



Harry Edward Berndt Papers (S0851)

Collection Number: S0851

Collection Title: Harry Edward Berndt Papers

Dates: 1943-2015

Creator: Berndt, Harry Edward

Abstract: The papers of Harry Edward Berndt (1926-), a former sociology professor at St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley, and executive director of Metro Housing Resources, a housing advocacy agency for low-income and minority individuals. The materials consist of correspondence, research articles, essays, and working and subject files, documenting his research interests in urban sociology, intercultural and interracial relations, and organizational analysis. Other items of interest include drafts and correspondence of his books *New Rules in the Ghetto: Community Development and Urban Poverty* (1977) and *Only a Priest* (2010), a biography of Monsignor John Alexander Shocklee, a civil rights and labor activist.

Collection Size: 8 cubic feet
(183 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but is stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Harry Edward Berndt Papers* (S0851); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Harry Edward Berndt on December 11, 2008 (Accession No. SA3830). An addition was made on October 5, 2010, by Harry Edward Berndt (Accession No. SA3917). An addition was made on December 13, 2017 by Harry Edward Berndt (Accession No. SA4331).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Harry Edward Berndt Papers can be found in the following collections:

Metro Housing Resources (S0772)

Processed by: Processed by Kenn Thomas, February 7, 2018

Biographical Note:

Harry Edward Berndt was born on June 9, 1926, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kent State University in 1951. Berndt worked as an industrial engineer and factory manager for the next fifteen years, eventually becoming a senior management analyst for the Monsanto Corporation in 1966. During his tenure at Monsanto, Berndt was in charge of preparing all systems and procedures for the firm's AstroTurf Enterprise. He subsequently developed a "for profit" joint effort between Monsanto and the Union Sarah Economic Development Corporation to manufacture and sell products made from off quality and obsolete AstroTurf for inner city residents of North St. Louis. After Monsanto's Board of Directors rejected the plan, Berndt left Monsanto in 1970, believing the company had shirked their corporate responsibility to help the underprivileged.

After leaving Monsanto, Berndt accepted a four-year scholarship from Washington University, St. Louis, where he earned a Master's degree in sociology in 1972 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1975. Berndt remained involved in urban problems, writing his dissertation on community development corporations as a response to poverty. During this period of his career, Berndt also served as director of research and venture formation for the Union-Sarah Community Development Corporation from 1971 to 1976, where he coordinated new venture start-ups, including drafting business plans and maintaining relationships with new ventures until they were self-sufficient. Berndt subsequently became the executive director of Metro Housing Resources (MHR), an organization that advocated for fair-housing options for all metro St. Louis residents. Under Berndt's leadership, MHR monitored St. Louis City and County's housing policies, ultimately submitting several administrative complaints against St. Louis County for failing its duty to provide fair housing for low-income residents.

In 1982, Harry Berndt closed MHR, citing the Reagan administration's lack of support for fair housing. Berndt spent the remainder of his career as an adjunct sociology professor at the Florissant Valley and Meramec branches of St. Louis Community College, where he continued his research interests in community development, urban sociology, intercultural and interracial relations, and organizational analysis. Berndt continues to write poetry, essays, and books, including *New Rules in the Ghetto: Community Development and Urban Poverty* and *Only a Priest* (2010), a biography of civil rights and labor activist Monsignor John Alexander Shocklee.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into 7 series:

Biographical Material
Publications and Writings
Correspondence
Monsanto AstroTurf Dispute

Teaching
Subject Files
Newspaper Clippings

Scope and Content Note:

Biographical Material

This series contains materials related to Harry Berndt's life and achievements, including Berndt's resumes detailing his experiences in corporate management and community development; letters of recommendation written by colleagues citing Berndt's skills in management and interpersonal skills as they pertained to the community development corporations; and his Washington University transcripts. Other materials of interest include a transcript of an oral history interview State Historical Society of Missouri archivist Kenn Thomas conducted with Berndt on August 20, 2008, as well as a 1918 patent for a blowpipe carrier held by Berndt's grandfather, George Nevergold. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Publications and Writings

This series contains articles, essays, and letters-to-the-editor Harry Berndt authored during his life as a student at Kent State University and Washington University, as the executive director of Metro Housing Resources, and as an adjunct sociology professor at St. Louis Community College. Materials of interest include Harry Berndt's dissertation, "Community Development Corporation as a Response to Poverty," as well as an Introduction to Sociology manuscript Berndt wrote for his sociology classes. The Publications and Writings series also includes Berndt's *Only a Priest* manuscript, including correspondence related to his research and publication of the book. One folder of undated poetry written by Berndt comprises the rest of this series. The series is arranged alphabetically.

Correspondence

This series consists of correspondence sent and received by Harry Berndt from 1960 to 2016, relating to his proposed AstroTurf project between Monsanto and the Sarah-Union Economic Development Corporation; open housing for minorities in St. Louis City and County; the Vietnam War and conscientious objectors; American intervention in El Salvador; and Berndt's opposition to the Bush Administration. Correspondents include Key Drey, Ann Manganaro, Monsignor John Shocklee, and Richard Gephardt. This series is arranged chronologically.

Monsanto AstroTurf Dispute

This series holds correspondence, slide presentations, and supply inventories regarding Berndt's proposal for Monsanto and the Sarah-Union Development Corporation to form a "for-profit" partnership to manufacture and sell products from off quality and obsolete AstroTurf products to North St. Louis residents. Materials of interest include two folders of correspondence sent to and from Harry Berndt regarding Monsanto's rejection of the partnership with Sarah-Union, as well as Berndt's efforts to involve Monsanto in the St. Louis Inner City Tennis Program. The Monsanto and AstroTurf Dispute series also contains Harry Berndt's business plan for the Sarah-Union partnership and includes sections on marketing, manufacturing, and employment, as well as a startup plan for the venture. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Sociology Coursework and Teaching

This series contains class notes, sociology research articles, and transparencies used by Harry Berndt as a master's student and doctoral candidate at Washington University, and as an instructor of sociology. The Sociology Class folders contain Berndt's classroom notes, as well as essays Berndt wrote on social deviance, social problems and social policy, and social psychology. The largest portion of this series consists of sociology papers Berndt used to supplement his research and teaching, as well as ungraded papers students submitted to Berndt. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Working and Subject Files

This series consists of research materials collected by Harry Berndt to supplement his writing on housing and race in St. Louis City and County and Monsignor John Shocklee, as well as the American Health Care System, the War on Terror, and Gun Control. Some of the folders in these files contain correspondence sent to and received by Harry Berndt about the topics covered in the folder. Materials of interest include a transcript of a conversation Berndt had with Kay Drey over their disagreements over integration management and publications produced by the Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council entitled *Fulfilling the Dream*, documenting integration efforts in St. Louis City Schools. The series also contains several folders on Metro Housing Resources, including an analysis Berndt wrote on the effectiveness of the agency. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Newspaper Clippings

This series contains news clippings collected by Berndt on a wide range of topics including urban housing, integration, prisons, and welfare reform from 1966 to 1987. The Newspaper Clippings series is arranged chronologically.

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