



ArchivesSpace

Clifford Berryman Cartoon CollectionP008

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Stage

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Summary Information

Repository:	Stage
Title:	Clifford Berryman Cartoon Collection
ID:	P008
Date [inclusive]:	1900-1948
Physical Description:	5 Linear feet
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

Clifford Kennedy Berryman was an editorial cartoonist at the Washington Evening Star. He was born in Versailles, Kentucky,[1] on April 2, 1867 to James T. and Sallie C. Berryman, the tenth of 11 children. The family was descended from English and Scottish immigrants to Virginia before 1726. Berryman attended Professor Henry's School for Boys in Versailles and graduated in 1886. He never attended art school and was entirely self-taught in the art of cartooning. His natural talent may have been inherited from his father, a planter and merchant, who would often draw sketches of the family's neighbors. When he was 13, Berryman drew a sketch of his idol, Rep. (later Sen.) C. S. Blackburn of Kentucky. Several years later, Blackburn happened to see the drawing displayed in Berryman's uncle's office, and he was so impressed that he sponsored the young man to come to Washington, procuring him a job as a draftsman at the United States Patent Office. Berryman arrived in D.C. in 1886 and put his talents to use on the job, where he added freehand drawings to illustrate and clarify the pictures accompanying applications for patents. From 1891 to 1896, he also worked as a general illustrator. During this time, he learned how to draw political cartoons by studying contemporary cartoons in Punch and Puck and copying the cartoonists' styles. Throughout his career, Berryman worked solely in the medium of pen and ink. On July 5, 1893, Berryman married Kate G. Durfee, a D.C. schoolteacher. The couple had three children, two of whom survived infancy. Later, his son James followed in his footsteps, joining him as a staff cartoonist at the Star, while his daughter Florence became the Star's art critic. Berryman sold his first series of drawings to the Washington Post in 1889 for \$25, which was nearly his whole month's salary at the Patent Office. In 1896, he joined the Post staff full-time as a political cartoonist, acting as understudy to editorial cartoonist George Y. Coffin. However, Coffin died less than a year later, leaving Berryman to inherit the position. He quickly honed his craft, drawing cartoons with direct, clear messages and caricatures that captured individuals' likenesses and personalities. On Feb. 1, 1907, Berryman moved to the Evening Star, where as chief cartoonist he drew a cartoon every day until 1935, when he underwent a serious operation and subsequently reduced his workload from seven to three

cartoons a week. Berryman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1944 for his Aug. 28, 1943 cartoon entitled "But Where is the Boat Going?," which criticized unorganized manpower mobilization efforts during World War II. He also illustrated nearly 40 books during his career, and was the first cartoonist to be accepted into the Gridiron Club. Berryman's most famous creation was the "Berryman Bear," a small, fuzzy bear cub that was the inspiration for the toy teddy bear. He first drew the bear in a Washington Post cartoon, inspired by an incident in which President Theodore Roosevelt refused to shoot a defenseless bear cub at the end of an otherwise fruitless bear hunt. The story became a legend and secured Roosevelt a reputation for fair play and compassion. Berryman depicted the event in a cartoon entitled "Drawing the Line in Mississippi" (Nov. 21, 1902) and the public instantly embraced his depiction of the little bear and clamored for further appearances. Thereafter, whenever Berryman drew Roosevelt, the bear also appeared; after Roosevelt left office, the bear became the companion of Uncle Sam, representing the entire country. The popularity of the Berryman Bear led toy manufacturers to produce the first teddy bear stuffed animals for children, which became the most popular toy in the country. Berryman did not seek any commercial profit from the adaptation of his creation, and was reportedly simply grateful for the happiness it brought to children. Berryman's remarkably long career spanned the tenures of presidents Benjamin Harrison to Harry S. Truman. In his capacity as a prominent Washington cartoonist, Berryman became very well known in political circles and cultivated friendships with many politicians. He received letters of appreciation from every president from Theodore Roosevelt, who complimented him on his "real artist's ability to combine great cleverness and keen thoughtfulness with entire freedom from malice," to Truman. Berryman is recalled as a genuinely kind and generous person, who was able to satirize and criticize in a gentle way that was often more effective in affecting the public figures depicted in his cartoons. It is said that no subject ever complained of unfair treatment, and many were actually flattered enough just to appear in a Berryman cartoon that they asked for the original. Berryman never commercialized his art and frequently gave away originals to anyone who wanted them. Berryman collapsed on his way to work at the Star on Nov. 17, 1949, and died less than a month later on Dec. 11, 1949. He was 80 years old and had been a cartoonist for 53 years.

