

PENNSSTATE



Guide to the "A Few Good Women" Oral History Collection, 1938-2000 (bulk 1969-2000)

Manuscript group number: MGN 984

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Table of Contents

1 Descriptive Summary	1
2 Administrative Information	1
2.1 Access	1
2.2 Preferred Citation	1
3 Provenance	1
4 Arrangement	1
5 Scope and Content	2
6 Biographical Sketches of the Interviewees	3
7 Index Terms	10
7.1 Personal Subjects	10
7.2 Topical Subjects	11
7.3 Form/Genre Terms	12
8 Container List	12
8.1 Oral History Interviews Series	12
8.2 Supporting Materials Series	19
8.3 Photographs Series	23
8.4 Oral History Tapes Series	24

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Franklin, Barbara Hackman

Title: "A Few Good Women" Oral History Collection, 1938-2000 (bulk 1969-2000)

Accession number: MGN 984

Extent: 1.4 cubic feet

Repository: Pennsylvania State University, University Libraries, Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Access

Unrestricted access for the most part, although permission is required to quote from some interviews.

Preferred Citation

"A Few Good Women" Oral History Collection, 1938-2000, MGN 984, Penn State University Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.

Provenance

Collected by Barbara Hackman Franklin, 1998-2000. The interview tapes and transcripts and related papers were donated by the various interviewees and by Barbara Hackman Franklin as project organizer to the University over the period 1998-2000.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series: I. Oral History Interviews; II. Supporting Papers; III. Photographs and; IV. Oral History Tapes. The supporting papers donated by

Esther Lawton have been organized as a separate collection known as the Esther C. Lawton Papers, 1936-1996 (MGN 297).

The series are arranged by subject and form of material.

Scope and Content

The collection consists primarily of oral history interview transcripts, original tape recordings of the interviews, and photographs and related papers donated by the interviewees. These materials may range from just a resume or Curriculum Vitae, to copies of newspaper clippings, articles, speeches and other writings to collected reports and other documents from the era. The Esther Lawton Papers are described in a separate inventory.

These oral history interviews and related papers are the product of the "A Few Good Women: Advancing the cause for Women in Government, 1969-74" oral history project initiated by the Honorable Barbara Hackman Franklin in 1995. Following the donation of her papers to the Penn State University Archives in 1994, Ms. Franklin agreed to the suggestion of University Archivist Lee Stout that an oral project be developed to record the reminiscences of the women who were recruited and trained for upper-level government positions during the administration of President Richard M. Nixon. This marked the first systematic effort to open such positions to women and Barbara Franklin had played an important role in that effort as Staff Assistant to the President with responsibility for recruitment of women.

The initiative began with President Nixon's response to a reporter's question in a news conference about two weeks after his inauguration in February, 1969. Vera Glaser asked why there had been only three women among the first 200 appointments. Mr. Nixon was unaware of this but promised to correct the imbalance. The Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities, chaired by Virginia Allan, former president of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs had been created in 1968. All of its various recommendations were ultimately adopted by the Nixon Administration, including the creation of a White House office to recruit women into executive positions in the federal government. Barbara Hackman Franklin took that position in 1971, coming from Citibank, where she was an assistant vice president and head of the governmental relations department.

A critical step in this process was the requirement that cabinet secretaries and agency heads submit Action Plans to the President, describing how they intended to place, recruit, advance and train women in their departments. One year later, the number of women in posts paying \$28,000 and up (GS-16 and above) increased from 36 to 105, many in positions women had never held before. Four years later, in March 1973, there had been more than 1,000 women hired or promoted to middle management positions. Women also became forest rangers, FBI agents and sky marshals. The logjam of promotions for women in the military service was also broken. The former limit of one female colonel per service branch was put aside and women were promoted for the first

time to general and admiral. Barriers against women in the foreign service were lifted. Women headed the Federal Maritime Commission, the Tariff Commission, and the Atomic Energy Commission for the first time. Numbers of women appointed to the federal judiciary increased.

In 1997, an Interim Advisory Board for the project was formed, chaired by Barbara Hackman Franklin, with the objective of launching a project to collect oral history interviews and related papers from women and men involved with the advancement of women in government. Individuals were identified by the Board to be interviewed and a cooperative relationship with the Penn State University Libraries was established to house the histories for use by future scholars and historians. Jean Rainey, a retired public relations executive who was active in women's issues during the era of the project, was named project administrator and served as interviewer. Funding for the project was raised from private corporations and individuals interested in supporting the project as well as specific outcomes. Tapes and transcripts of the interviews, along with copies of related papers donated by several interviewees have been donated to the Penn State University Archives, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University Libraries.

Biographical Sketches of the Interviewees

Virginia Allan

Virginia Allan was a native of Michigan and was an educator and businesswoman, whose interest in women's issues developed through her work as President of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, where she initiated the idea of a national network of state commissions on the status of women, based on her experience on Michigan's commission. In 1969, she was named chair of President Nixon's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities. From that group came the report "A Matter of Simple Justice" and from its recommendations grew the Women's Equality Act of 1971. In 1972, she was named Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, where she served in a variety of roles and was the liaison with non-governmental organizations for the International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975. She also attended world conferences in Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985. In 1983, she helped to inaugurate the United States Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, a non-profit organization created to support projects to promote the political, economic, and social empowerment of women around the world. She also served as Director of the Graduate School of Women's Studies at George Washington University. In 1993, she retired and moved to Florida. She died in Sarasota, August 8, 1999.

The Honorable Anne L. Armstrong

Anne Legendre Armstrong was born in New Orleans and graduated from Vassar College. After work as a journalist, she married Tobin Armstrong, a Texas cattle rancher. In 1966, she became involved in the Texas Republican Party and was elected Co-Chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1971. She was the first woman to deliver a keynote address at the Republican National Convention in 1972 and

became a Counselor to the President in 1972. There she served on the president's Domestic Council, the Council on Wage and Price Stability, and the Commission on the Organization of Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy. In 1976 President Ford appointed her U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain. She served as chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 1981 to 1990, and the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security. She is currently chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., as well as a member of the Texas A and M University Board of Regents. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Reagan in 1987.

