

South Carolina Political Collections
University of South Carolina

Daniel I. Ross, Jr.

Papers, 1904, c. 1930s-2008

Volume: 8.75 linear feet

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University of South Carolina

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Biographical Note:

Dan Ross was a pioneer in the conservative movement who helped build the modern day Republican Party in South Carolina. During his tenure as Chairman of the South Carolina Republican Party, he orchestrated the original First-in-the-South presidential primary that helped put our party on the map. Dan was instrumental in transforming South Carolina into a two-party state. His vision and leadership will be missed.

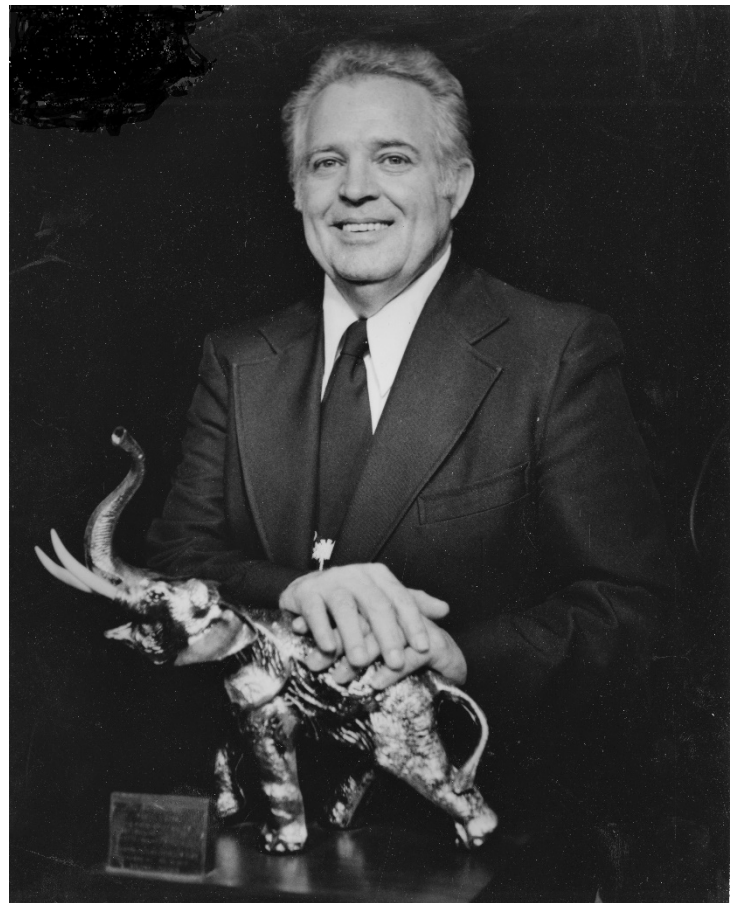
--U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham on the death of Dan Ross

In a letter acknowledging Ross's work as Party Chair, former governor Jim Edwards wrote, "You gave us the best organization we have ever had and the kind of leadership that the Party needed during these years." [June 11, 1980]

