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Fine and Applied Arts

Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning

Victor A. Hyde Papers, 1937-58

Memorandum for the Archives:

The Papers of Victor A. Hyde, Field Representative with the Bureau of Community Planning From 1947 to 1963, Prepared by Louis B. Wetmore, May 1984

From the scattered files of the Bureau of Community Planning I have assembled sets of materials which were prepared by, or used by, Victory Hyde in his role as a Community Consultant for the Bureau of Community Planning.

These papers have been organized under the following headings:

- 1) Files from Hyde's work with four Alabama cities while he was with the T.V.A.
- 2) Bureau reference materials used in working with Illinois communities, and materials related to other programs of the Bureau.
- 3) Files on recreation and parks used as part of the Bureau's Extension Program.
- 4) Other reference materials used by a field representative.
- 5) Copies of annual reports of the Bureau of Community Planning which appear to be the original draft copies from which final copies were organized and duplicated
- 6) The file of lecture notes and other data supplied to participants in the 1943 M.I.T. short course which Hyde attended.

The following paragraphs are a commentary on these materials and the way in which they were used. These observations are based upon my own participation as Director of the Bureau's Extension Program, from 1955 to 1961, and my own personal experience as a field representative of T.V.A. in 1941 to 1943.

I am commenting here on this set of materials from Victor Hyde's files, but there are significant sets of reference materials in the other Bureau of Community Planning files in the Archives.

Anyone doing research on the Bureau's Extension Program could use this memorandum and the Hyde reference materials for background and interpretation while working through the more extensive Bureau files.

A Brief Outline of the Bureau's Extension Program, 1934-1964

The Bureau had no full-time staff until Don Morgan was appointed a Community Consultant in 1938.

Under the leadership of Rexford Newcomb and Harland Bartholomew there were several state-wide planning conferences in the early 1930s, under the sponsorship of the Bureau. With the appointment of Don Morgan a program of education through field visits to communities was initiated. This program continued until the middle 1960s, when the State of Illinois established its first Community Affairs Agency, which was staffed and able to take over the counseling of municipalities.

The initial program under Don Morgan responded to questions raised by municipal officials, but also took the initiative by field trips to visit communities, call upon local officials and explain the potentials through community planning.

The annual reports of the Bureau recorded the visits which were made in any given year, and in some of the annual reports the response of the individual communities is recorded.

The Bureau staff had two defined strategies which were operational until 1955. One of these strategies was to give priority to visits to county seat towns outside the Chicago Metropolitan Area. (Within the six-county metropolitan area the Regional Plan Association provided a source of counseling and worked with the municipalities).

The other strategy developed by the Bureau was to provide specialized counseling in the area of parks and recreation. The Landscape Architecture staff could provide the expertise required, and there was a widespread interest among municipalities in establishing park districts and developing at least one significant city park or recreation area.

One has to remember that up until 1955, almost all of the municipalities in Illinois were not only very small in size, but were also without any form of professional staff except a municipal attorney and a municipal engineer on a retainer.

These part-time professional advisers always welcomed assistance in the form of draft ordinances, and advice on sources of information or professional planning assistance.

It should also be noted that most planning consulting firms serving the communities in Illinois were also qualified in landscape architecture, and therefore in park planning. This was true of Harland Bartholomew's office in Indianapolis, Lawrence Sheridan's office in Indianapolis, the Scruggs and Hammond office in Peoria, or the offices of McFadzean and Everly in Chicago.

The strategy argued that by providing assistance in undertaking park planning, which was high on the agenda of the local communities, the communities would then be led to see the value of the broader community planning activity.

To respond to inquiries, and to provide handouts while visiting communities, the Bureau staff developed a number of data sheets. These comprised copies of relevant state legislation, or drafts of ordinances, for both planning and zoning.

Articles from magazines, or copies of relevant talks on community planning, were also part of the data sheet files. As extension work on parks and recreation expanded, a similar set of data sheets for this specialized area was developed. Reference folders for both of these kinds of data sheets are included in the Victor Hyde files.

There were no changes in these strategies or policies until 1955, when I became Director of the Bureau of Community Planning. It was timely for a change in the strategies. The 1954 Housing Act had authorized grants of federal funds for community planning by communities under 25,000 population.

Expanding federal programs and broader national interest in economic development and regional programs were providing incentives to reestablish state planning agencies where states such as Illinois had allowed these programs to lapse during World War II.

Since the State of Illinois had no official state planning agency as required to handle federal 701 Community Planning Grants, the State Housing Board was designated to act as the state planning agency in 1956. A contract was negotiated between the University and the State Housing Board under which the Bureau of Community Planning would handle the professional responsibilities for 701 planning grants. The established community extension activity provided the appropriate base for taking on this task.