The Honorable Catherine May Bedell

Catherine Dean May was born in Yakima, Washington, and graduated from the University of Washington in 1936 with a degree in education. She later studied speech at the University of Southern California and taught English before becoming involved in broadcasting. She was a writer and assistant commentator with the National Broadcasting Co., New York City 1944-1946, and women's editor at station KIT, Yakima, Washington, 1948-1957. She served as a member of the Washington State Legislature from 1952 to 1958; and was later elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican, serving six terms (1959-1971) before losing a bid for reelection in 1970. She married Donald W. Bedell in November 1970. She was appointed by President Richard Nixon to the United States International Trade Commission, and served 1971-1981, and also was appointed Special Consultant to the President on the 50 States Project, 1982. She has been president of her own firm, Bedell Associates and is a resident of Palm Desert, Calif.

The Honorable Helen Delich Bentley

Former U.S. Representative from Maryland (1985-95), Helen Delich Bentley entered government service in the Nixon administration as Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission. Helen Bentley grew up in the Nevada mining town of Ruth and attended the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Graduating in 1944, she took a position with the United Press, eventually landing in Baltimore as Maritime Editor for the Baltimore Sun. In this position she covered all forms of transportation and its labor relations activities. During this time she also produced local television news programs in Baltimore and Philadelphia dealing with trade and the two ports. In these she did profiles on more than 800 companies in the trade and shipping businesses. After writing some pieces for the Nixon Campaign she was recruited to be Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission. She left office in 1975 to become a business consultant and, in 1984 was elected to Congress representing Baltimore and Harford counties, Maryland. She was re-elected four more times and, after 1995, returned to her international trade and business consulting practice.

Charles L. Clapp

Charles Clapp received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California at Berkeley. As the winner of one of five American Political Science Awards given nationally to spend nine months in Washington working for members of Congress, Charles Clapp had the experience of working for Peter Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) in the House and John F. Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate. He then served as a special assistant on the Special Senate Committee to Investigate Political Activities, Lobbying

and Campaign Contributions, and later on the staff of Representative Charles Chamberlain (R-MI). He then went to the Brookings Institution where, in 1966, he published the study "The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It." From there he joined the staff of Senator Leverett Saltonstall (R-MA) where he served for five years until the Senator retired. His next position was as Special Assistant to the Secretary (Head) of the Smithsonian Institution. With the election of Richard M. Nixon in 1968, Arthur Burns, counsel to the President at the time, invited him to come on his staff as Special Assistant to the President, where he was responsible for the 17 Presidential task forces developed in the domestic area to provide recommendations for programs. As a member of the Domestic Council staff, he was named co-chair of the first White House Conference on Corrections. After President Nixon's re-election, he was nominated and confirmed by the Senate as a Commissioner of the Interstate Commerce Commission, where he served for eight years. He later became Chief Administrative Officer and Secretary for the Postal Rate Commission for 11 years.

Evelyn Cunningham

Evelyn Cunningham studied journalism at Long Island University and graduated in 1943. She secured a position with the *Pittsburgh Courier*, then one of America's leading newspapers serving the African-American community across the nation. In her roles as New York City editor, she interviewed Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and many other prominent leaders, and she covered all of the major civil rights events of the 1950s and 1960s. She also produced and hosted for five years a popular radio program on WLIB in New York called "At Home with Evelyn Cunningham," which featured interviews with significant figures in the African-American community in New York. Cunningham had campaigned for Nelson Rockefeller and, in 1968, he offered her a position on his staff and she accepted. After two years, as administrative assistant to Jackie Robinson, she moved to the Women's Unit of state government. There, she was responsible for liaison with women's organizations and mounted the first major conference in New York government on women's issues. She was invited to become a member of the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities in 1969 and later served in several other positions in the White House. She is the founder of The Coalition of 100 Black Women, and is an active supporter and participant in a number of organizations dedicated to the arts in the African-American community.

Julie Nixon Eisenhower

Julie Nixon was born in 1948 in Washington, D.C. She graduated from Smith College in 1970 and received a master's degree in Elementary Education from Catholic University in 1971. She was active in both of her father's presidential campaigns and during the Nixon administration, she traveled across the country, representing the White House on behalf of children's issues, the environment, and the elderly. She married David Eisenhower on December 28, 1968. From 1973-75, Julie Nixon Eisenhower served as Assistant Managing Editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and helped establish a book division for Curtis Publishing Co., its parent corporation. Since that time, she has written or edited five books, including *Pat Nixon: The Untold Story*, a biography of her mother. She has an extensive record of community service in the Philadelphia area and is co-chair of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Birthplace Foundation.

The Honorable Barbara Hackman Franklin

Barbara Franklin's role in the Nixon White House from 1971 to 1973 is the keystone for

advancing women into leadership positions in government and also for this oral history project. After graduation from Penn State in 1962, she became one of the first women to receive an M.B.A. degree from the Harvard Business School in 1964. With path-breaking experiences in business, she accepted a position as Staff Assistant to President Richard M. Nixon in 1971 with the mission to recruit talented women into leadership positions in the federal government. After great success she was nominated and confirmed as Commissioner and Vice Chairman of the newly established Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1973. After six years of service, she returned to business, founding a consulting firm and becoming a director on a number of corporate boards, a senior fellow of the Wharton School of Business, and director of the Wharton Government and Business Program at the University of Pennsylvania, and at various times as a member of the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy Negotiations, as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. In 1992-93, she served as the 29th Secretary of Commerce in the administration of President George H. W. Bush. Returning to the private sector, she is now President and Chief Executive Officer of Barbara Franklin Enterprises, a consulting and investment firm. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees, and the Distinguished Alumni award from Penn State.

Vera Glaser

A Washington correspondent and bureau chief since 1963, Vera Glaser has written for the North American Newspaper Alliance, Knight Ridder Newspapers, Maturity News Service, and most recently has been contributing editor for *The Washingtonian* magazine. She has been a free-lance writer for a variety of magazines and a commentator on radio and television. In 1970, she served as a member of President Nixon's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities and has served as a public member of a variety of USIA and Department of State advisory panels. She has been president of the Washington Press Club, a governor of the National Press Club, and a member of the board of the International Women's Media Foundation.