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Scope and Contents

The Clifford Berryman Cartoon Collection contains 108 political cartoons drawn for publication in the Washington Evening Star from approximately 1900 to 1948. Drawn in pen and ink on poster board, the majority of these oversized cartoons measure either 13.5" x 14.25" or 18" x 15.75". In general, the subjects of the cartoons pertain to local District of Columbia issues as opposed to national news. The cartoons address community issues, congressional appropriation and District finances, holidays and events, politics, District political representation, weather and nature, and World Wars I and II. The collection also contains a handful of miscellaneous Berryman drawings, cards, and caricatures. A brief description of each cartoon is provided with the box inventory at the end of the finding aid. Recurring characters in Berryman's cartoons include: 1. "D.C.," a character resembling Benjamin Franklin who represents the people of the District of Columbia; 2. Uncle Sam, representing the country as a whole; 3. the Berryman bear, a small, furry bear cub figure that appears with either President Theodore Roosevelt or Uncle Sam, usually to depict an emotional response to the situation occurring in the cartoon, or to

stand for Berryman's own views on the matter; 4. and the Squash Center farmers, a group of men that provide various comments and opinions on news.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Stage

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Clifford Berryman's daughter, Florence Berryman, most likely donated the cartoons sometime after his death, possibly in the early 1950s. However, the file on this collection does not document the details of this accession.

Processing Information

Processing procedures consisted of analyzing the images, sorting them into series according to subject, describing them, performing research to verify dates, and constructing Mylar sleeves. Each cartoon is described by: a unique ID assigned by the archives, representing its series and its position within the series, on the top right corner of each cartoon; an original number, which usually appears on the back lower left corner; a date, either from the cartoon itself, discovered through research, or an approximated circa date; a caption if given or discovered; and a brief description of the content of the cartoon in terms of characters, dialogue, and topics. Although the collection is not well documented, there is evidence of some prior archival work. Almost every cartoon is labeled in pencil with a unique number in the back lower left corner, and dates have been written in pencil on the front under Berryman's signature. It is unknown who added this information, and whether the original numbering system had any meaning; the processing archivist was unable to determine any pattern to the numbers. These "original numbers" are not believed to be from either Berryman or the Star staff, and were probably added around the time the cartoons were received by the archives. Likewise, it is unknown how the dates provided (usually circa dates or date spans) were chosen. Some seem to be very vague guesses, and a few of the specific ones have been determined to be wrong. It is possible that the writer had knowledge of Berryman's evolving style and thus could approximate dates for some cartoons. However, again, the processing archivist was unable to determine this for sure. Within each series, the cartoons are arranged chronologically with undated ones at the end of the series according to original number. The processing archivist tried to determine publication dates for cartoons whenever this was possible, based on the cartoon's subject and content. Dates appearing in [square brackets] are supplied by the processing archivist; those appearing in {curly brackets} were originally penciled in by an unknown person and have not been verified. If a full date is given without brackets, Berryman wrote it on the cartoon himself. If a full date is given in [square brackets], it has been verified by locating the cartoon as actually published in the Star. Circa dates in [square brackets] designate a guess to the best of the archivist's ability, and have been inserted into the chronological run with cartoons with

verified dates. Cartoons possessing original, unverified dates in {curly brackets} have been treated as undated, and are interfiled with the undated cartoons according to original number at the end of each series. Captions sometimes appear on the cartoons in either pen or pencil. Those cartoons without a designated caption either were published without one, or the caption was not noted on the original cartoon. Descriptions of the cartoons were written by the processing archivist. Any other additional information and notes provided by the archivist appear in [square brackets]. Each cartoon was placed in a Mylar sleeve.

Conditions Governing Use

There are no restrictions on viewing this collection. Reproductions should appear with the proper attribution indicating that the cartoon is housed in the Clifford Berryman Cartoon Collection. Citations should also indicate that the image appears "courtesy of Washingtoniana, DC Public Library."

