

CRANBROOK

ARCHIVES

**Cranbrook Foundation
Records of Executive Secretary:
William Alley Frayer (ca 1880-1946)**

1935-1938
.50 linear feet

Accession Number: 1980-04

Acquisition: The collection was transferred to the Archives Oct 1980 from the office of Henry S. Booth.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.

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Preferred Citation: Cranbrook Foundation Records of Executive Secretary: William Alley Frayer, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Index: See end of finding aid.

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History

William Alley Frayer was born in Nunda, New York and attended high schools in Nunda and Springville. He received his A.B. degree from Cornell University (1899-1903) in 1903, and also attended the University of Gottingen and the University of Freiburg. For a time he was an assistant in history and held the Andrew D. White Fellowship at Cornell University.

Frayer joined the University of Michigan faculty as an Instructor in European History in 1909, and three years later was advanced to Assistant Professor. He became an Associate in 1918, and full Professor in 1924. In 1929, Frayer resigned from the faculty to become President of the Bureau of University Travel at Newton, Massachusetts.

Beginning in 1927, the Cranbrook Foundation was administered by an office staff working under the authority of a Board of Trustees. In the spring of 1935, the Board considered hiring Frayer as the general representative of the Cranbrook community. The office of Executive Secretary of the Foundation was created and Frayer began work July first. Frayer worked closely with chairman George Booth daily discussing matters of general Cranbrook concern. Specific projects included the promotional contract of Tamblyn and Tamblyn, for which Frayer played a central role, as well as spearheading discussions between the various institutions regarding creation of a Central Office. By June 1938, Booth and Frayer came to an agreement that Frayer would retire and close the office of Executive Secretary on 1 Jul 1938.

Upon retirement, he returned to Ann Arbor and died 29 Jun 1946 at the University of Michigan Hospital after many years of ill health. He was survived by his wife, two daughters, and a son, William C. who graduated from Cranbrook in 1945.

Scope and Content

The collection deals with the correspondence, reports and meetings concerning inter-institutional cooperation and coordination of activities, as well as public relations of the office of Executive Secretary. It is not known whether these are the complete records of William A. Frayer. Some of the records deal with proposed organizational changes and development, Foundation philosophy and maintenance concerns. The bulk of the Tamblyn and Tamblyn materials were removed to the Cranbrook Foundation Records though much of the correspondence relates to the promotion of Cranbrook. The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereunder.

Related Collections

- Cranbrook Foundation Records (1981-05)
- Lee A White Papers (1979-02)
- George Gough Booth Papers (1981-01)

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4. Booth, George Gough, 1935-1937
5. *Cranbrook News Bulletin*, 1936-1938
6. "D" correspondence, 1936-1937
7. Detroit Convention and Tourist Bureau, 1936-1938
8. "E-F" correspondence, 1937-1938
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10. "G-H" correspondence, 1935-1938
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14. "K-L" correspondence, 1935-1936
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17. Medical Service, 1935-1936
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22. "O-P" correspondence, 1935-1937
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