Judge Cynthia Holcomb Hall

Judge Cynthia Holcomb Hall is a Los Angeles native and attended undergraduate and law school at Stanford. She spent a year as an undergraduate at the University of Geneva in Switzerland, and later took a master's degree in tax law at New York University. She served as a law clerk to a judge on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, before joining the Justice Department as a trial lawyer and later the Treasury Department to work on tax policy. She took up private practice in 1966. In 1972, she was offered a seat on the Tax Court in Washington, where she served until 1981. She then moved to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, and in 1984 was named to the 9th Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals. She has since moved to senior status on the court.

Rita Hauser

Rita Hauser is President of The Hauser Foundation. She is an international lawyer, senior Partner and now of counsel to the New York City law firm, Stroock, Stroock and Lavan. She is known for her public service and philanthropic work. Interested in world peace, security, and human rights, she has served as the U.S. Representative to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and on commissions affiliated with the U.S. Department of State, The Brookings Institution and the International Center for Peace in

the Middle East. Dr. Hauser chairs The International Peace Academy and The Advisory Board of the RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy. She is a director of many organizations, including: The Rand Corporation, The International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, The New York Philharmonic Society and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. She is on the Visiting Committee of the John F. Kennedy School at Harvard University, on the Dean's Advisory Board of Harvard Law School, and chair of the Advisory Board of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University. Dr. Hauser is a National Co-Chair of the Harvard University Campaign. She holds advanced degrees from the University of Strasbourg in France, Harvard and NYU Law Schools, and the University of Paris Law Faculty.

Patricia Reilly Hitt

A Whittier, California native, Patricia Reilly Hitt graduated from the University of Southern California. She was an educator and board member of several educational organizations. She began ringing doorbells for Richard Nixon in his first political campaign in 1946. She became increasingly active in California politics, working in a number of campaigns, rising eventually to National Co-chair of the Nixon-Agnew Campaign in 1968, the first woman to hold such a post in either party. In January 1969, she was named Assistant Secretary for Community and Field Services, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In this position, she was responsible for coordinating the work of the Department's ten regional field offices across all programs. She has received numerous awards including honorary doctorates from several colleges and served on the boards of Whittier College and Chapman College and a number of other organizations. After her term in Washington, she returned to California where she is active in community service, although she remained an appointee to the President's Commission on White House Fellows.

Maj. Gen. Jeanne M. Holm, USAF - Retired

Jeanne M. Holm was the first woman in the armed forces to be promoted to the rank of Major General (1973), and this was only one of her many firsts. She served in the Army from 1942-1945 and transferred to the Air Force in 1948, when a new law integrated women in the regular armed forces. Gen. Holm served in a variety of personnel assignments, including Director of Women in the Air Force from 1965-73. She played a significant role in eliminating restrictions on numbers of women serving in all ranks, expanding job and duty station assignments for women, opening ROTC and service academies to women, and changing the policies on the status of women in the armed forces. According to Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught, "Gen. Jeanne Holm is recognized as the single driving force in achieving parity for military women and making them a viable part of the mainstream military." After her retirement, she served as a Special Assistant on Women for President Ford and as a policy consultant for the Carter administration. She is the author of *Women in the Military, An Unfinished Revolution* (Presidio Press, 1986, revised edition, 1992).

Patricia Hutar

With her political involvement beginning in the Young Republicans, Patricia Hutar became an early advocate for women's rights and initiated her interest in international affairs both in her professional and political careers. She served as co-chair of the Republican National Committee. Ms. Hutar was appointed to the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities. Later she was appointed by the President of the

United States to serve as U.S. Representative to the U.N. Commission of the Status of Women, and in that capacity was chair of the U.S. delegations to the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City. As a result of her interest in international women's affairs, she became the Founding President of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Later Ms. Hutar was elected President of the National Federation of Republican Women. She has served as a consultant on national/international affairs. Ms. Hutar became the Director of the Office of International Medicine for the American Medical Association. She also served as a member of the Washington Roundtable of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Ms. Hutar is a founding member and director of the International Foundation for Election Systems. She was elected chair of the Board of Directors of IFES in June 2001, and was also elected chair of the Board of Directors of IFES Limited, London, in July 2001. IFES is committed to serving emerging, transitional and mature democracies in the areas of elections, the rule of law, strengthening of civil society, and governance.

E. Pendleton James

E. Pendleton James has over thirty years experience in the executive search field. He is a 1954 graduate of the University of the Pacific and did graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Santa Clara. After several positions in personnel management and recruiting, Pen James became a member of President Nixon's White House staff (1970-1972), where he served as Deputy Special Assistant to the President with primary responsibility for recruiting leading figures to fill Presidential appointment positions. Returning to the private sector in 1981, he was president and owner of Pen James and Associates, Inc., an executive search firm headquartered in Los Angeles. In 1980, he became director of personnel for President-elect Reagan. From January 1981 to August 1982, he served in the Reagan White House as Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel, where he was responsible for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet appointments in all departments and agencies of the Federal Government, as well as appointments to regulatory agencies, boards, commissions, and ambassadorships. In April 1983, President Reagan nominated James to a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Communications Satellite Corporation. He later returned to his company and, in 1996, James sold his interests in Pen James and Associates. He is also a former member of the board of the Metropolitan Life Series Fund and the White House Fellows Commission. He currently serves on the Board of the Citizens for Democracy Corps, which fosters privatization in Eastern Europe. During his career, he has been involved in a number of civic and philanthropic organizations.

Virginia Knauer

Virginia Knauer grew up in Philadelphia, where her father was a professor of accounting at Temple University, and she graduated from both the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania. She became interested in politics in the 1950s and began organizing Republican women's groups in support of President Eisenhower. She was later elected to consecutive terms on the Philadelphia City Council, and became Governor Raymond Shafer's principal advisor on consumer affairs, a new post. She was lured to Washington and took a similar post in the Nixon White House, which she later held under Presidents Ford and Reagan as well. Because of her expertise, she also served on the Cost of Living Council and a number of other White House domestic policy committees. At other times, she formed her own consulting service on consumer affairs, was chair of the non-partisan Council for the Advancement of

Consumer Policy, and served on a number of other organizational and corporate boards. Knauer has also been active in Republican politics, historic preservation activities, and has received numerous awards for her public service and work on behalf of the consumer movement.

