



Finding Aid for

**IRVING R. BACON PAPERS, 1863-1957 (BULK 1929-1945)
Accession 1657**

Finding Aid Published: December 2011



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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1657

CREATOR: Bacon, Irving R. (Irving Ruben), 1875-1962

TITLE: Irving R. Bacon papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1863-1957

BULK DATES 1929-1945

QUANTITY: 4.4 cubic ft. and 4 oversize boxes

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Irving R. Bacon worked for Henry Ford as an artist. His work ranged from cartoons in the *Ford Times* to paintings of artifacts and events at the Edison Institute. His papers include photographs, drawings, and correspondence related to his career with Ford Motor Company and the Edison Institute.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Found in Ford Personal History Room, 1984
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford: Irving R. Bacon oral history, part of the Oral History subgroup, 1951-1961, Accession 65
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 1657, Irving R. Bacon papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Ryan Wieber at the Benson Ford Research Center, May 1995.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared and published by Ryan Wieber at the Benson Ford Research Center in May 1995.
- Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, December 2011, and published in December 2011.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born in 1875 in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Irving Bacon received his early art training from Joseph Gies at the Art School of the Detroit Museum of Art. Much of his early work concentrated on illustrations and cartoons, and often his artwork reflected the influence of his travels to the American West. From 1894 to 1900 he worked as an illustrator at the *Detroit Evening News* and the *Detroit Free Press*. He first met Henry Ford through a mutual acquaintance in 1898, when he rode to Royal Oak and back to Detroit on Woodward Avenue in Henry's new automobile. In 1902 he went to New York City to study at the Chase School of Art and to illustrate for *Harper's Weekly* and *McClure's*. In 1906 he went to the Royal Academy in Munich and studied under Heinrich von Zugel, a noted animal painter. It was there where Bacon acquired his talent for painting landscapes and portraits. After returning to Detroit in 1910, he once again met Henry Ford, who by this time was a millionaire. Henry became interested in art largely due to the interest and talent of his own son, Edsel. He purchased a landscape scene from Bacon—a painting, which, according to Bacon, was "certainly not a masterpiece". It was after this meeting that Bacon gained permission from Henry to utilize his large estate for landscape paintings.

In 1913 he received a generous gift of money from his friend Harold Wills (a Ford executive), and once again returned to Munich for further study. His stay was cut short, however, due to the start of World War I. Upon returning to Detroit, he realized the need for a steady salary in order to adequately support his wife and six children, so he met again with Henry Ford and soon became an employee of the Ford Motor Company, drawing cartoons for the *Ford Times* and later, illustrations for *The Dearborn Independent*. Henry loved Bacon's cartoons, an area of work which Bacon wanted to discontinue. According to Bacon, "That class of work seemed to conflict with my high aims of art. Little did I realize at the time that I was beginning a thirty three year stretch of work for Henry Ford and his great organization that eventually would wean me away from the art world."

Working for Henry at the Ford Motor Company, and later the Edison Institute, Bacon's tasks included painting scenes and portraits that were of great interest to Henry Ford and his Museum and Village. These included portraits of Ford's family and friends, Noah Webster, Luther Burbank, Mark Twain, Dr. George Washington Carver, Stephen Foster, John Burroughs, and others. He was also responsible for creating paintings of the artifacts located at the institute, and he also acted as stage designer for the Museum's theater. His interest in photography and motion pictures led him to become the head of the Photographic Department for several years. Bacon retired from the Edison Institute in 1948, and moved to Miami with his second wife. He died in 1962 at the age of 86.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is mainly composed of photographs, drawings, and some correspondence related to Bacon's career with the Ford Motor Company and the Edison Institute. The series within this collection are accordingly arranged to the different aspects involved with the work of Henry Bacon. There are five series in the collection, the **Golden Jubilee painting, Irving Bacon**

personal materials, Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, Henry Ford related work, and *Dearborn Independent*.

Series I, **Golden Jubilee painting:** This series is comprised of pamphlets, notes, lists, correspondence, and photographs related Bacon's painting entitled "Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Invention of the Incandescent Electric Light" also known as the "The Dedication of the Edison Institute of Technology." The Golden Jubilee occurred on October 21, 1929. It is arranged by the sub-series Printed material (1929), Correspondence (1936-1937), and Photographs (dates unknown, but assumed to be between 1920-1938). The photographs, which are mainly portraits of the individuals who attended the events of October 21, 1929, were obtained by Bacon in the years 1936-1938, for the purpose of recreating the dinner scene, some seven to nine years previous. Over 400 individuals attended this dinner, ranging from Henry Ford's personal friends to contemporary world business and political leaders. The number of dinner guests eventually included in Bacon's painting numbered 266. The filing arrangement for the Photographs subseries was left in much the same way that Bacon had organized it, which was by seating arrangements. He categorized his filing system according to "Tables," "Arches," and "Individuals Standing" e.g., Table 1, Arch 1, etc.

