

Aurel Vaszin Papers
MS-98

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections
And Archives

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Aurel Vaszin Papers

The papers of Aurel Vaszin cover the years 1912-1979. They were given to the Wright State University Archives in April, 1980, by his friend, Mrs. Eva Berry.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: .11

Approximate number of items: 34

The letter of gift imposes no restrictions to literary or publishing rights on materials in the collection.

Aurel “Dutch” Vaszin Papers, (1928-1979)

1 box

Biography

Aurel Vaszin was born in Romania in April, 1885. When he came to the United States in 1904, he was a cabinet maker with a sixth grade education. He first came to Dayton, Ohio in 1913 as a craftsman employed by an amusement park development firm headquartered in New Haven, Connecticut. After completing his assignment on the Lakeside Amusement Park, Lakeside Drive and Gettysburg Road, he planned to return to Dayton to establish his own business. As a result, he developed and opened the Forest Park Zoological Gardens on 43 acres located off of North Main Street. The Park was forced to close in 1935, a casualty of the Depression Era.

Vaszin’s firm, the National Amusement Device Company, located at 139 Hatfield Street for more than 60 years, was one of two leading manufacturers of amusement park rides and equipments in the country. In 1964, Vaszin designed and developed the world’s largest roller coaster, called “Russian Mountain” for Chapultepec Park in Mexico City, Mexico.

The business was sold in April, 1973, but Vaszin stayed on as a consultant until his death on May 15, 1979. He was survived by two sisters in Romania.

Scope and Content Notes

The Aurel Vaszin Papers, 1928-1979, address the accomplishments and international reputation of the Dayton designer and manufacturer of amusement rides and equipment. He is primarily remembered for introducing steel into roller coasters, increasing their size and popularity significantly, and for designing a variety of miniature, trackless trains. By following his career, the evolution of amusement parks from roller coasters, ferris wheels and carousels, to the large theme parks like Disneyland can be observed.

The material is arranged chronologically by type of document and contains numerous newsclippings, feature articles, posed photographs, commercial postcards, and certificates of merit for trade involvements. Recent feature articles are helpful in placing Vaszin's contributions within the scope of Twentieth Century amusement trends, particularly when contrasted with a January, 8, 1928 article recounting his early life, pursuit and philosophy.

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	News Articles – Arranged Chronologically -newsclippings, feature articles (8 items)	1928-1979
	2	Professional Documents – Arranged Chronologically -Masonic membership, 1928 -Meritorious service, 1948-1960 -War Department letter of quality control rating, 1942 (11 items)	1928-1960
	3	Photographs -posed portraits and postcards of amusement rides (15 items)	c. 1950-1970