Esther Christian Lawton

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1910, Esther Lawton's family realized from an early age that she had academic talent and supported her education through college at a time when relatively few women could take that route. She graduated from the University of Rochester in 1932 and, with her husband, took the Civil Service examination for a government position. She was called to Washington in June 1936, and began working in the Treasury Department, first in public relations, and then coordinating foreign intelligence reporting before the creation of the Office of Strategic Services. In 1942, she began work as a position classifier, the field where she would make extraordinary contributions over the next 38 years. She rose gradually, becoming Assistant Director in 1961 and Deputy Director of Personnel for the Treasury Department in 1972, then the highest ranking woman in the department. Esther Lawton was an extraordinary teacher and organizational leader. In 1961, she was the first woman elected president of the American Society for Public Administration. She founded the Training Officers' Conference, the Classification and Compensation Society, and the International Association for Personnel Women, as well as a number of women's organizations. During these years, Lawton also served as a consultant for the Ford Foundation in Lebanon and Jordan, advising those governments on personnel management, occupational classification, and salary scale determination. During the 1970s, Lawton was instrumental in developing lists of women qualified for supergrade positions and she worked closely with Barbara Franklin. Widely known as probably the best classification analyst in the federal government, Lawton received numerous awards including the 1969 Federal Woman's Award and was twice named Professional Woman of the Year by Washington's Business and Professional Women's Clubs. She retired from the federal government in 1980 and opened her own management consulting firm as well as teaching at George Washington University's School of Government and Business Administration. Esther Lawton died in Washington, D.C., on February 14, 1998.

Fred Malek

Fred Malek grew up near Chicago and won an appointment to West Point. Following a tour as an airborne ranger officer with the Special Forces in Vietnam, he spent two years in business before coming to Washington as Deputy Under Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1970 he became Special Assistant to President Nixon, where he was responsible for recruiting for cabinet-level positions, commissions and boards. He later served as Deputy Director of the Office and Management and Budget and then Member of the White House Domestic Council, before leaving government service in 1975 to join the Marriott Corporation. There he rose to become President of Marriott Hotels and Resorts when he moved on to become President and Co-CEO, and later Chairman, of Northwest Airlines. During the 1990s, he founded Thayer Capital Partners, a finance and investment firm, and serves as a director of several corporations. Malek remained active in Republican political circles and served in advisory roles in both the Reagan and Bush administrations. His book, *Washington's Hidden Tragedy, the Failure to Make Government Work*, stemmed from his leadership of an effort to improve government management.

Paula Adams Tennant

Paula Adams Tennant followed a singular path to a law career. Graduating from high school during the Depression, she could not afford college. She served in the Navy during the war, and afterward went to law school on the GI Bill. Passing the California bar exam, she began her practice of law. She served as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Territory of Alaska in Fairbanks and as a district attorney in California, and was twice appointed by Gov. Ronald Reagan to the California Youth Authority Board, the state's parole body for juveniles. In 1970, President Richard M. Nixon appointed Tennant to the U.S. Board of Parole, where she played a significant role over a number of years in reforming the federal parole process. In 1983, President Reagan appointed her to the U.S. Parole Commission. Since her retirement, she has continued to write and publish poetry, has been a volunteer for the SETI Institute, and is involved in a variety of community projects near her home in northern California.

Margita E. White

Margita White emigrated from Sweden with her family in 1948 when she was ten years old. She grew up in Southern California and graduated magna cum laude from the University of Redlands in 1959. She developed a strong interest in politics, volunteering and working in several legislative offices. In 1960, she received her M.A. in political science from Rutgers where she was a Woodrow Wilson National Fellow at the Eagleton Institute of Politics. She worked in both the 1960 Nixon and 1964 Goldwater presidential campaigns while pursuing a career in public policy. After working on the 1968 Nixon campaign, she joined the White House staff as an assistant to Communications Director Herbert G. Klein. In 1973, she was named Assistant Director for Public Information at the U.S. Information Agency and in 1975 returned to the White House as, first, Assistant Press Secretary and, then, Director of the restored Office of Communications for President Ford. In 1976, she was appointed to a two-year term on the Federal Communications Commission. After the expiration of her term, she served as a director and then vice chair of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc., and on a number of other corporate boards. Between 1988 and her retirement in 2001, she was president of the Association for Maximum Service Television, Inc., an industry group working on technology policy issues and the primary advocates for high definition initiatives in broadcast television. In April 2001, the National Association of Broadcasters honored her with the acclaimed "Spirit of Broadcasting" award. Margita White died on November 20, 2002.

Index Terms

These materials are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Pennsylvania State University. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search the catalog under these index terms.

Personal Subjects

Adams

Allan, Virginia
Armstrong, Anne Legendre
Bedell, Catherine May, 1914-
Bentley, Helen Delich
Clapp, Charles L.
Cunningham, Evelyn
Eisenhower, Julie Nixon
Franklin, Barbara Hackman
Glaser, Vera
Hall, Cynthia Holcomb
Hauser, Rita E.
Hitt, Patricia Reilly
Holm, Jeanne, 1921-
Hutar, Patricia
James, E. Pendleton
Knauer, Virginia H.
Lawton, Esther Christian
Malek, Frederic V.
White, Margita Eklund, 1937-

Topical Subjects

African American women journalists
Businesswomen -- United States
Women cabinet officers
Women generals
Women government executives -- United States
Women journalists
Women judges

Women lawyers -- United States

Women legislators -- United States

Women political consultants

Form/Genre Terms

Oral histories

Photographs

Container List

Oral History Interviews Series

Oral History Interviews, 1997-2000.