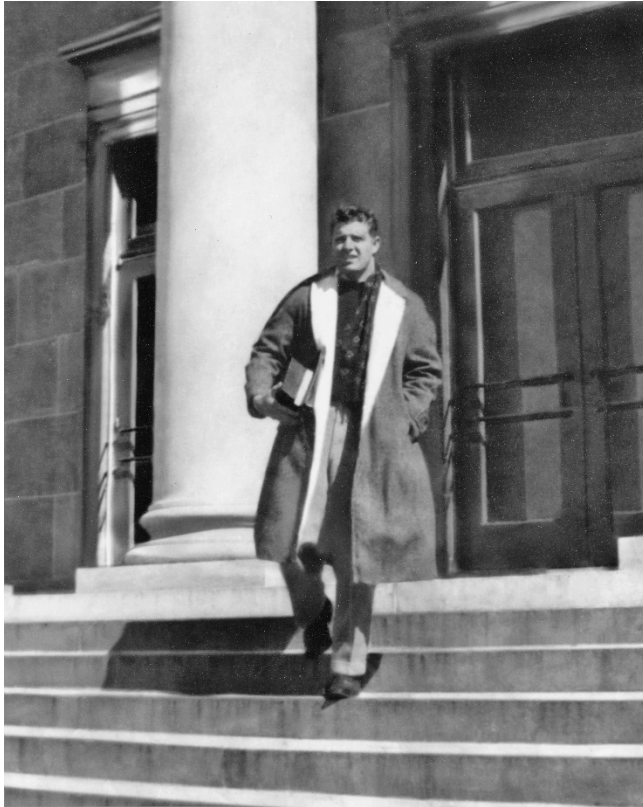
Daniel Iradell Ross, Jr. (1923-2008) was an early Republican activist who helped elect James B. Edwards governor of South Carolina in 1974, the state's first Republican governor since Reconstruction. Ross became active in Republican politics in 1960 and played a significant role in transforming the Party in South Carolina. Previously, the Party had largely served as a patronage organization dispersing federal jobs. That began to change in the late 1950s. The election of Carroll Campbell as governor in 1986 showed the Party had become a viable second party challenging Democrats across the state. It soon became South Carolina's dominant political party.

Ross's Party service included terms as County Chair, State Executive Committeeman, 2nd District Chair, Deputy State Chairman of the Richard Nixon 1960 Presidential Campaign, District Campaign Chair of Strom Thurmond's 1972 reelection campaign, Chair of James Edwards' 1974 gubernatorial primary campaign, co-chair of Edwards' successful general election campaign, and state Party Chair, 1976 to 1980. Ross also held a leading role in George Bush's 1988 and 1992 presidential campaigns in South Carolina.

Ross was born in Blackville, S.C. to Daniel I. Ross, Sr. (c.1896-1954) and Beatrice Aileen Beasley (d. 1989). He received a degree in geology from the University of South Carolina in 1943, and his



Master's degree from the University of Texas, c.1957. He married Goldie Jeanniene Prater Ross (1929-1991) in 1955, and they had a daughter, Brenda Dawn Ross Hollingsworth. Jeanniene was very active in the community and in Republican affairs, but suffered, particularly in her last years, from rheumatoid arthritis. In 1992, Ross remarried, to childhood friend and widow Helen Halford Barnes (1923-2009).



During World War II, Ross saw action in the China-Burma-India Theater. In China, he suffered a leg injury which led to a nine-month hospitalization. He later served as Commander of the South Carolina Basha of the China-Burma-India Veterans Association and as State Commander of the American Legion.

From 1953 to his 1986 retirement, Ross was employed at DuPont's Savannah River Plant [SRP] in the areas of environmental monitoring and health protection. In 1960, he worked on behalf of Republican Richard M. Nixon's presidential campaign in Barnwell County. Two years later, he crisscrossed the county promoting the candidacies of William D. Workman, Jr. and Floyd D. Spence and campaigning against incumbent U.S. Senator Olin D. Johnston. These early campaigns ignited his lifelong dedication to the

Republican Party and a determination to help develop a competitive political party. Some early Republican leaders argued for building the Party from the top down; Ross firmly held that what was required was a grassroots program built from the bottom up. Most of his work for the Party was directed to this grassroots mission.

