

Thomas L. Fries Papers

MS – 154

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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Introduction

The Fries collection is comprised of general political and legislative documents emanating from the 114th Ohio General Assembly (1981-1982). The material is divided among four boxes and sixty-three folders, or approximately 1,000 separate documents. Much of the material contains replicated form letters, memos, verbatim copies of bills, and other documents deemed worthy of preservation. While this characteristic of duplication is prominent, enough knowledge can be gleaned from both the general political correspondence of Fries and the legislative portion of the collection to gain a better understanding of the various duties of the local politician --- fundraiser, community activist, and lawmaker.

Brief Biographical Sketch

Thomas Louis Fries was born in Dayton, Ohio on September 28, 1942, the son of Robert L. and Charlotte Van Ostrand Hawley. Fries father abandoned the house-hold in 1950, and eventually his mother remarried. Fries attended public school in Dayton, later attending Ohio State University for three years, Bowling Green State University for one year, and the University of Dayton for two years.

He was interested in sports in general and baseball in particular, playing pro-ball with the Minnesota Twins from 1960 to 1964 and the Washington Senators from 1964 to 1966. Fries married Esther Carole Stookey in 1963, and the couple has two children, Thomas Louis Fries, Jr., and Melissa Suzanne Fries.

Thomas Fries worked in the Sales and Marketing division of Gulf Oil Corporation from 1966 to 1970, and began his elective political career by running successfully for the Democratic nomination for 86th district state representative in 1970, easily winning both nomination and election. His service on the Ohio House Finance Committee spanned twelve years (1971-1983), the entire length of his tenure as state representative. He declined to run for re-election in 1982. In addition to his legislative duties, he has been an active member of the Citizens' Clean Air Association, and the Huber Heights-Wayne Township Jaycees.

Scope and Content

Thomas Fries represented the 86th state legislative district for twelve years, January 1971 – January 1983. His papers from the 114th General Assembly (1981-1982) provide an interesting group of material pertaining to legislation considered and/or composed by himself and his colleagues serving on the Ohio House Finance Committee.

The records tend to be somewhat repetitious concerning the documents preserved – verbatim copies of submitted and amended bills, form letter memos, and fiscal notes pertaining to legislation and “scope and content” sheets descriptive of various bills – are found in the folders dealing with Representative Fries’ co-legislators on the Finance Committee.

The material pertinent to Fries’ political life aside from legislative matters appear more illuminating to the casual observer. His correspondence between Finance Committee members, as well as copies of resumes from constituents, letters received expressing opinions for or against certain legislation, Fries’ press releases, and other documents are more easily comprehended when put into the context of a politician, i.e., concerned with the often-times mundane duties of fundraising, attending inconclusive committee meetings, granting employment and other consideration to constituents, etc.

This collection falls rather evenly through 1981-1982, a time of increasing economic distress in Ohio. There is a slight preponderance of notes from 1982, which is understandable, considering this was an election year (although Fries declined to run for a seventh term). A weakness of the collection is the abundance of verbatim legislation, for example, H.B. 580 and other bills are listed in their entirety.

This portion of the collection is difficult to grasp, as there is nothing more explanatory concerning the legislation than a series of brief “scope and content” sheets, which I do not believe are adequate in aiding the ordinary citizen’s conception of a bill’s significance.

The personalized general political category is clearly more beneficial in regards to gaining a general understanding of some of the aspects of a politician’s life and career in a two-year period.

Series Description

Thomas L. Fries Political-Congressional Papers: 1981-1982

Four boxes containing sixty-three folders with material spanning early January 1981 through November 1982.

The type of material preserved takes the form of:

Typed and handwritten notes, memos, form letters,
Press releases, copies of speeches, etc.

The folders are divided into two categories:

Congressional Bills and General Political Papers

The Bill's section is divided into two areas:

House and Senate Legislation

Congressional Bills are arranged in numerical order:

H.B. 134
H.B. 189
Senate Bill 425
Senate Bill 426, etc.

General Political Papers are arranged in alphabetical order:

Memoranda
Permission Slips for Recording
Preparing a Committee Report, etc.

Container Listing

Series I: General Political Papers, 1981-1982

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	1	Columbus Report
	2	Committee Hearing Announcements
	3	Committee Hearing Announcement Forms
	4	Committee Secretary's Manual
	5	House Bill 900 – General Correspondence
	6	Invitation Responses
	7	Letters of Recommendation
	8	Letters Received
	9	Maps – Ohio Districts
	10	Memoranda
	11	Permission Slips for Recorring
	12	Preparing a Committee Report
	13	Press Releases, 114 th G.A.
	14	Reference Committee Reports, 114 th G.A.
	15	Rep. Batchelder
	16	Rep. Bell
	17	Rep. Bonanno
2	1	Rep. Fries
	2	Rep. Healy
	3	Rep. Hinig
	4	Rep. James
	5	Rep. D. Johnson
	6	Rep. Mahnic
	7	Rep. Nettle
	8	Rep. Ney
	9	Rep. Pottenger
	10	Rep. Saxbe
	11	Rep. Turner
	12	Resumes
	13	Speeches
	14	Telephone Calls, 114 th G.A.
	15	Washington Senate Bill on S&L's Correspondence

Series II: House Bills

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
3	1	H.B. 95 – Interest Rates, Political Subdivision Notes
	2	H.B. 113 – Pensions Systems, Real Estate Mortgage Investment
	3	H.B. 134 – Licensees-Registrars, Small Loan and Second Mortgage Laws
	4	H.B. 189 – Computation, Interest on Judgment

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
3	5	H.B. 190 – Banking Board Reserve Requirements	
	6	H.B. 197 – Raise interest rate on judgments	
	7	H.B. 226 – Limit Bank Giveaways	
	8	H.B. 230 – Depository Law – Counties	
	9	H.B. 255 – Deposit Public Funds – Now Accounts	
	10	H.B. 280 – Banking Regulations	
	11	H.B. 405 – Tax Exemption – Interest on Savings	
	12	H.B. 526 – Rate of Interest, Bank Credit – Retail Agreement	
	13	H.B. 538 – Locate Public Utilities Prior to Construction	
	14	H.B. 538 – Subcommittee Report	
	4	1	H.B. 580 – Regulation-Consumer Financial Securities
		2	H.B. 843 – Income Tax Retirement Exclusion
		3	H.B. 854 – Energy Credits Program, Public Utilities Subcommittee
		4	H.B. 862 – Fries, et.al.
5		H.B. 900 – Expand Building and Loan Association Powers	
6		H.B. 900 – Info. In Regard to	
7		Amended H.B. 900 – Batchelder	
8		Amended H.B. 900 – Bonanno	
9		Subcommittee on Amended H.B. 900	
10		H.B. 1020 – Nursing Home Requirements	

Series III: Senate Bills

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
4	11	AM.S.B. 112 – Eliminate Ceiling on Stock Dividends
	12	AM.S.B. 161 – Indexing of Financial Statements
	13	AM.S.B. 264 – Government Pay Financial Institutions for Copying
	14	AM.S.B. 325 – Banking Board Representation
	15	Senate Bill 425 – Building and Loan, Savings and Loan
	16	Amended Sub.S.B. 425 – “Building and Loan” and “Savings and Loan”
	17	Senate Bill 426 – Building and Loan Association Powers