Box 1

Folder 01

OHI deeds of gift, 1997-2000

Box 1

Folder 02

OHI indexes, 1997-2000

Box 1

Folder 03

Allan, Virginia oral history interview (no restrictions, 1998/08/30, 1998/09/01

"Virginia Allan discusses her early work with the National Federation of Business and Professional Women in pushing for equality for women, their development of a talent bank to refute charges of a lack of qualified women, and leadership in fighting discrimination. In part of the interview, Charles Clapp joins the conversation to talk about the selection and qualities of Virginia Allan as chairman of the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities and the selection of Task Force members. Both agree Catherine East played the key role as staff person, providing information for the Task Force. They discussed the tone of the meetings and the final report, 'A Matter of Simple Justice,' and the need to be moderate to a point and politically astute to secure acceptance from higher White House staff. They also discussed the broader impact of the Task Force deliberations and recommendations at the state level and how state commissions on the status of women contributed new ideas to the federal level, and how these ideas percolated up towards the International Year of the Woman. In a concluding segment, Virginia Allan discusses her work as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State to establish contacts with non-governmental organizations on foreign policy issues and to coordinate the U.S. observances of the International Year of the Woman. She also briefly discusses her role in the establishment of the women's study center at George Washington University."

Box 1

Folder 04

Armstrong, Anne oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/03/24

Anne Armstrong discusses her experience in Washington as Co-chairman of the Republican National Committee and service as a Counselor to the President in the Nixon White House, dealing with women's organizations and issues, among other responsibilities. In this interview, she provides a wide-ranging assessment of women who made a difference in that period in both the Executive Branch and the Congress. She discusses aspects of her life, marriage, and work and the balance between them in the broader context of feminism and women's rights. She reflects on the approach to advancing equality for women that she felt comfortable with in comparison to more radical feminists, but believes they had an important role to play too. She discusses women in government in other countries as well as in American state and local government.

Box 1

Folder 05-06

Bedell, Catherine May oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/09/29, 1998/02/18

Catherine Bedell begins by describing her youth in rural Washington, her background in broadcasting, and her involvement in local Republican politics leading to her election to the state legislature. After four years, she ran for and was elected to Congress, a first for the state of Washington. She discusses her women colleagues in the House, their bipartisan efforts to advance women's issues, and her realization that many issues, like hydroelectric power dams--a critical issue for her district--had aspects that were critical to women. In the Nixon administration she was appointed chairman of the Tariff Commission, which later became the International Trade Commission. She discusses the role of Barbara Franklin and believes she played an important role and accomplished a great deal. She reflects on her family background, her strong grandmother and her mother's encouragement, but also teachers and legislative leaders as mentors. She also discusses her experiences with Senators Jackson and Magnusson, the four presidents she worked with, and her work on corporate boards.

Box 1

Folder 07

Bentley, Helen oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/02/18

Helen Bentley describes in fine detail the struggles she overcame to achieve prominence as a journalist and public servant. She discusses the influence of her mother, who ran a boarding house in small Nevada mining towns, and her determination to strive for excellence and achieve success in fields where women were rarely seen. Her narrative takes us through her experiences as a journalist and she tells the story of her tenacious battle to secure appointment to the post of Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission. Mrs. Bentley discusses in detail her work with Barbara Franklin and her relationships with women journalists and women in the Congress. Her reflections on the problems women faced, sometimes of their own making, is revealing; her attitudes towards her work and the pride in breaking barriers and opening the door for other women is evident. Her own election to Congress is another reflection of the qualities she regarded as essential to the success of women in government generally.

Box 1

Folder 08

Clapp, Charles oral history interview (permission to quote required), 1997/11/17

While on Capitol Hill, Charles Clapp worked on staff for several members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats. His 1966 book for the Brookings Institution, *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, gave him a unique perspective on women in

Congress and the difficulties they faced. He describes being hired by Arthur Burns to staff the various task forces appointed early in the Nixon presidency to look at various domestic issues. He recalls he chose Virginia Allan as a more moderate and balanced chair for the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities over more conservative candidates. While he selected both Republican and Democratic members for the Task Force, he acknowledges that he was interested in giving Republican women more visibility on women's issues. He describes the meetings of the Task Force, which he usually attended, and characterizes the roles of various members. He discusses the White House staff attitudes towards the work of the Task Force, its recommendations, noting some reluctance to release the report. He further discusses Barbara Franklin's work and the difficulties she had with some staff, and the departmental action plans, which varied considerably in effectiveness. He also reflects on the relationship between these initiatives at the federal level and accomplishments at state and local levels, and comments on some of the women in government he has worked with since his White House years.

Box 1

Folder 09

Cunningham, Evelyn oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/02/25

"After graduating from Long Island University in 1943, Evelyn Cunningham secured a job at the Pittsburgh Courier, an event she described as 'a fluke.' She spent 25 years there as a reporter, columnist and editor, interviewing all the major Black leaders and covering the civil rights stories of the day. In 1968, she interviewed Governor Nelson Rockefeller and, much to her surprise, he offered her a job, which she accepted on the spot. After two years as an executive assistant for Jackie Robinson, who was Special Assistant to the Governor, she joined the Women's Unit in the State of New York. She reflects on the influence of Gov. Rockefeller and of Rep. Shirley Chisholm in making her a feminist, and her experience in mounting the first major conference on women and government held in New York state. She describes her experiences on the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities, her perception of its style of approach as being distinct to Republican women, and her delight that all of its recommendations were eventually adopted. She reflects on women in the Washington press corps, and on Barbara Franklin's very important work for women in government. She also discusses her further work on women's issues in HEW, her service on Gov. Rockefeller's study on U.S.-South American relations, and on the White House Domestic Council under President Ford. Barriers for women, she concludes, are still largely attitudinal and contending with stereotypes; although today's young women don't seem to see them, and--perhaps not understanding the history of the struggle--they are not as unified and focused on helping other women advance."

Box 1

Folder 10

Eisenhower, Jullie Nixon oral history interview (no restrictions), 1999/03/09

Julie Nixon Eisenhower's interview provides her perceptions of her father's attitudes toward the emerging feminist movement and the project to appoint more women to leadership positions in his administration. She also gives insights into her mother's role and how Pat Nixon encouraged these ideas through conversations with her husband, suggestions, and advocacy for issues ranging from having women military aides and secret service agents in the White House, to support for the Equal Rights Amendment and the appointment of a woman justice to the Supreme Court. She also reflects on her own interest in and support for these issues as a college student and newly-married

young woman seeking to have a career as well as a family of her own. She places her father's comments from the released White House tapes on women and African-Americans in context, by noting their selection to prove a particular bias.

