

MSS. Collection #236

Berry Coal Co. Collection, 1923-1999 [bulk 1926-1984]. 1½ boxes (27 folders), 147 items.

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

This collection contains a variety of materials relating to the establishment and early operations of the Berry Coal Company (later Berico Fuels, Inc.), which was founded by W.N. Berry in 1924. The materials primarily cover the legal and financial transactions of the company, and they include correspondence, financial statements, loan agreements and contracts, and property deeds. Researchers interested Berico Fuels or the financial and legal operations of local businesses in the second quarter the twentieth century may find this collection useful.

Arrangement: This collection is organized into three series and arranged within series by document type or subject. The series are: **Financial**, 1926-1984; **Legal**, 1923-1959; and **Miscellaneous**, 1934-1999, undated.

Provenance: The materials in this collection were stored in the Berico Fuels offices for many years. They were donated by CEO Thomas A. Berry, the son of Joseph Berry, and assigned the accession number 2016.26.1.

Processing: This collection was organized and the finding aid was prepared by volunteer Kimberly Oliver in July 2016.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Berry Coal and Wood Company was founded in 1924 by William Nathan “W.N.” Berry and his wife Elizabeth “Bess.” Initially located on West Bragg Street, it later moved to West Lee Street and then Bessemer Avenue as it expanded. W.N. served as the president and Bess as secretary-treasurer, soliciting orders and collecting payments door-to-door in the community. The company began by delivering coal with a horse and wagon, and they were soon superseded by trucks. As demands changed, it began offering oil as the main fuel and added air conditioning to its services. W.N.’s son John succeeded him as president and was replaced by his brother Joseph around 1970, by which time the company had been renamed Berico Fuels, Inc.

Historical Sources: The historical information was obtained from the finding aid for the [Berry-Vize Family Papers](#) (GHM Archives, MSS. Coll. #188) and the [Berico Fuels website](#).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists primarily of financial and legal materials relating to the Berry Coal Company. Included are financial reports (1:2-3), tax information (1:13), loan contracts and mortgages (1:5,8,2:1,4,5), financial and legal correspondence (1:4; 2:2), property deeds (2:7-8), a ledger (1:10), installation records (3:2), payment receipts (1:1,9), photographs (3:5), and postcards (3:6). The collection focuses on the legal operations of the company, with little information about its daily operations or services to the Greensboro community. The lack of context for many materials and the specialized nature of many legal materials are weaknesses. Researchers interested in the founding of the Berry Coal Company and its detailed legal and financial operations will find this collection useful.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**1. Financial. 13 folders (79 items). 1926-1984.**

The financial documents include a variety of bank notes (1:1), CPA balance sheets for 1934-1984 (1:2), and several CPA financial and examination reports (1:3). Correspondence features loan payments and balances, tax updates, and receipts in the forms of letters (1:4). Insurance materials consist of life and auto certificates (1:6), correspondence about payments and policy coverage (1:7), loan agreements (1:8), and payment receipts (1:9). The series also contains correspondence and contracts made with the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association (1:5), a company ledger (1:10), purchased and blank stock certificates (1:12), property tax receipts, and 1943 income tax returns (1:13).

2. Legal. 8 folders (46 items). 1923-1959.

The legal materials include contracts between W.N. and Bess Berry and various parties for the payment or endorsement of loans (2:1), correspondence between W.N. Berry and his attorney regarding paid loans (2:2), and an abstract form from his attorney regarding the company's property in Morehead Township (2:3). Mortgages detail payments to be made by Berry to various parties (2:4). Materials relating to real estate include contracts giving the option to buy a specific area of land (2:5), correspondence about land value, an attorney's opinion about that land, an engineering sketch of the plot (2:6), and deeds of trust (2:7-8).

3. Miscellaneous. 6 folders (22 items). 1934-1999, undated.

Of particular note in this series are company postcards (3:6), photographs of the company's coal yard and trucks (3:5), and newspaper clippings promoting its 50th anniversary (3:3). Also included are dealers' equipment installation records from the 1950s (3:2), auto service invoices (3:1), and a nomination form and newsletter announcement for the William Parker Award from the North Carolina Petroleum Marketers Association (3:4).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Financial
	2	“
	3	“
	4	“
	5	“
	6	“
	7	“
	8	“
	9	“
	10	“
	11	“
	12	“
	13	“
2	1	Legal
	2	“
	3	“
	4	“
	5	“
	6	“
	7	“
	8	“
3	1	Miscellaneous
	2	“
	3	“
	4	“
	5	“
	6	“