Series II, **Irving Bacon personal materials:** In this series are various materials (1907-1957) which apparently were kept for the personal use and interest of Mr. Bacon. A large portion of this series, theater interests, contains materials on early theater and film actors/actresses. The majority of the materials within this series are photographs, unless otherwise noted.

Series III, **Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum:** This series is an assortment of photographs, mixed with notes and sketches related to subjects found at Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum. Bacon collected photographs of the various subjects in order to study them and eventually create a likeness within his own paintings.

Series IV, **Henry Ford related work:** This series is an example of yet another type of work that Bacon undertook as an employee of Henry Ford. It reflects the personal interests of Henry Ford. Included are miscellaneous printed materials, photographs, sketches, and maps (photographed). The folders have retained the original titles given by Bacon himself.

Series V, ***Dearborn Independent*:** Irving Bacon's artwork created for the *Dearborn Independent* is found within this series (approximately 1925-1935). These oversized materials consist mainly of sketches, prints, and color drawings.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Bacon, Irving R. (Irving Ruben), 1875-1962
Ford, Henry, 1863-1947
Ford family
Edison, Thomas A. (Thomas Alva), 1847-1931
Twain, Mark, 1835-1910
Bennett, Sir John, 1805-1891
Burroughs, John, 1837-1921
Carver, George Washington, 1864?-1943
Ford, Edsel, 1893-1943
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964
Firestone, Harvey Samuel, 1868-1938
Thumb, Tom, 1838-1883
Dearborn Inn (Dearborn, Mich)
Ford Motor Company
Ford Motor Company. Highland Park Plant
Ford Motor Company. Rouge River Plant
Henry Ford (Organization). Greenfield Village
Henry Ford (Organization). Henry Ford Museum
Dearborn Independent
Fordson tractor

Subjects

Actors and actresses
Celebrities
Artists
Painting
Theater--Stage setting and scenery

Genre and Form

Sketches
Photographs

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

Box 1

GOLDEN JUBILEE PAINTING

Printed material, 1929

" . . .A Guide to the Celebration"

Press release, program

" . . .To Thomas Alva Edison"

Charles Edison Sloane's account of the events

Guest lists and seating arrangements (2 folders)

Correspondence, 1937-1937

Ab-AI

Abbott, C.G

Adams, George Matthew

Albrecht, Albert A.

Alexander, Kirkland B.

Alexanderson, E.F.W.

Allen, A.E.

Althouse, Daniel M.

An-Ay

Anderson, Earl

Andrews, Roger

Arkrigh, P.S.

Aschner, Leopold

Atkins, William H.

Aylesworth, Merlin

Ba

Barbour, W.T.

Barnes, Freeman

Barrington, Frank

Barron, John N. (Sir)

Barry, J.G.

Barstow, William S.

Batchelder, W.O.

Bateman, Sydney E.

Be-Bon

Beard, Daniel C.

Beran, Theodore

Berggren, E.J.

Bernays, Edward L.

Bishop, James W.

Blair, Frank W.

Bodman, Henry E.

Bonbright, Howard

Boo-Bri

Book, Frank P.
Boone, Joel T.
Booth, Clarence H.
Booth, George G.
Boynton, N.H.
Brenner, Wm H.
Briggs, W.O.

Bro-Bu

Brock, William
Browning, McPherson
Buchanan, Capt. Wilson
Bullington, L.C.
Burgess, C.F.
Burr, A.A.
Burrows, W.R.
Butler, Col. Jarvis
Butzel, Henry M.

Ca-CI

Cameron, W.D.
Campbell, Frank
Campbell, W.R.
Cary, Walter
Cato, Geo. W.
Castle, E.R.
Chrysler, Walter P.
Clancy, Robert
Clarke, Chas. L.
Clay, William (Mrs.)

Box 2

Co-Cu

Compton, Arthur
Craig, B.J.
Cravath, Paul B.
Crouse, Huntington B.
Crouse, J. Robert
Crowley, P.E.
Cullinan, George
Currie, Cameron

Da-Dou

Davidson, James E.
Dahlinger, Ray
DeForest, Lee
Derrick, Robert O.
Doane, S.E.

Box 2 continued:

Doubleday, H.M.
Doubleday, Russell
Douglas, Dwight D.

Dow-Eg

Dow, Alex
Dykema, Robert K.
Eaton, C.S.
Eaton, Chas. A.
Easton, William H.
Edison, Charles
Edison, Theodore
Egar, Louis H.