At the same time, Bureau efforts were directed to research and extension activities that broadened the local park extension concerns to broader state level concerns with resource conservation and open space.

Further, the Bureau took the initiative for encouraging county and multi-county regional planning agencies, and the establishment of a state planning agency.

In effect, then, the Bureau's work with local community extension continued with a new emphasis through the 701 grants, but the real thrust was to bring about state assumption of responsibility for state planning and development, for local community assistance, and for the encouragement of sub-state regions.

Victor Hyde's papers and his personal career with the University of Illinois covers the period from 1947 to 1963. Therefore, it spans the period of extensive work with small local communities, and the period of transition during which the Bureau shifted many of its extension responsibilities to state agencies, while the Bureau staff became more and more focused on research.

Don Morgan and Victor Hyde were admirably suited through their experience and their personalities to an effective educational program with small communities throughout the State of Illinois. They were neither motivated nor equipped to undertake research activities -- which explains, in part, why such activities did not begin until after 1955.

The principal documents which were required for extension purposes were prepared by Karl Lohmann and Rexford Newcomb. They were well equipped to write such papers, and they provided essential documents for use by the field representatives. (See the list in the folder in Section 2 of the Hyde Papers).

While the term Community Consultant was used for both Morgan and Hyde, their role in actuality was much more that of a field representative, bringing information and advising on how to undertake certain kinds of programs.

Professional consulting and contract planning was provided by the professional offices to which the communities were referred. The character of the Bureau explicitly stated that the Bureau would not provide professional services but would only inform and advise officials and citizens.

The work of the extension programs from 1938 until 1955 resulted in the establishment of many planning agencies, and the completion of many community plans. In addition, a very large number of municipalities were aided in establishing park districts and in initiating park programs.

There is no ready reference tally of the number of plans, zoning ordinances, and parks established as a result of the work of the Bureau staff. However, as of 1948, 207 communities in 95 of the 102 counties had been contacted, including 65% of those over 2,500 population and 25%

of those between 1,000 and 2,500.

Victor Hyde. I knew Vic Hyde as a warm and friendly person. While he was with T.V.A. Victor Hyde worked under A.J. Gray, who was a close personal friend of mine. Therefore, I was familiar with his working background with T.V.A., and became acquainted with his work with the Bureau of Community Planning.

He was very effective in working with community officials in the predominantly small town of Illinois. He took a low-key approach to offering advice and assistance, which was well received.

Over the years, he established friendly and good working relationships with many mayors, plan commission members, and park district board members, as well as attorneys and civil engineers across the state. This was invaluable as we turned to the 701 program.

In many instances the 701 programs were being undertaken by communities which had previously worked with the Bureau staff. In the case of communities not visited before, Victor Hyde's ability to refer to what had been done in nearby communities while identifying their local officials by name helped the process of getting programs under way.

Having traveled the state extensively, Vic Hyde learned all of the better places to eat while on the road. One has to remember that, even in the late 1950s, there were very few of what we now call motel chains or fast-food restaurants, especially in the smaller communities of Illinois.

How different things seem today, when there are Holiday Inns in all regions of the state!

Therefore, when one was traveling without Vic it was necessary to get his counsel on where to stay and where to eat, before starting out. He also provided the reminder that, before uniform daylight savings time, one had to check meeting times very carefully.

As late as 1955, and for several years after, daylight savings time was local option in Illinois. Therefore, one community would be on daylight savings, and the next community still on standard, in a very random and uneven pattern.

Summary/ May 1984

L.B. Wetmore

Victor Hyde Papers

Box 1:

1. TVA - Alabama State Planning Board Extension Records

Under TVA's Community Extension Program, a cooperative contract with the Alabama State Planning Board provided staff counseling for communities in that state. Four cities in Northern Alabama were served by A.J. Gray with the assistance of Victor Hyde.

Hyde's papers include records of the City Plan Commission attendance, activities, and the

names of officials for Guntersville (1939-1947), Tuscumbia (1941-1946), Decatur (1941-1946), and Sheffield (1940-1947).

There are significant planning reports for each city in a bound folder. These were prepared by the staff, with technical support from TVA. For Example, the Minutes of the Florence CPC of February 3, 1944, record a discussion of a house-numbering study and a major street plan which were presented by V.A. Hyde representing the Alabama State Planning Board. The Long Range Plan for Florence Schools acknowledges the service of Aelred J. Gray with the assistance of Victor A. Hyde. Base maps were provided by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The scope of Hyde's work before coming to Illinois is indicated by these records.

