project Area Committee (PAC). (4 folders)

SERIES 3: MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY – ORGANIZATION AND BUILDING HISTORY: Newspaper articles about the Monroe County Historical Society's reorganization plans in the 1970s-1980s, Carnegie Library building renovations. Also contains Historical Society newsletters and event information. All collected by Mary Ellen Farmer. (4 folders)

SERIES 4: MARY ELLEN FARMER PERSONAL PAPERS: A collection of Mary Ellen Farmer's personal notes and correspondence related to the Old Library controversy. (3 folders)

SERIES 5: HISTORIC PRESERVATION – GENERAL: General historic preservation guidelines, National Register guidelines, and Bloomington Restorations, Inc. materials collected by Mary Ellen Farmer. (2 folders)

SERIES 6: RUTH MILLER MATERIALS: Ruth Miller, a T.O.L.I. founding member and friend of Mary Ellen Farmer collected or created the items in this series, including: Carnegie Library building maintenance information, Ruth Miller's personal correspondence and notes, T.O.L.I. meeting and membership documents. *See also* Mary Ellen Farmer collection of T.O.L.I materials in Series 1. (7 folders)

SERIES 7: CITY OF BLOOMINGTON – GENERAL: Documents and newspaper articles related to Bloomington arts groups and councils, city event calendars, city council information, and notes about the Monroe County Public Library's oral history program. (3 folders)

SERIES 8: MARY ELLEN FARMER SCRAPBOOKS: 6 scrapbooks compiled by Mary Ellen Farmer and containing newspaper articles, notes, letter, and ephemera related to the Old Library controversy. Mary Ellen created a guide to the scrapbooks that is also housed within this series. (6 scrapbooks, 1 notebook, 2 folders)

SERIES 9: OVERSIZE FLAT NEWSPAPER STORAGE: Contains 5 newspaper excerpts or full papers related to the Old Library controversy and Housing and Urban development's role in the issue.

ALTERNATE FORMS AVAILABLE

View selections from the collection in digital format at:

Content of this collection are not available in this format at this time.

ACQUISITION INFO

Materials collected by Mary Ellen Farmer. Donated to the Monroe County Historical Society by Mary Ellen Farmer in 1998.

PREFERRED CITATION

Mary Ellen Farmer Collection, Monroe County History Center Research Library, Boxes #, Folders #/Scrapbook #.

PROCESSING INFO

Processed by Sean Ettinger and Nicole Bieganski, 2014.

RELATED MATERIAL

FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS ABOUT MARY ELLEN FARMER, PLEASE SEARCH THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORY CENTER'S CATALOG AT:

http://monroehistory.pastperfect-online.com/30572cgi/mweb.exe?request=ks

Vertical Files:

http://monroehistory.org/sg_userfiles/Vertical_File_Index_1.pdf:
Buildings – Farmer House
Monroe County Museum – T.O.L.I.
Monroe County Libraries – Carnegie Library: *"The Old Library" Debate: How Bloomington Preserved its Historic Carnegie Library*

INVENTORY

BOX 1 – 16 folders
BOX 2 – 9 folders
BOX 3 – 10 folders
BOX 4 – 6 scrapbooks, 1 notebook, 2 folders
BOX 5 – 5 newspapers

SUBJECT TERMS

PERSONAL NAMES: Bayh, Birch, 1928-; Mary Ellen Farmer, 1917-1999; Fulton, Daniel; McCloskey, Frank; Miller, Ruth, 1918-1998; Roberts, Warren E. (Warren Everett), 1924-1999; Tone, Bruce J.

ORGANIZATIONS: Bloomington Restorations, Inc.; Central Business District Project Action Committee; Housing and Urban Development Monroe County History Center (Ind.); Monroe County Historical Society (Ind.); Neighborhood Development Program; The Old Library, Inc. (Ind.); United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: Bloomington (Ind.); Monroe County (Ind.)

SUBJECTS: Carnegie libraries; Correspondence; Historic preservation; Local government; Local history; Newspapers; Museums; Women

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BOX / FOLDER LIST

BOX 1

Series 1: Old Library Controversy/The Old Library, Inc. (T.O.L.I)

Folder 1: Old Library Controversy Articles
Folder 2: T.O.L.I. -- General
Folder 3: T.O.L.I. Lease Proposal
Folder 4: T.O.L.I. Meeting Minutes

Folder 5: T.O.L.I Newsletters
Folder 6: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1972 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 7: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1973 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 8: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1974 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 9: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1975 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 10: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1976 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 11: Library Controversy Correspondence: 1977 (Various authors/recipients)
Folder 12: Letters to the Editor

Series 2: Housing and Urban Development – Central Business District and Neighborhood Development Plan

Folder 13: City Redevelopment/HUD/Neighborhood Development Newspaper Articles: 1972-1973
Folder 14: Central Business District Study Reports
Folder 15: Legal Documents and Notes
Folder 16: HUD/Neighborhood Development Miscellaneous

BOX 2

Series 3: Monroe County Historical Society – Organization and Building History

Folder 1: Monroe County Historical Society – Organization and Building History
Folder 2: Old Library Building Proposals and Reports
Folder 3: Vacant Old Library Photos by Oscar F. Curtis
Folder 4: Carnegie Library Building (Old Library) History and Renovations

Series 4: Mary Ellen Farmer

Folder 5: Mary Ellen Farmer – Correspondence
Folder 6: Mary Ellen Farmer – Personal Notes
Folder 7: Mary Ellen Farmer – Miscellaneous

Series 5: Historic Preservation – General

Folder 8: Historic Preservation Guidelines and Articles
Folder 9: Bloomington Restorations, Inc. Newsletters

BOX 3

Series 6: Ruth Miller

Folder 1: Ruth Miller-collected Carnegie Library (Old Library) Building Information
Folder 2: Ruth Miller – Correspondence
Folder 3: Ruth Miller – Personal Notes
Folder 4: Ruth Miller – List of T.O.L.I. Board Members
Folder 5: Ruth Miller-collected T.O.L.I. Financial Information
Folder 6: Ruth Miller-collected T.O.L.I. Meetings Information
Folder 7: Ruth Miller-collected T.O.L.I. Room Rental Information

Series 7: City of Bloomington – General

Folder 8: Bloomington Arts and Events Calendars

Folder 9: City Council Articles
Folder 10: Monroe County Public Library (MCPL)

BOX 4

Series 8: Scrapbooks

Folder 1: Farmer Scrapbook Inventory
Folder 2: Photocopied Newspaper Articles
Scrapbook 1: Newspaper Articles 1967-1975
Scrapbook 2: Newspaper Articles 1967-1977
Scrapbook 3: Letters to the Editor
Scrapbook 4: The Old Library, Inc. Donors
Scrapbook 5: Papers and Letters Concerning the Old Library Building
Scrapbook 6: The Old Library "Summaries"
Notebook 1: T.O.L.I. Buildings and Grounds

BOX 5

Series 9: Oversize Flat Newspaper Storage

5 Newspapers: Newspapers related to Old Library Controversy and HUD