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## **Guide to the**

### **ESTHER HURWITZ PAPERS**

**1890s-1980s**

**2 linear ft.**

**Collection Number: 35**

**Prepared by Kevin Kendro**

**May 2003**

**CITATION: Esther Hurwitz Papers, Collection 35, Box number, Folder number, Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.**

### **Biographical Sketch**

Esther Weaver was born in 1902 and moved with her family to Dallas County as a young child. She attended school in Dallas and went to business college while working as a secretary for a Dallas law firm.

In 1919, she married Ben Hurwitz, a successful Dallas builder. The couple lived in Dallas for a number of years, then moved to their country home located off Irving Heights Drive, near Irving, in 1929.

Esther spent the next several decades deeply involved in the civic improvement and social life of the city of Irving. Her efforts began by having an abandoned switch engine removed from a vacant lot. The Hurwitzes donated land for the improvement of roads in what today is eastern Irving. She was also instrumental in obtaining bus service for the city.

Hurwitz co-founded the Irving Felicity Club, a women's club for community welfare, in the early 1930s. Among many other activities, she was co-founder of the Dallas County Library System, the Business and Professional Women's Club of Irving, the Irving Presidents' Council, and the Irving Improvement League.

She founded the Irving Public Library as part of the Dallas County Library System in 1941. Mrs. Hurwitz served as librarian of the Irving Public Library for twenty-one years, until the city opened a municipal library in 1962.

Late in her life, Esther Hurwitz moved to Dallas and helped re-establish a library in the town of Balch Springs.

Esther Hurwitz died on August 8, 1976.

### **Historical Sketch**

Esther Hurwitz opened the first public library in Irving on May 5, 1941, in a corner of a furniture store. The Irving Public Library was part of the Dallas County Library system. The county library system worked to open libraries in the small communities throughout Dallas County.

Mrs. Hurwitz opened the Irving Public Library with a stipend of \$25 from the county. After about a year in the furniture store, the library moved into rented quarters at 113 E. First Street. The library operated at this location from 1942 until 1951.

In 1951, money from the library building fund was used to purchase a five-room house and to move the house onto library property along Main Street. The converted house served as the city's library throughout the decade of the 1950s.

As the population of the city soared during the 1950s, city leaders discussed creating a municipal library. The plans came to fruition on February 24, 1962, when the city opened a municipal library at 915 N. O'Connor Road. The books and other property of the Irving Public Library were transferred to the new municipal library.

### **Series Description**

The Esther Hurwitz Papers are arranged in eight series:

Series I. Correspondence, 1930s-1970s, (bulk 1930s-1950s). .1 linear ft. (2 file folders). Arranged chronologically. Letters to and from Esther Hurwitz regarding the Irving library and other projects with which she was involved.

Series II. Financial Records of the Irving Public Library, 1941-1962. .2 linear ft. (6 file folders). Arranged chronologically by type. Annual financial reports, bank statements, canceled checks, receipts, contributions, acquisitions, expenditures, and wages paid.

Series III. Library Records, 1941-1962. .4 linear ft. (10 file folders). Arranged chronologically by type. Statistical reports, records of fines and rentals, public relations, library cards issued, vital records, and record of county-loaned books.

Series IV. Minutes, 1941-1967 (bulk 1940s-1950s). .1 linear ft. (2 file folders). Arranged chronologically. Incomplete minutes of the Board of the Irving Public Library Association. Incomplete minutes of the Irving Public Library Association.

Series V. Club Yearbooks and Non-Library Related Material, 1890s-1960s. .2 linear ft. (2 file folders). Yearbooks from various clubs formed by Esther Hurwitz, 1950s. Various publications, fliers, invitations, letterhead, and copies of Texas independence documents.

Series VI. Photographs, 1930s-1950s .1 linear ft. (1 file folder). Five photographs of Esther Hurwitz and library subjects.

Series VII. Newspapers and Newspaper Clippings, 1930s-1970s. .3 linear ft. (6 file folders) The folders are arranged by decade, and the articles within each folder are arranged chronologically.