In 1972, Ross managed Jim Henderson's campaign for Lt. Governor. While unsuccessful, Henderson's campaign helped build a framework for future efforts. In 1974, Ross managed Jim Edwards' successful gubernatorial campaign. Edwards' election was a major turning point for the growing party. Walt Pettiss, a Republican pioneer and key associate of textile magnate and conservative activist Roger Milliken, wrote, "*Jim is one of those rare individuals who could step into a situation rife with change and advance a conservative philosophy, reduce government, and gain friends – both liberal and conservative friends. In fact, he did things so smoothly that most people were oblivious to the changes. Finances of the State improved. We did a better job with a relatively smaller number of people, and the face of state government became more pleasant.*" [Feb. 22, 2001]

Edwards supported Ross for Party chair when the position came open at the 1976 state convention. He wrote, "*I will happily vote for you for the job of State Chairman. . . . I feel that your past*

experience, your dedication and your temperament will give us the stability we need to move forward in the coming years. You have proven yourself in both Jim Henderson's and my campaigns. You know the nuts and bolts organizational structure that our party needs to make it successful." [letter to Ross, Mar. 26, 1976]

As chair, Ross faced two critical issues - - fund raising, specifically broadening the overall number of financial supporters, and growing Party membership by reaching out to African Americans. In his December 1979 announcement of his candidacy for a third term, Ross expressed pride in his emphasis on making Party headquarters a service organization for candidates and local party organizations: "By focusing our efforts at the local level, we've won better than 50 percent of the special elections we've contested since 1976. For the first time since 1972, we've made gains in the state legislature and congress." Ross lost that hotly contested race, but, reflecting years later, he regretted that after his service, the Party abandoned its outreach to the black community. [Ross oral history with SCPC, p.52]

Ross remained active as a member of the state Party's Executive Committee until 2002. He took great pride in his role in advocating for South Carolina's first Republican Presidential Primary Election. He saw the 1980 primary as a major opportunity to build the Party across South Carolina, with its ballot including the primary's and general election's ultimate victor Ronald Reagan, as well as John Connally and George Herbert Walker Bush.

As a private citizen, Ross maintained his interest in the place of SRP in the community through his involvement with Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness [CNTA]. CNTA was organized in 1991 to increase public understanding and support for nuclear energy and to boost support for the Savannah River Site. Significant material exists for 1991-1994 and reflects Ross's leadership, which included service as Vice-Chair. Ross left the Board in 1998.

Always eager to work to better his community, Ross notably served on the Barnwell School Board, District 19, 1963-1968, while integration of the schools was under consideration. He was also involved with the Barnwell Co. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Board, Barnwell Co. Clemson Extension Service Advisory Council, Barnwell Co. Hospital Board, Barnwell Co. Mental Health Association, Barnwell Co. Task Force on Education, Boy Scouts of America, Chem-Nuclear Support Group, March of Dimes, South Carolina Department of Education Excellence Team, and the Tuberculosis Association. He received the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America in recognition of his distinguished service to scouting.

Scope and Content Note:

The Dan Ross papers consist of 8.75 ft. of material, 1904–2008, arranged in four series: General Papers, Topical Files, Photographs and Clippings. The collection documents his leadership of the Republican Party in Barnwell County and in South Carolina, work at the Savannah River Plant, work on behalf of Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness [CNTA], interest in the history of Blackville and Barnwell County, ownership and rental of a beachfront home on Edisto Island, and the operation of his family farm, chiefly the harvesting of timber.

A note on the arrangement of the collection: Many archives have adopted the processing techniques presented as “More Product, Less Process” to adapt to the growing size of modern archival collections. Processing of the Ross Collection reflects some of these techniques. Patrons need to plan their research strategy accordingly. The General Papers have not been put in exact date order; rather, they have been arranged only by year. As a consequence of this practice and the proliferation of multiple photocopies in contemporary collections, users may find the collection includes duplicates. Also, staff limited the time spent trying to date undated manuscripts so there are a number of “No Date” items as well as a great number of items bearing a “circa” date. Circa dates are assigned based on information within the document and should be accurate within two to three years. [“c. 1986” probably dates from 1986 and almost certainly dates from the period 1984 to 1988.]