Ei-Fir

Eimer, August
Elliot, Edward C.
Ellis, Griffith Ogden
Farr, Merton E.
Fead, Louis H.
Ferry, Dexter M. (Jr.)
Fine, Richard D.
Finkenstaedt, Harry S.
Firestone, Harvey S. (Jr.)

Fis-Fr

Fisher, Atwood M.
Fisher, Fred J.
Forbes, B.C.
Ford, Clyde
Ford, Frederick
Ford, J.B.
Foster, F.C.
Franklin, Rabbi Leo M.
Freeh, Theodore W.
Freeman, W.W.
Frishkorn, G.M

G

Gabrilowitsch, Ossip (Mrs.)
Gerard, James W.
Gilchrist, John F.
Green, Fred
Green, H.H.
Green, William
Grosvenor, Gilbert

Ha-Hi

Haigh, Henry
Hammer, Edwin W.

Box 2 continued:

Hammond, C. Herrick
Hand, William M.
Hays, Will H.
Heath, F.K.
Hickman, J. Parker
Hines, Edward N.
Hitchcock, H.K.

Ho-Hu

Hodges, C.B.
Hodges, Charles T.
Hodges, Frederick W.
Holton, Addison E.
Hoover, Herbert
Hoover, Herbert (Mrs.)
Hough, Edward C.
Howe, Hubert S.
Hubbard, Frank W.
Hudson, Grant M.
Hughes, Edward E. (Mrs.)
Hutchings, Jere C. (Mrs.)

I-K

International News Photos
Jefferson, C.W.
Jeffries, Zay
Jehl, Francis
Jones, W.A.
Joy, Henry B.
Kahn, Albert
Kalmbach, Herman
Kanzler, Ernest
King, Charles B.
Kinter, S.M.
Kreusi, Frank E.
Kreusi, Paul

L-Mart

Learned, John G.
Lemp, Hermann
Lindsey, Ben B.
Liversidge, H.P.
Livsey, J.H.
Lord, Robert O.
Lovejoy, J.R.
Lovett, Benjamin
Macauley, Alvan
MacDonald, Rachel

McCarter, Thomas N.
McClure, Roy D.
McCoy, Joseph F.
McIver, J.W.
McLeod, Clarence J.
McManis, T.J.
McNamee, Graham
Magdsick, H.H
Martin, P.E.
Martin, Thomas W.

Box 3

Mars-Mo

Marshall, A.E.
Mason, Frank E.
Mayo, Charles H.
Mayo, W.B.
Meadowcroft, W.M.
Meloney, William B. (Mrs.)
Millar, Preston
Miller, Edward B. (Mrs.)
Miller, John V.
Miller, Lewis
Miller, Walter H.
Mitchell, W. Ledyard
Moore, Lucian S. (Jr.) 3-4
Morganthau, Henry
Morrison, George F.
Mott, S.D.

Mu-N

Muir, Malcolm
Mungle, Alexander
Murphy, C. Hay ward
Murphy, M.J.
Musha, R.
Myers, C.E.
Nash, C.W.
Neumuller, Ralph
Newberry, Phelps 3-5
Nichols, Mary Miller
Norton, Chester A.

O-Pe

O'Brien, J.J.
Olds, Ransom E.
Onken, William H.
Ott, Frederick P.

Box 3 continued:

Owen, Percy
Page, Rev. Herman
Paine, S.B. (Mrs.)
Parsell, Henry V.A.
Peabody, George Foster
Peabody, Witter J.

Po-Q

Pole, Felix J.C. (Sir)
Porter, Joseph F.
Potter, E.E.
Quinlan, J.F.

R

Raymond, S.W.
Reid, Harry
Rentschler, Gordon S.
Reynolds, Gordon M.
Rice, Martin P.
Robertson, A.W.
Rockefeller, John D. (Jr.)
Rockelman, Fred
Ruddiman, E.A.
Ruddiman, S.P.
Rugg, W.S.
Rumney, W.T.
Ruthven, Alexander

Sa-She

Sales, Murray W.
Sanger, Henry H.
Scheffler, Frederick A.
Schoellkopf, Paul A.
Schroeder, John William
Schwab, Charles M.
Scripps, William E.
Seyburn, Wesson
Shaffer, John C.
Shaw, P.B.
Shearer, Henry
Shelden, Allan

Shu-Sm

Shute, Henry D.
Simons, Charles C.
Sippel, John F.
Sladen, Frank J.
Sloan, M.S. (Mrs.)
Sloane, John Edison

Sloane, John Eyre
Smith, Frank W.

Sn-Sy

Snow, Harry A.
Sorenson, C.E.
Stair, E.D.
Stearns, Frederick S.
Stone, Charles A.
Stryker, E.D.
Sullivan, B.H.
Swope, Gerard
Symonds, N.G.