Box 1

Folder 11

Franklin, Barbara Hackman oral history interview (permission to quote required), 1998/11/10

Ranging from the influences of her parents and experiences in college and M.B.A. program, Barbara Franklin's interview covers her career in considerable depth in business, the White House, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, her return to the business world, and service as Secretary of Commerce. Through these experiences we can follow her evolving ideas and the development and success of the program to recruit women into leadership and middle management positions in the federal government. Equally interesting are her reflections on the problems women faced in this effort, the largely overlooked successful effort to advance women's equality initiated by the Nixon Administration, and the impact of this effort on the women's movement in America. Many of the other women interviewed in this project are mentioned here and placed in context.

Box 1

Folder 12

Glaser, Vera oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/08/19

Vera Glaser posed a question to a newly elected President Nixon in a February 1969 news conference that was the catalyst for the A Few Good Women project. She asked the president why he had made so few appointments of women to top-level positions. Taken by surprise, he immediately responded he would change this and so began the first systematic program to recruit women in executive positions in the federal government. Her interview further describes the recruitment of women into government, the work and recommendations of the Task Force, the Equal Rights Amendment campaign, and media coverage of women issues as well as issues of women in journalism.

Box 1

Folder 13

Hall, Cynthia oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/04/10

"In this interview, Judge Cynthia Hall describes her college (Stanford '51) and law school (Stanford '54) experiences and the common experience of finding that large law firms would not hire women. She pursued further education and ended up specializing in tax law in the Justice and Treasury departments before going into private practice. In 1972, both she and her husband were recruited and offered posts in the Nixon administration--he in Treasury and she on the Tax Court. Yet, as the first husband and wife appointed, their confirmations were criticized for their double incomes and, when her husband returned to private practice two years later, they had lengthy problems over the possibility of conflicts of interest. She describes her Navy service with the JAG, which interrupted her law school studies, and she reflects on the irony that discrimination against her likely resulted in her achieving a broader background, which was an advantage in being appointed to her post. One of her unique opportunities has been to study and write about women and tax law, especially the so-called marriage penalty. She describes some interesting cases affecting women that she has adjudicated, and she reflects on her experiences in the law in the 1950s and '60s, recognizing that there were problems in hiring, but also seeing some advantages to

being a woman in litigation. She describes her work on the District Court and the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the responsibilities and opportunities since she decided to 'go senior' on the court."

Box 1

Folder 14

Hauser, Rita oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/07/01

"Rita Hauser discusses her entry into the law profession as one of the early woman graduates of Harvard Law School in 1958 and also the difficulties of beginning a practice in international law. She describes her background in politics and the influence of her family. Her early support for Richard Nixon in New York led to her chairing his campaign there in 1968, and subsequently to her appointment as U.S. Representative to the U.N. Commission for Human Rights. In 1972, she co-chaired his national campaign. She describes her role as a consultant to the Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities, her advocacy for 'responsible feminism' and her role as part of the informal network supporting Barbara Franklin's work in the White House. She reflects extensively on the importance of hiring qualified women, and the barriers and compromises women faced. Dr. Hauser also compares American women's situations to those of women in other countries and reflects on the role conflicts, stereotypes, and lack of self-confidence that still impede women's advancement despite the significant achievements that have been made in opening more doors for women."

Box 1

Folder 15

Hitt, Pat oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/09/23

Patricia Hitt traces her early political involvement in Nixon California campaigns and the role of women in other California senate and gubernatorial campaigns. As a result, she co-chaired the 1968 campaign with John Mitchell and was actively involved in the Women for Nixon organization, from which she hoped women appointees would be recruited. She describes her appointment and confirmation as Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for Community and Field Services and her initial reluctance to serve, preferring campaigns to administration. She discusses the role and attitude of Robert Finch toward women appointees and the culture and functioning of HEW at this time. She also discusses the problematic answer she gave at a women reporters' press conference dealing with the difficulties of finding both qualified and available women for posts. Hitt reflects on her relationships with women in Congress, other top women appointees, the necessity for supportive husbands, and the impact of these changes in American government and society on women in other countries. In closing, she discusses the remarkable unity of the women who were working to advance the cause of equality for women at that time. She returned to private life in California in 1975; her only continuing tie to Washington was service on the White House Fellows Commission.

Box 1

Folder 16

Holm, Jeanne oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/11/11

General Holm's interview covers her career in the military and as an adviser to the Ford administration. She describes her experiences and the ideas she advanced on developing the role of women in the armed forces. She discusses testifying before Congress and dealing with the media, the attitudes of Defense Secretaries and senior officers, as well as relationships with the women's movement and other women executives in government. She reflects especially on the period 1969-1974 and offers

her assessment of women's progress in the 1990s.

Box 1

Folder 17

Hutar, Pat oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/12/02

Patricia Hutar's interview focuses extensively on the Task Force for Women's Rights and Responsibilities, including the roles played by various members, the experiences and perspectives drawn from its deliberations, and the outcomes from the recommendations. Legislative initiatives arising from the recommendations and led by Martha Griffith were complex but critical. She describes Barbara Franklin's position at the White House as very important, as were the departmental action plans. Ms. Hutar describes in depth the impact of the Task Force recommendations on the development of the International Women's Year and the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. As head of the U.S. delegation to the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City, she describes some of the debates and discusses the subsequent impacts of the U.S.-sponsored major policy recommendations. These had a significant impact at the state level and on state commissions on the status of women. This rich interview also discusses extensively the role of a wide variety of women's organizations and, in retrospect, Ms. Hutar reflects on what seems to her a loss of passion and taking for granted the achievements of this period by the women of today. She believes that women who understand the needs and who hold powerful positions are the change agents of the future. Women will continue to make gains and will be in leadership positions to build a better society for people worldwide in achieving a better quality of life for all.