Republican Party activities were a constant in Ross’s life beginning in 1960. He was active at the local level in Barnwell County and at the state and national levels. His correspondents include most significant South Carolina Republicans active from the 1960s to his death including David Beasley, Roberta Combs, William B. “Rusty” DePass, Jr., Martha Edens, James B. Edwards, Ray Harris, Joyce Hearn, Henry McMaster, Strom Thurmond, and David Wilkins.



The Ross Collection is filled with material detailing Republican politics at the local, state, and national levels. Typical of the value of the correspondence is a letter by Carroll Campbell, Nov. 11, 1976, in which Campbell suggests the need for the state party to help fund candidate campaigns and to elect the Party chair in off election years. The latter initiative would provide a new chair an extra year to initiate fund raising and other plans.

General Papers include correspondence and other manuscripts, arranged by year. In many early letters, Ross is addressed by his nickname, “Deek.”

During World War II, Bea and Daniel Ross, Sr. corresponded with a number of local servicemen, and the letters of those men form a small but interesting element of the collection. A letter from Ted, July 3, 1945, [Oberwallen?], Germany, talks of his hopes of returning home and notes, “We have our assigned mission here now + I guess we should feel proud. Our job is to go to Berlin + accompany and Guard the American Embassy there. . . . You asked me once what I thought about [General George] Patton + I was unable to say because of censorship but I truly think him the Greatest General for he is hard Boiled about everything he does. I had the pleasure of Driving a tank with him aboard twice + he was very calm under fire.” Another correspondent was Dan’s former football teammate, Dominic “Dom” Thomas Fusci (1922-2012). Fusci served aboard the *USS Silenus* in the Asiatic Pacific Theater. After the war, he enjoyed a short career with the

Baltimore Colts, Philadelphia Eagles and Paterson [NJ] Panthers, as attested to in letters from 1947 and 1948.

The period 1951 to 1953 features numerous letters from Jeanniene to her sweetheart Ross while he was in Texas. She wrote of her work in Columbia and about life on her farm, "*The damned frost killed all of my cotton and part of my tobacco – I don't know which to do cry or cuss. . . .*" [Saturday night, c. 1952] In another letter, she stated her displeasure with a local game warden, "*No damned man is going to tell me what I can hunt where and when on my own land. . . .*" [Nov. 18, 1952]

Papers from the 1970s document Ross' strong efforts to help re-elect President Richard Nixon, the 1972 Henderson campaign, the 1974 Edwards campaign, and his service as Party Chairman. Unannotated copies of Party documents have been interfiled in SCPC's collection of the Republican Party of South Carolina.

An incomplete set of speech notecards, c. 1978, show how Ross appealed to black voters, seeking their support for the Republican Party.



Ross noted that Republicans stand for individual freedom, a strong national defense, fiscal responsibility, and decentralized or more local government. He argued that the Civil Rights victories attributed to the federal government were actually brought about by the activism of the black community. He wrote, "*This – I believe – is the crux of why a two-party system at the local level is a good thing – Competition makes local govt move from an establishment controlled mechanism to [one] being responsible to people*" In writing Louis Bone of Columbia, Ross noted, "*During the past several weeks we have held several discussions concerning the need for recruiting blacks and other minorities into the Republican Party and ways to reach that objective. A review of our experience over the past few years has indicated the need to make the party more representative of a cross-section of the people of South Carolina. We have discussed the image of the GOP and we agree that the image needs improving. . . .*" In writing Mitchell Kobelinski, Chair of the National Republican Groups (Heritage) Council, Feb. 26, 1979, Ross reflected on his leadership in reaching out to African Americans. He wrote, "*The largest minority in South Carolina are the blacks. Since I've been chairman, our candidates – even at the local level, have generally committed to campaign the black community. To date, we haven't been too successful but I feel we're making some slight progress.*"

Material from 1985-1986 reflects his work with the Barnwell County Hospital and Nursing Home Board of Trustees.

Papers from the late 1990s reflect Ross' work as executor of the estate of his aunt, Eudora Dean Hudson (1911-1998), widow of Percy Clenton Hales (1907-1984), of Florida.