2. Bureau of Community Planning Reference Materials on Community Planning and Zoning

A bound folder has a list of Bureau publications and contains many of these publications for reference. These are primarily leaflets dated from 1940 to 1950.

Other documents relate to enabling legislation. One is a mimeographed summary of Planning Legislation, with pieces dated 1954 and earlier. After the Bureau moved to 1203 West California Street from McKinley Hall, a printed version of state enabling legislation was reproduced about 1957.

Folder One contains notes on Bureau studies of attitudes toward city planning and on planning communications. Hyde had a special interest because of his work with communities and public officials, although he was not personally directing these studies.

The folder also contains: Cards used in making talks; a set of 41 cards with answers to typical questions asked about county zoning; and the filing system used by the Bureau. County zoning was one of the controversial issues in many parts of Illinois, and the cards provided ready reference in answering telephone calls or letters.

Folder Two contains documents prepared for the Peoria Tri-County Regional Planning Program; a report on a national workshop on 701 local planning assistance attended by Hyde; notes on relevant state and national planning programs; documents related to citizen participation programs.

Folder Three contains legislation and explanatory notes about the Marion County Indiana Metropolitan Planning Commission. This innovative program was frequently cited in consulting with officials about regional planning in Illinois.

Box 2:

3. Bureau of Community Planning References on Parks

The Bureau provided counsel to communities on establishing Park Districts and Recreation Programs as part of its strategy to expand planning activity.

The Bound Folder contains a wide range of reference materials and copies of handouts used at meetings with community officials. Series XI of the Bureau's Community Planning Data documents were concerned with Parks and Recreation.

The September-October 1952 issue of Illinois Parks bound in the folder contains a directory of Park District officials throughout Illinois. It also contains an article by Don Morgan, and notes a report by Karl Lohmann as Chairman of the Planning Committee of the Illinois Association of Park Districts, and recognizes J.D. Blair as First President of the Association in 1927.

Reference documents include examples of park plans for Illinois communities, and guides for planning and development by the National Park Service and other national organizations.

4. Publications

There were a number of publications in the files, most of which are readily available in the C.P. & L.A. Library. Therefore, many are listed here but not included in the Archives.

The listing and the documents retained in this file indicate the kinds of documents maintained in Hyde's working files to carry on his community advisory role.

Better Population Forecasting for Areas and Communities

U.S. Department of Commerce, 1952

You and Modern Zoning - City of Minneapolis Planning Commission, 1959

Data Sources for Plant Location Analysis

U.S. Department of Commerce, 1959

Organized Industrial Districts

U.S. Department of Commerce, 1954

Metropolitan Area and City Size Patterns of Manufacturing Industries

U.S. Department of Commerce, 1954

Studies in Business and Economics - Industrial Dispersal Bureau of Business and Economic Research

College Park, Maryland - 1956

Open Space Planning - An Annotated Bibliography

Michael A. Carroll - Bureau of Community Planning, Department of Urban Planning, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1966

Part 1 - The Plan for Research - A Report to the Wabash Valley Association, From the Inter-University Research Planning Committee, University of Illinois, Indiana University, Purdue University, 1958

A Guide for County Zoning Administrators in Illinois

James E. Lee - Bureau of Community Planning, University of Illinois, Urbana 1961

Director of Illinois Planning and Zoning Agencies

Bureau of Community Planning, University of Illinois, 1960

5. Annual Report of the Bureau of Community Planning

These are the original draft copies for 1939-1948, and for 1958

They have special interest because they show how successive annual reports were redrafted from the previous year. There are also notes from Dean Newcomb requesting the reports, and for the 1941 reports comments from Newcomb and Schaffer.

1957-1958 report includes a proposal for an expanded research program; recognition of the changing roles of the Bureau; a summary of the Bureau's services for local planning assistance to the State Housing Board; and a detailed listing of community contacts.

6. M.I.T. Short Course, 1943 (Victor Hyde's Copy)

In attending this short course, Hyde was brought up to date on planning practice. The list of participants shows that he was in distinguished company.

The M.I.T. two-week summer conference was the first extension course for professional planners. It was originally directed to those with planning experience but no formal education in planning (very much like the U. of I. Allerton short course in the 1970s).

When Wetmore was administrator of the conference ten years later, in 1953 and 1954, many of those who attended held planning degrees and returned for a refresher.

The papers are of special significance as indicating the state of the art being presented by such leaders of the profession as Adams, Shurtleff, Burchard, and Clark.

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