

A Guide to the J. Russell Bailey, Records, 1935-1986

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1935-1986

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Descriptive Summary

Accession Number

38513

Language

English

Creator

J. Russell Bailey

Physical Characteristics

5.7 cu. ft.

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Barbara B. McBride, Northfield, IL, 9 October 2001.

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Biographical Information

J. Russell Bailey (1905-1998) was born in Southampton, New York, on October 19, 1905. He studied architecture at the University of Michigan and at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. At Cranbrook, the young architect studied in the first class taught by architect Eliel Saarinen. Bailey's designs for the development of Mantauk Point, Long Island, New York, from that time period were published in the *Architectural Record* in 1933. Needing to associate himself with a more established architect because of the on-going economic depression, Bailey joined the firm of Arthur H. Newman from 1933 until just prior to World War II. It was at that time that he joined the Architectural Section of the United States Coast Guard. There, he first ventured into library design with his work on the United States Coast Guard Library in New London, Connecticut.

After military service, Bailey was asked to join manufacturer and architect Angus Snead McDonald in a venture that included designing library buildings. McDonald was head of the well-known Snead and Company firm which manufactured multi-tiered bookshelves for libraries around the world. Modular designs for library buildings were coming into vogue and McDonald and his company had a great impact on their use. In 1946, Bailey resigned from Snead and Company to form his own practice in Orange, Virginia.

Under McDonald's supervision, Bailey had become proponent of modular design in library planning. Throughout his career, he consulted on or designed a significant number of university, college, private, and public library buildings utilizing this design theory. J. Russell Bailey's commissions include Yale University, University of Virginia, University of Maryland, Medical College of Virginia, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Beloit College, and University of Georgia, to mention a few. As his office became more prolific, Bailey took on a partner, Judson M. Gardner, and the firm became known as Bailey and Gardner, Architects. Eventually, the firm was renamed Bailey Gardner and Gillum Architects.

J. Russell Bailey died at his home in Orange, Virginia, on May 28, 1998, at the age of 92.

Scope and Content

This accession consists of the surviving office and project files of J. Russell Bailey, principal in the architectural firm of Bailey and Gardner and well-known library building designer. The collection includes correspondence, memoranda, clippings, photographs, facsimiles, drawings, sketches, and renderings. Series have been designated for Office Records and Project Records. All project-specific materials are included in Series II: Project Records. All general materials, such as clippings not related to a specific project, are housed in Series I: Office Files. This arrangement was imposed by the records' creator(s) and maintained by the processing archivist.

Series I: Office Files, 1935-1986, contains mainly general correspondence, publicity materials, and writings and speeches by J. Russell Bailey. Biographical data on Bailey can also be found in this series.

Series II: Project Files, 1938-1981, consists of project-specific correspondence, publicity and construction photographs, publications, drawings, renderings, sketches, notes, and memoranda. The projects are arranged alphabetically by name. No differentiation has been made between the architect's consulting projects and those in which he was sole or collaborative designer.

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