1991 papers include material documenting Ross's chairing of the Convention Platform Committee.

1994 material documents Ross's efforts as a member of David Beasley's gubernatorial campaign steering committee.



During 2000 and 2001, Ross engaged in a broad correspondence in a determined effort to assist the South Caroliniana Library in documenting the rise of the Republican Party and to Korean War veterans seeking their papers for the Library. Many wrote back to Ross reflecting on their political involvement.

Topical Files:

American Legion material, 1963-2003, includes Ross' correspondence as commander, drafts of press releases and speeches. [Clippings filed in an American Legion folder within the Clippings series.]

Barnwell School Board of Trustees, District 19 files, 1963-1969, document meeting decisions and discussions, Ross's writings and remarks as Chair, and correspondence related to school improvements, accreditation, personnel,

millage, and desegregation. Correspondence with Sol Blatt and Edgar Brown relates chiefly to school funding, board voting, and desegregation.

The Blackville file contains the collection's oldest item, a May 1904 "Programme" for the Graded School Commencement.

China-Burma-India [CBI] files date from 1984 to 2000. Ross served as Commander of South Carolina's China-Burma-India Veterans Association for a time. Almost one foot of material relates to the CBI and includes correspondence, membership rosters, newsletters, and local, state and national meeting records of these veterans of World War Two's 'Forgotten Theater.' Local CBI groups met in "Bashas," the name taken from the huts common in the Theater. "CBI" and "Basha" appear to have been used interchangeably. Related materials appear in Clippings and Photographs.

Republican Party topical files relate to specific activities of the Party. The American Opportunities Workshop file relates to a 1990 *“nationwide teleconference designed to arouse, inform, liberate and empower citizen activism.”* It was created by GOPAC and hosted by Newt Gingrich. Republican National Committee Workbook for State Chairmen, 1977, bears Ross’ handwritten notes and presents information on issues including staffing a headquarters, fundraising, press relations, and candidate recruitment.

Ross, Beatrice Beasley (c. 1907-1989), files document South Carolina’s first woman state park superintendent. Born in Rocky Ford, Georgia, Mrs. Ross married Daniel (Bunkum) Iradel Ross, Sr. (1897-1954), circa 1922. In 1944, D.I. Ross, Sr. became superintendent at Barnwell State Park, where he served until his death in 1954 at 58 years of age. Upon Mr. Ross’ death, Mrs. Ross took over superintendence at the park, a position she held until her retirement in 1979. Her papers, 1942-1989, mostly reflect her work at the park. General papers consist of correspondence related to park service, her correspondence with her friends and family, and a small amount of D.I. Ross Sr.’s correspondence as park superintendent. Significantly, Mrs. Ross engaged in correspondence with Sol Blatt and Edgar Brown. The correspondence, 1954-1979, reflects Blatt’s and Brown’s assistance with the hiring of Mrs. Ross as superintendent, Blatt’s interest in the park and his influence on its development, and the park’s closing in 1963 to avoid a federal court desegregation order. Newsletters of the South Carolina State Parks provide seasonal updates from each park in the state. Writings include Mrs. Ross’ drafts of updates for the newsletter, as well as writings for her column, *“Seen and Heard at Barnwell State Park”* for the Barnwell newspaper. Related clippings, 1949-1989, mostly focus on the park and are filed in Clippings.

Ross, Jeannine files include material related to her activity with the United Daughters of the Confederacy and a three act play *“The Yankees Are Coming!!!”* by Mary Wilson Erickson and Viola Parish Shackelford, of the Georgetown chapter. Correspondence to and from Jeannine is throughout the general papers, particularly during the 1950s. Drake Edens complimented her political skills after watching her campaign on behalf on Bill Workman’s Senate bid. He wrote, *“We were in Barnwell last night and one of our hardest workers in that county is Mrs. D.I. (Jeanniene) Ross of Blackville. Jeanniene would be spending time in Florence to politick with these many, many members of her family scattered throughout the county.”* [Sept. 26, 1962]

Savannah River Plant [SRP] files document Ross’ long-time employment with SRP.

Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association of Edisto papers, 1965-1969, document Ross’ presidency, 1969-1970. Records include by-laws, meeting agendas and minutes, and correspondence. Much of the material deals with their 1968 Christmas Seal Campaign.



University of Texas material concerns his research on Mexico and includes his thesis, a longer paper, and his field summer school notebook. His thesis, *A Study in Land Utilization of the Villa De Coalcoman De Matamoros*, was not submitted until 1957 and is based on earlier research for the PhD study he never completed. A longer undated paper is titled *The Hot Springs, Geyser, and Solfataras of the Northern Part of the State of Michoacan, Mexico*. The notebook, June-Aug., 1951, is basically a diary of a trip to central Mexico.

Photographs reflect all aspects of the Ross family and Dan Ross's life including his student days at USC, military service, Republican politics, and interest in Blackville and Barnwell County. Political photos include candid shots of campaigning as well as photographs of Ross with any number of notables including George H. W. Bush, Carroll Campbell, John Courson, James Edwards, Ronald Reagan, Norma Russell, Floyd Spence, Sherry Shealy Martschink, and Strom Thurmond. In addition to general photos, there are also photos regarding the Carroll Campbell gubernatorial campaign, the China, Burma and India Veterans Association, Ross's family, Politics, and Portraits of Ross.



Ross Collection Inventory:

Series:

General Papers

Topical Files

Photographs

Clippings

General Papers:

Box 1

1930s

1940s

1950-1951

1952-1953

1954-1959

c.1950s

1960s

1970-1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

1979

Box 2

1980

1981

1982-1983

1984

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990

1991

1992

Box 3

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

2001

Box 4

2002

2003

2004

2005

2007

n.d.

Topical Files:

American Legion:

1963

1964-1965

1966
1967
1968
1969
1971
1987
2001
2002
2003
n.d.

Barnwell School Board, District 19:

Box 5

1963
1964
1965
1966
1967
1968
1969
n.d.

Biographical Information

Blackville

Boy Scouts

China-Burma-India:

General:

1984-1986
1987
1988
1989-1990
1991-1992
1993
1994
1995-1996
1997-1998

1999

Box 6

2000

2001-2005

n.d.

Member Questionnaire Responses

March of Dimes, 1967-1968

Henderson, James, Campaign, 1972

Republican Party:

American Opportunities Workshop, 1990

Election Law Reform, 1985

Presidential Primary, 1988

Republican National Committee, Workbook for State Chairmen, 1977, (2f.)

Ross, Beatrice Beasley

General:

1940

1950-1954

1955-1959

1960-1969

1970-1979

1980-1987 & n.d.

Newsletters:

Box 7

State Parks Newsletter

Sparks from the Parks

Spark Plugger

Park Lites

Writings:

“Seen and Heard at Barnwell State Park”

Untitled

Ross, Jeanniene

Savannah River Plant [SRP]

Speech Notes

Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association of Edisto, 1965-1969

University of Texas:

Field Notebook:

pp.1-45

pp.46-89

pp.90-113

Paper, *The Hot Springs, Geyser, and Solfataras of the Northern Part of the State of Michoacan, Mexico,* n.d.

Thesis, *A Study In Land Utilization of the Villa De Coalcoman De Matamoros,* 1957.

Photographs:

General

Barnwell Co.

Campbell Gubernatorial Campaign

China, Burma and India Veterans Association [CBI]

Family:

General

Parents

Politics

Portrait

Clippings:

General:

1930s

1950s

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

n.d.

Topical:

China, Burma and India Veterans Association [CBI], 1986-2004

Ross, Beatrice, 1949-1989