T

Tannahill, Robert H.
Tate, Alfred O.
Taylor, Orla B.
Taylor, W.H.
Thompson, W.H.
Thornley, Geo. H.
Tockeson, F.V.
Tremaine, B.G.

U-V

Underwood & Underwood, Inc.
Underwood, R.H.
Valentiner, W. R.

W

Wadsworth, H.L.
Walker, Hiram
Warren, Charles B.
Way, S.B.
Webber, Richard, H.
Webster, Edwin S.
Whitcomb, Edgar B.
Whitehome, Earl
Wide World Photos
Willard, Daniel
Wilson, Freemont
Wright, Orville

Y

Yost, Fielding
Young, Owen D.

Box 4

Photographs

Table 1

Table 2 (3 folders)

Table 3 (5 folders)
Table 4 (4 folders)

Box 5

Table 5 (4 folders)
Table 6 (5 folders)
Table 7
Table 8

Box 6

Table 9 (2 folders)
Table 10
Table 11 (2 folders)
Table 12 (2 folders)
Table 13
Table 14
Table 15
Table 1 - not used (2 folders)
Table 2 - not used (3 folders)
Arch 1

Box 7

Arch 2 (2 folders)
Arch 3 (3 folders)
Arch 4
Individuals standing (2 folders)
Banquet hall
The painting at various stages
Glass slides
Nancy Niepoth
Unused photographs
Unidentified individuals
Miscellaneous material

Box 12 (oversize)

Table 2
Table 3 (2 folders)
Table 4
Table 5
Table 6 (2 folders)
Table 7

Box 13 (oversize)

Table 8
Table 10

Table 11
Table 12
Table 13
Arch 2
Arch 3
Arch 4
Standing individuals
Table 2 - not used
Not used
Florence Fisher Parry

Box 8

IRVING BACON PERSONAL MATERIALS

Bacon biographical material, 1942
Miscellaneous World War II newsprint, 1941
Miscellaneous items
Correspondence, 1938-1957 (3 folders)
Miscellaneous Abraham Lincoln newsprint and (3 folders)
Color drawing of Russian city
Theater interests
 Various theater and movie stars (2 folders)
 Sarah Bernhardt
 Amphitheaters
 Assorted photographs
 Clyde Fitch (includes some newsprint copies)
 DeWolf Hopper
 Elmo Lincoln
 Joseph Jefferson
 David Thoreau
 "Teahouse of the August Moon"
 Tile kiln
 Lillian Russell
 Ancient Greek amphitheaters (negatives)
 Tom Thumb
 Photographs (2 folders)
 Printed materials
 Sketch of the Life of Charles S. Stratton, 1863, 1867
 3 Years Around the World, 1872 (2 copies)
 The Lives of Tom Thumb and Wife, 18-? (photocopy)

Box 14 (oversize)

Maps of World War II Russia
Poem, written on oversized book board
Sailboat sketches
Sketch of colored carpet
Miscellaneous

Tom Thumb

Box 15 (oversize)

Classical architecture (Photostats; 2 folders)
"Mary and Her Lamb" prints

Box 9

GREENFIELD VILLAGE AND HENRY FORD MUSEUM

Martha-Mary Chapel (2 folders)
Scotch Settlement School
Mark Twain
Sir John Bennett
Horace Mann
The Bells of Corneville
John Burroughs (2 folders)
Thomas Edison (5 folders)

Box 10

Foster Cottage (2 folders)
William McGuffey material
Dr. George W. Carver
 Notes and sketches
 Pamphlets
 Photographs
 Drawing by Carver
Luther Burbank
Display case designs
Notes and sketches concerning busts
Miscellaneous Greenfield Village photographs (8 folders)
Museum room notes

Box 11

Declaration of Independence painting, portrait photographs of the signers (7 folders)
Negatives

Box 14 (oversize)

John Burroughs
Bells of Corneville
Thomas Edison
Foster Cottage
William H. McGuffey
Display case designs
Miscellaneous photographs of Greenfield Village
Declaration of Independence painting
Edsel Ford
Employee badge design

Box 15 (oversize)

Foster Cottage
Robert E. Lee, George Washington

Box 11

HENRY FORD RELATED WORK

Highland Park Plant
Rouge Plant
Old cars
Maps of area plants
Fordson tractor
Rivera Fresco for Mr. Ford
Racing cars-Ford historical
Miller School
Dearborn Inn
The Ford grandchildren
Clara Ford
Miscellaneous newspaper stories, 1914-1917 (photocopies)
Harvey Firestone, Harold Wills, and Henry Ford (photograph)

Box 15 (oversize)

DEARBORN INDEPENDENT

Sketches and drawings (2 folders)