Series VIII. Scrapbooks, 1930s-1970. 1 linear ft.  
Scrapbooks relating to Mrs. Hurwitz and her activities, the city operated library, and the Felicity Club.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Esther Hurwitz Papers, consisting of eight series, are contained in three manuscript boxes, two scrapbook boxes, and one newspaper box.

Series I consists of correspondence to and from Esther Hurwitz concerning fund-raising, requests for and acknowledgements of assistance, and letters of congratulations. The topics predominantly addressed are the Irving Public Library, the Community Clubhouse, and Mrs. Hurwitz's nomination as "most outstanding woman in Irving," 1950.

Series II is made up of the financial records of the library such as annual financial reports, records of contributions, canceled checks, and receipts.

Series III consists of the operational records of the library such as statistical reports, records of fines, and vital records.

Series IV consists of the minutes of the meetings of the Irving Public Library Board and minutes of the meetings of the Irving Public Library Association. The minutes are primarily from the 1940s and are sporadic.

Series V is made up of yearbooks from various book clubs founded by Esther Hurwitz and documents unrelated to the Irving Public Library such as a bumper sticker, invitations, and letterhead of various clubs.

Series VI consists of five photographs: two portraits of Esther Hurwitz and three of library subjects.

Series VII consists of newspaper clippings and newspapers. The clippings appear to be material that was meant to be placed in scrapbooks. The clippings span the years of the 1930s to the 1970s. The bulk of the clippings are from the 1950s and 1960s.

Series VIII is made up of scrapbooks. Many of the scrapbook pages were loose in the box when they were received, so it was somewhat difficult to determine the number of scrapbooks there were originally. It appears that there are four scrapbooks. Two of them pertain to the Felicity Club and Mrs. Hurwitz's other activities, one pertains to Mrs. Hurwitz's activities and the library, and one pertains to the municipal library. The series also contains four current event scrapbooks from the late 1950s, which were most likely used as library reference tools.

This collection provides an in-depth history of the Irving Public Library established by Esther Hurwitz in 1941 and operated by her until 1962. It also provides a look at the activities of the Felicity Club, and the various social and civic activities undertaken by Esther Hurwitz.

### **Provenance Statement**

The Esther Hurwitz Papers were donated to the Irving Public Library by Mrs. Hurwitz sometime during the 1970s. The library transferred the material to the Archives during the 1980s. The papers have been in the Irving Archives' possession since that time.

### **Literary Rights Statement**

Permission to publish from the Esther Hurwitz Papers must be obtained from the Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

### **Container List**

#### **Series I. Correspondence, 1930s-1970s, (bulk 1930s-1950s)**

##### Box 1

##### Folder

1 Correspondence, 1930s-1940s

Contains correspondence concerning, primarily, bus routes; the Red Cross; the Community Clubhouse; road development; and the library. Most of the letters are from county commissioners or county employees.

2 Correspondence, 1950s-1970s

Contains correspondence regarding, primarily, Esther Hurwitz's nomination and selection as most outstanding woman in Irving, 1950, and fundraising for the library.

#### **Series II. Library Financial Records, 1941-1962**

3 Annual Financial Reports, 1941-1953

4 Annual Financial Reports, 1954-1957

5 Annual Financial Reports, 1958-1960

6 Financial Records, 1941-1962

Contains records of contributions to the library's building fund and records of contributions and expenses for the library in general.

7 Financial Records, 1922-1962

Contains cancelled checks and receipts related to the library's operation. Included is a 1922 handwritten tax receipt for lots 19-22, block 15, of the Otis Brown Addition. It was the plan to use these lots to construct a library building.

8 Wages, 1942-1948

Contains a monthly time book used to record the hours worked by the employees at the Irving Public Library.

#### **Series III. Library Operations Records, 1941-1966**

9 Annual Statistical Reports, 1940s-1960s

Contains library inventories of materials and usage statistics from the 1940s. Included is a 1966 report on usage and projected growth of the municipal library and a copy of a 1962 city resolution denying the Irving Public Library's request for a contribution of \$400 per month from the city.

10 County Book Records, 1958 and 1960-1962

Records of books borrowed and returned to the county library system and books bought by the Irving library.

Box 2

Folder

1 Fines, 1958

Record of library fines for 1958.