Box 1

Folder 18

James, Pendleton oral history interview (no restrictions), 2000/10/06

E. Pendleton James has over thirty years experience in the executive search field. He is a 1954 graduate of the University of the Pacific and did graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Santa Clara. After several positions in personnel management and recruiting, Pen James became a member of President Nixon's White House staff (1970-1972), where he served as Deputy Special Assistant to the President with primary responsibility for recruiting leading figures to fill Presidential appointment positions. Returning to the private sector in 1981, he was president and owner of Pen James and Associates, Inc., an executive search firm headquartered in Los Angeles. In 1980, he became director of personnel for President-elect Reagan. From January 1981 to August 1982, he served in the Reagan White House as Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel, where he was responsible for Cabinet and sub-Cabinet appointments in all departments and agencies of the Federal Government, as well as appointments to regulatory agencies, boards, commissions, and ambassadorships. In April 1983, President Reagan nominated James to a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Communications Satellite Corporation. He later returned to his company and, in 1996, James sold his interests in Pen James and Associates. He is also a former member of the board of the Metropolitan Life Series Fund and the White House Fellows Commission. He currently serves on the Board of the Citizens for Democracy Corps, which fosters privatization in Eastern Europe. During his career, he has been involved in a number of civic and philanthropic organizations.

Box 1

Folder 19

Knauer, Virginia oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/04/14

A pioneer in consumer affairs, Virginia Knauer served in three presidential administrations, but focuses here on her service in the Nixon administration and her entry to political life on the Philadelphia City Council and as head of Pennsylvania's new Bureau for Consumer Protection under Governor Raymond P. Shafer. At the instigation of Pat Hitt, Knauer was recruited to the Nixon White House and began in April 1969 as Special Advisor to the President and Director of the Office for Consumer Affairs. Knauer discusses her attitude to breaking down barriers to women and the importance she placed on bringing intelligent young women into government service and helping to advance their careers, including Elizabeth Hanford Dole, who was her deputy, and Tillie Fowler, who was later elected to congress. She discusses her work in consumer affairs and how it related to regulatory bodies, other domestic policy posts, and to service as an American delegate on the Consumer Policy committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). She also discusses her mentors, family and interests outside of politics and government service.

Box 1

Folder 20

Lawton, Esther oral history interview (no restrictions), 1998/01/18

This interview with 88-year-old Esther Lawton also included her niece Dr. Diane Christian, Director of the Center for Studies in American Culture at SUNY Buffalo. In it Lawton reflects on her methods of dealing with people to achieve success through her career at the Treasury Department and as a consultant for the Ford Foundation. She recalls her strong interest in anything having to do with the advancement of women, while at the same time having to adapt to a strategy of gradualism and indirect suggestions to advance her own ideas and position. She discusses the discrimination she experienced in trying to advance and be promoted in the Treasury Department. Christian adds her own commentary on how her aunt influenced her life and what she has learned about it from her aunt's papers and speeches.

Box 1

Folder 21

Malek, Fred oral history interview (no restrictions), 1997/01/14

In a brief interview, Fred Malek describes his role in hiring Barbara Hackman Franklin, a Harvard Business School classmate, as Special Assistant at the White House to lead the effort to recruit women for top positions in federal government. He characterizes the results as exceeding his expectations, and he reflects on why President Nixon took on this challenge and how the effort was viewed by senior staff in the White House. Malek sees the success of the program as demonstrating that it is possible to accomplish a significant objective in government with a dedicated effort, the right people, a systematic approach, and accountability.

Box 1

Folder 22

Tennant, Paula Adams oral history interview (permission to quote required), 2000/08/03

Paula Tennant traces her remarkable career in the law and criminal justice systems, where she regularly pioneered in positions that had been almost uniformly male before her. She became one of Barbara Franklin's close associates in the founding of Executive Women in Government (EWG) as a counterpart to the federal undersecretaries' organization, which was exclusively male. She discusses how she and her husband coped with a two-career marriage when it was a relative rarity. She credits much of her success to being in the right place at the right time, but also acknowledges she was outspoken and refused to acknowledge or be hindered by

discrimination. She believes the women who founded EWG were similar. They were not hampered by feelings of inferiority or jealousy and prospered through the networking the organization offered. She discusses, in part, her work in instituting reforms in the parole process. She also reflects on the need for lawyers to be perceptive about people's tendencies to alter the reality of their memories to make their lives more comfortable. She carries this concept through in her published poetry where she deals with unbidden memories and reflects their vividness in the brevity of her verse.

Box 1

Folder 23

White, Margita oral history interview (no restrictions), 2000/08/16

Margita White traces her career in communications in the federal government, acknowledging male mentors who brought her into positions of increasing responsibility. At the same time, she recognized that she was discriminated against in salary and often encountered antagonistic men in the White House who could make life there difficult. She recalls her work with Barbara Franklin, especially the disastrous first press conference that White arranged for her. At USIA, she was able to become a founding member of Executive Women in Government (EWG), which enhanced her opportunities. She recounts in some detail the difficulty she encountered with her nomination to the FCC. Besides party differences, she experienced charges of conflict of interest because her husband, a tax attorney, was with a firm that was beginning to develop a small practice in communications law. This was one of the first husband-wife appointment controversies. She evaluates the role of President Nixon in the advancement of women in government. In her personal life, she looks back to her grandmother in Sweden as an inspiration: she had been a teacher, a member of parliament, and the author of a number of books. She feels the 1969-1974 period was a watershed for women in government, and believes EWG deserves enormous credit for the work it did.

Supporting Materials Series

Supporting Materials, 1938-1998.