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Related Materials

Related Materials

At the D.C. Community Archives: Biography vertical file: Berryman, Clifford K. Washington Evening Star photo collection Washington Evening Star clipping file Washington Evening Star Papers Outside the D.C. Community Archives: Unfortunately, the bulk of Berryman's cartoons and personal papers are scattered throughout many different repositories. This is in part due to the massive number of cartoons as well as Berryman's willingness to give away his originals to whoever asked first. His work reportedly is held in collections at: Library of Congress (personal manuscript collection and bulk of cartoons) National Archives and Records Administration: Senate papers George Washington University American University University of Texas: John N. Garner Cartoons (approx. 150 cartoons) College of Idaho: Senator William E. Borah collection (approx. 100 cartoons) British Museum Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery Franklin D. Roosevelt Library University of Missouri New York Public Library Folger Shakespeare Library United States Supreme Court National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Tudor Place Historic House and Gardens

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Collection Inventory

Series 1: Community Issues, 1900-1946

Scope and Contents

Cartoons in this series relate specifically to issues affecting residents of the District. Concerns include crowded schools, high rent, litter, noise and pollution. A few cartoons address the growing population in D.C. Others deal with sports and recreation. Berryman also exercised his editorial role by drawing cartoons that served as public service announcements, such as ones encouraging participation in Community Chest campaigns, reminding citizens not to harm the dogwood trees, or calling for traffic safety and curfews.

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Series 2: Congressional Appropriations and District Finances, 1929-1940

Scope and Contents

Cartoons here deal with a broad array of District financial issues, including Congressional appropriations, budget, spending, taxes, and a general lack of funds. Also included are cartoons reminding citizens of approaching tax deadlines. Many of these cartoons have overtones of Berryman's recurring theme of "taxation without representation" (see also Series 5: Representation).

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Series 3: Holidays and Events, 1908-1942

Scope and Contents

The bulk of the cartoons here show scenes relating to holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Others address important days such as Inauguration and Teacher Appreciation Day, or prominent events in the city such as conferences and meetings. While there is one cartoon in this series relating to the Fourth of July, many more about this holiday as well as Flag Day can be found in Series 5: Representation, because Berryman often used these events as an opportunity to criticize the District's lack of representation.

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Series 4: Politics, 1909-1938

Scope and Contents

Cartoons in this series discuss political figures, events, and controversies in a general manner. This collection does not contain many cartoons that comment on national politics. However, since D.C. is the seat of government, there was always plenty of political news in the city, so there are number of drawings relating to the president and Congress generally. Most cartoons here deal with politics directly relating to the District government, such as ones commenting on the performance of the District commissioners, or the actions of Congressmen on the District committees.

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Series 5: Representation, 1929-1947

Scope and Contents

These cartoons address the need for political representation for the District of Columbia. Berryman was a vocal proponent of full political rights for the District, and often lamented unfair conditions that required Washingtonians to pay taxes but denied them voting rights. The theme of "taxation without representation" appears frequently, often depicted as a ball-and-chain burden on his "D.C." character. Berryman often used occasions of national holidays to comment on lack of representation; see also: Series 3: Holidays and Events. Here, the Fourth of July, Flag Day, Election Day, and the anniversary of the Boston Tea Party were days when Berryman called for representation for the District. Cartoons also comment on the political developments and progress in the campaign to gain representation.

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Series 6: Weather and Nature, 1915-1917

Scope and Contents

These cartoons mainly comment on the weather in the District and the changing of the seasons. Berryman often laments the frigid winter, windy spring, and sweltering summer. One of his recurring characters here is a young girl depicting Spring, wearing a large hat covered in flowers. A few cartoons also relate problems of nature in the city, such as flies and starlings.

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Series 7: World War I, 1917-1919

Scope and Contents

Cartoons here depict issues affecting District residents during the first World War, such as fundraising campaigns for government bonds, food shortages, and the return of war heroes.

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Series 8: World War II, 1940-1945

Scope and Contents

This series contains a few cartoons specifically about World War II, which discuss the draft, war loans, and political conferences.

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Series 9: Artwork, 1934-1948

Scope and Contents

This series collects the handful of items in the collection that are not full-sized political cartoons from the Star. It contains Christmas cards, an invitation, a sketch, and printed caricatures, all drawn by Berryman.

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