2 Fines, 1959

Record of library fines for 1959.

3 Fines, 1960-1961

Record of library fines for 1960-1961.

4 Library Card Numbers, n.d.

Contains a record of cardholders for card numbers 100-2450.

5 Public Relations, 1940s-1980s

Contains press releases, rough drafts of speeches, newspaper articles, speeches, and invitations relating to the Irving Public Library.

6 Rentals, 1958

7 Rentals, 1959

8 Vital Records, 1940s-1960s

Charter of the Irving Public Library Association, 1941; by-laws of the Irving Public Library Association; articles of dissolution of the association, 1964; establishment of the Esther Hurwitz Memorial Fund, 1965.

**Series IV. Minutes, 1941-1962**

9 Minutes, 1943-1962

Contains an incomplete and sporadic set of minutes, primarily from the 1940s and 1950s, of the meetings of the Board of Directors of the Irving Public Library Association.

10 Minutes, 1941-1961

Contains an incomplete and sporadic set of minutes of the meetings of the Irving Public Library Association and a number of proxies signed to Mrs. Hurwitz for the October 1945 and the December 1954 meetings.

**Series V. Club Yearbooks and Non-Library Related Material, 1890s-1960s**

11 Club Yearbooks, 1950s  
Yearbooks of the various book review clubs founded by Esther Hurwitz, 1953-1958.

12 Non-Library Related Material, 1890s-1960s.  
City charter; programs; invitations; letterhead; copies of Texas independence documents; and publications.

Two copies of *Harper's Weekly* from 1898 are housed in Box 6.

### **Series VI. Photographs, 1940s-1950s**

13 Photographs, 1940s-1950s  
Contains five photographs: two portraits of Esther Hurwitz, one of which is hand-tinted; the interior of the library, 1942; the library dedication, 1941; and the exterior of the library building, 1951.

### **Series VII. Newspapers and Newspaper Clippings, 1930s-1970s**

#### Box 3

#### Folder

1 Newspaper Clippings, 1930s  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to Mrs. Hurwitz and her activities.

2 Newspaper Clippings, 1940s  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to Mrs. Hurwitz and her activities.

3 Newspaper Clippings, 1950s  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to Mrs. Hurwitz; the Felicity Club; and the library.

4 Newspaper Clippings, 1960s  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to Mrs. Hurwitz; the city of Irving; the Irving Woman's Club; the Garden and Arts Center; the library; and the Felicity Club.

5 Newspaper Clippings, 1970s  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to the Balch Springs library and the Irving Public Library System.

6 Newspaper Clippings, n.d.  
Contains newspaper clippings relating to Mrs. Hurwitz's activities; the library; and Irving history.

One issue of *The Irving News-Record*, three issues of *The Irving Herald*, and one issue of *The Irving Daily News Texan* are housed in Box 6.

### **Series VIII. Scrapbooks, 1930s-1970s**

7 Scrapbook of Current Events, Dec. 1957-March 1958  
Contains newspaper articles of current Irving events.

8 Scrapbook of Current Events, March-July, 1958  
Contains newspaper articles of current Irving events.

9 Scrapbook of Current Events, July-December, 1958  
Contains newspaper articles of current Irving events.

10 Scrapbook of Current Events, Jan.-July, 1959  
Contains newspaper articles of current Irving events.

#### Box 4

Contains two scrapbooks pertaining to Esther Hurwitz's activities, the Felicity Club, and construction of the Community Clubhouse, 1930s-1950s. The third scrapbook relates to the Irving municipal library, 1966-1970.

For preservation purposes, the large scrapbook relating to Esther Hurwitz and the Felicity Club was photocopied, and the copy is in a folder in this box.

#### Box 5

Contains a scrapbook pertaining, primarily, to the Irving Public Library and to Mrs. Hurwitz and her activities during the 1950s.

#### Box 6

Contains an issue of *Harper's Weekly* from April 23, 1898, and an issue from May 14, 1898, and the following newspapers:

*Irving News-Record*, March 3, 1950

*The Irving Herald*, December 9, 1949

*The Irving Herald*, March 3, 1950

*The Irving Herald*, April 7, 1950

*The Irving News Texan*, November 24, 1963