Box 1

Folder 24

White House Statement on the Status of Women, 1972

Box 1

Folder 25

Allan, Biographical materials, clippings

Box 1

Folder 26

Armstrong, Biographical materials, Corpus Christi (TX) newspaper story, 1998/05/17

Box 1

Folder 27

Bentley, Biographical materials

Box 1

Folder 28-29

Bentley, News articles, 1950s-1980s

Box 1

Folder 30

Bentley, remarks at 18th National Republican Women's Conference, 1972/04/08

Box 1
Folder 31
Bentley, "The Changing Role of Women" remarks at Arizona State University,
1970/01/30
Box 1
Folder 32
Bentley, Basic women's speech
Box 1
Folder 33
Bentley, Nixon Administration record, 1969-1972
Box 1
Folder 34
Bentley, Women -- Ford Administration record
Box 1
Folder 35
Bentley, Women -- Correspondence Miscellaneous
Box 1
Folder 36
Bentley, *Women in the World of Work* (book)
Box 1
Folder 37
Bentley, *Study of Employment of Women in the Federal Government* (book), 1968-70
Box 1
Folder 38
Bentley, Women in Government: Presidential Appointment and Executive Level
Box 1
Folder 39
Bentley, Women: Executive Women in Government
Box 1
Folder 40
Bentley, Women: Commission on Civil Rights
Box 1
Folder 41
Bentley, Women: Civil Service Commission Statistics
Box 1
Folder 42
Bentley, Report, Sex Discrimination against the American Working Woman
Box 1
Folder 43
Bentley, Women: Leadership Foundation
Box 1
Folder 44
Bentley, Women: Department of Labor Statistics and Publications
Box 1
Folder 45
Bentley, Women: Academic Field -- Role of Women
Box 1
Folder 46
Bentley, Women: Management -- Role of Women

Box 1
Folder 47
Bentley, Politics: Role of Women
Box 1
Folder 48
Clapp, Biographical notes
Box 1
Folder 49
Cunningham, Biographical notes
Box 1
Folder 50
Cunningham, Papers and news articles
Box 1
Folder 51
East, Catherine: Biographical materials, "The Women's Movement and the Nixon Administration," Inventory of papers at the Schlesinger Library
Box 1
Folder 52
Eisenhower, Resume, pages from Pat Nixon biography concerning these issues
Box 1
Folder 53
Franklin, Biography
Box 1
Folder 54
Gannon, Sister Ida: Resume (member of the President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities)
Box 1
Folder 55
Gannon, Report on President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities
Box 1
Folder 56
Glaser, Resume
Box 1
Folder 57
Glaser, Correspondence and news stories on February 6, 1969 press conference and subsequent activities,
Box 1
Folder 58
Glaser, Report of President's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities
Box 1
Folder 59
Hall, Biographical materials
Box 1
Folder 60
Hauser, Resume
Box 1
Folder 61
Hauser, White House memos on "Emergent Responsible Feminism," 1971
Box 1

Folder 62
Hitt, News release and articles
Box 1
Folder 63
Hitt, Women's Advisory Committee for the Nixon Campaign, 1968
Box 1
Folder 64
Holm, Biographical notes
Box 1
Folder 65
Holm, News articles
Box 1
Folder 66
Hutar, Resume
Box 1
Folder 67
Hutar, Members of the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, 1975
Box 1
Folder 68
Hutar, Report on the World Conference on International Women's Year, Mexico City, 1975
Box 1
Folder 69
Knauer, Resume
Box 1
Folder 70
Malek, Biographic notes, inventory of his papers at the Hoover Institution Archives
Box 1
Folder 71
Executive Women in Government webpage, clippings on Elizabeth Dole and Dorothy Sarnoff
Box 1
Folder 72
Lawton, biographical information
Box 1
Folder 73
Lawton, "Women in the Federal Service," 1938
Box 1
Folder 74
Lawton, Report of the Job Evaluation and Pay Review Task Force, 1972
Box 1
Folder 75
Lawton, "State Labor Laws in Transition: From Protection to Equal Status for Women," 1976
Box 1
Folder 76
Lawton, Women in the Federal Government Project oral history interview, Radcliffe College, 1982/12/28

Photographs Series

Photographs, 1963-1972.

Box 2

Folder 01

Women in Administrative Positions, Rose Garden, White House, 1972/04/01

Box 2

Folder 02

Allan, Portraits and swearing in as Deputy Assistant, Secretary of State

Box 2

Folder 03

Armstrong, Portrait and picture with Pres. And Mrs. Ford and Henry Kissinger

Box 2

Folder 04

Bedell, Photographs Signing of Equal Pay Act of 1963 portraits, picture with Richard Nixon, Nixon daughters, Army Gen. Elizabeth P. Hoisington, 1963-70 1963

Box 2

Folder 05

Bentley, Presidents Nixon and Ford signing legislation

Box 2

Folder 06

Eisenhower, Portrait

Box 2

Folder 07

Glaser, Portrait

Box 2

Folder 08

Hauser, Portrait

Box 2

Folder 09

Hitt, Portraits and picture with Pres. Nixon

Box 2

Folder 10

Holm, Portrait, picture with Pres. Ford, picture of the first four women generals: Hays, Bailey, Hoisington (all Army), and Holm (USAF)

Box 2

Folder 11

James, Portrait

Box 2

Folder 12

Knauer, Portrait, picture with Pres. Nixon, and Cost of Living Council meeting, 1972

Box 2

Folder 13

Tennant, Portrait

Box 2

Folder 14

White, Portraits

Box 2

Folder 15

Negaives: Bentley, Knauer, Glaser, Hitt, Holm, Armstrong

Oral History Tapes Series

Oral History Tapes, 1997-2000.

Cold Storage

Allan, Virginia oral history interview

Cold Storage

Armstrong, Anne oral history interview

Cold Storage

Bedell, Catherine oral history interview

Cold Storage

Bedell, Catherine oral history interview and Hitt, Pat oral history interview

Cold Storage

Bentley, Helen oral history interview

Cold Storage

Clapp, Charles L. oral history interview

Cold Storage

Cunningham, Evelyn oral history interview

Cold Storage

Eisenhower, Julie Nixon oral history interview

Cold Storage

Franklin, Barbara Hackman oral history interview

Cold Storage

Glaser, Vera oral history interview

Cold Storage

Hall, Cynthia oral history interview

Cold Storage

Hauser, Rita oral history interview

Cold Storage

Hitt, Pat oral history interview

Cold Storage

Holm, Jeanne oral history interview

Cold Storage

Hutar, Pat oral history interview

Cold Storage

James, Pendleton oral history interview

Cold Storage

Knauer, Virginia oral history interview

Cold Storage

Lawton, Esther oral history interview

Cold Storage

Malek, Fred oral history interview

Cold Storage

Tennant, Paula oral history interview

Cold Storage

White, Margita oral history interview