

GUIDE to the DREYFUSS - BENSWANGER PAPERS

National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
Manuscript Archives

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Claudette Scrafford, Manuscript Archivist
May 2013

Collection Number

BA MSS 186

Title

Dreyfuss - Benswanger Papers

Inclusive Dates

1886 – 1971

Extent

.41 linear feet (1 archival box)

Repository

National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
25 Main Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Provenance

Items in this collection were donated by Mrs. Benswanger in 1974.

Abstract

This collection is comprised primarily of correspondence and agreements. Also included are rosters, programs, and financial information.

Separation

Books and programs were integrated into the general collection and photographs were separated to the Photo Archives.

Preferred Citation

Dreyfuss - Benswanger Papers, BA MSS 186, National Baseball Hall of Fame Library, Cooperstown, NY

Access

By appointment during regular business hours, email research@baseballhall.org.

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Biography

Barney Dreyfuss was an innovative team owner and policy maker, Barney Dreyfuss was one of the most highly regarded executives in organized baseball. During his career, he merged his Louisville Colonels with the

Pittsburgh Pirates to form a National League powerhouse, was one of the original advocates of a commissioner's office in baseball, helped to establish the modern World Series and was the Senior Circuit's first vice president. As president of the Pirates from 1900 until his death in 1932, Pittsburgh won six pennants, two World Series, and finished in third place or better 21 times. He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2008.

Source: www.baseballhall.org/hall-famers/

William E. Benswanger was an insurance executive in his family business and married to Dreyfuss' daughter. He never had much interest in baseball but grew up a Pirates fan. Upon the death of Barney Dreyfuss, his widow asked Benswanger to become president of the club. Although he had little baseball experience, he was a businessman. His teams finished second four times and were in the first division in all but four years. He served as president from 1932 to 1946, when the Pirates were sold to John W. Galbreath.

Source: <http://thedeadballera.com/Obits/Executives/Benswanger.Bill.Obit.html>

See Also

Barney Dreyfuss biographical file; National Baseball Hall of Fame Library
Pittsburgh Pirates team file; National Baseball Hall of Fame Library

Controlled Access Terms

These records are indexed under the following terms in the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Library catalog.

Corporate Names

Louisville Colonels (Baseball team)
Pittsburgh Pirates (Baseball team)
Pittsburgh Athletic Company (Baseball)
National League of Professional Baseball Clubs
Elias Baseball Bureau

Personal Names

Benswanger, William E. 1892-1972
Blanton, Cy 1908-1945
Dreyfuss, Barney 1865-1932
Frick, Ford 1894-1978
Mays, Carl 1891-1971
Preibisch, Mel 1914-1980
Tobin, Jim 1912-1969
Traynor, Pie 1898-1972
Wagner, Honus 1874-1955

Subject Headings

Agreements
Letters
Programs
Finances
Contracts

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- hosted by the Allegheny Base Ball Club |
| <i>Folder 2</i> | 4/15/1898 Invitation to Louisville's inaugural game
-handwritten note on back by John Heydler, 9/17/1936
- BL-1288.74 |
| <i>Folder 3</i> | 4/10/1899 Correspondence re: schedule changes
- St. Louis, Cleveland, Louisville |
| <i>Folder 4</i> | Oct – Dec 1899 Agreements for the sale of Louisville
players to Pittsburgh by Dreyfuss
- BL-1315.74 |
| <i>Folder 5</i> | 1900 Pittsburgh roster and salaries
- BL-1326.74 |
| <i>Folder 6</i> | 12/14/1900 Notice of stockholders meeting to Dreyfuss
- Pittsburgh Athletic Club |
| <i>Folder 7</i> | 3/18/1902 Correspondence, J. Grillo to Dreyfuss
- "Take care of Pittsburgh if National League can't"
- BL-1317.74 |
| <i>Folder 8</i> | 4/22/1902 Invitation to Pittsburgh's opening game
- BL-1283.74, BL-1287.74 |
| <i>Folder 9</i> | 8/09/1902 Correspondence, G. L. Richards to Dreyfuss
- "overheard conversation of raiding Pittsburgh"
- BL-1318.74 |
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- "Night Baseball Development Company"
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- Wagner running for sheriff, wants Benswanger on campaign committee
- BL-1319.74

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- BL-1330.74

Folder 14 5/01/1933 Invitation to Philadelphia's 50th anniversary

Folder 15 6/30/1934 Forbes Field 25th anniversary program, 3 copies
- BL-1202.74

Folder 16 Handbills for spring exhibition games
- April 10-11, 1935, Pittsburgh Pirates, Chicago White Sox, Little Rock, AK at Travelers Field, BL-1308.74
- 3/31/1936, Chicago White Sox, Pittsburgh Pirates at Ragsdale Park, TX, BL-1305.74

Folder 17 Correspondence
6/05/1935 Frick to National League presidents, All-Star ballots
- BL-1322.74
3/30/1936 handwritten agreement with player Melvin Preibisch
- signed by Benswanger, witnessed by Pie Traynor
- BL-1328.74
4/17/1937 handwritten agreement with player James Tobin
- signed by Benswanger and James Tobin
- BL-1325.74
1/28/1943 Cy Blanton to Benswanger asking to be signed
- BL-1327.74
3/21/1944 Landis inquiring about the demand for night games
3/24/1944 Benswanger's replies that 14 should suffice
2/13/1947 Frick to Benswanger, re: missed Championship dinner
- BL-1324.74

Folder 18 7/16/1946 Subpoena for Benswanger to appear before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board
- BL-1320.74

Folder 19 1887-1946 All-time Pittsburgh roster, Elias Baseball Bureau
1887-1948 Pittsburgh club record, Elias Baseball Bureau
1887-1957 All-time Pittsburgh roster, J. J. Long, PR director
1931-1946 Players on his club compiled by Benswanger in 1947

Folder 20 11/20/1952 Pittsburgh Professional Baseball Association
- asking Benswanger to join the non-profit organization
- BL-1321.74

- Folder 21* 9/30/1952 Examination of Accounts, Pittsburgh Athletic Club
 - BL-1332.74
 5/01/1953 Financial and Operating Schedules for month ending
 - BL-1331.74
- Folder 22* 1946-1971 Pittsburgh roster – players, scouts, coaches
 - position, date and place of birth and release dates