HARDEN, CECIL MURRAY PAPERS, 1938-1984 (BULK 1950-1960)

Collection Information

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Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by: Ellen Swain & Paul Brockman 5 August 1991 Updated 1 July 2004

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department William Henry Smith Memorial Library Indiana Historical Society 450 West Ohio Street Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 20 manuscript boxes, 5 4X6 "shoe boxes", 6 oversize manuscript boxes (12 linear feet)

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive, 1938-1984; bulk, 1950-1960

PROVENANCE: Marjorie M. Harden, West Lafayette, Indiana, 26 June 1985

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1987.0570

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cecil Murray Harden (1894-1984), a native of Covington, Indiana, attended Indiana University and taught in the Covington school system. In 1914, she married Frost R. Harden, owner of a local Ford dealership and bore one son Murray, later a doctor in West Lafayette.

Active in local clubs and church organizations, Harden began her political career in 1932 when she was elected Republican Precinct Committeewoman. After holding several district and state positions within the Indiana Republican Party, Harden was elected to the United States House of Representatives from the Sixth District in 1948. While in Congress, Harden became in 1951 the first woman member of a House subcommittee to make an official trip around the world. She served on the House Committee on Government Operations for eight years and on the House Committee for Post Office Civil Service for six years. One of her congressional activities involved gaining funds for the Federal flood control project in Indiana. After her defeat in the 1958 election, Harden was appointed Special Assistant to the Postmaster General for Women's Affairs by Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield, a position she held until 1961. During this time, Harden toured the country, speaking on the danger of "obscene" mail.

During the 1960s, Harden remained active in politics by serving as National Committeewoman for Indiana (1964-1972). She also was a member of the Task Force on Conduct of Foreign Relations of the Republican Coordinating Committee from 1965 to 1968 and served as a delegate-at-large for the 1968 and 1972 National Conventions.

While spending her retirement years in Covington, Harden was honored in 1973 with an appreciation dinner in which five hundred friends and associates paid tribute to her years of service. Cecil M. Harden Day was established and Mansfield Lake was renamed for her in 1974 as a tribute to her work for the flood control project.

Sources: *Biographical_Directory_of_U.S._Congress,_1774-1983*, p. 1130. Information obtained from materials in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection, spanning the years 1938 to the 1970s, consists largely of Harden's personal and political correspondence. Arranged chronologically, these folders contain cards and letters from family and friends as well as correspondence between constituents and colleagues. Also included is correspondence regarding Harden's six congressional campaigns (1948-1958) and her work as Special Assistant to the Postmaster General, as well as five letters from President Eisenhower congratulating her for her congressional work. Tributes such as Cecil M. Harden Day, Cecil M. Harden Lake, and a Harden appreciation dinner given in 1973 include congratulatory letters and well-wishes. Republican committee and convention correspondence and information as well as election results comprise three boxes and various legislation sponsored by Harden make up two boxes.

Also comprising a substantial part of the collection are Harden's speeches and news releases. A number of speeches are dated during Harden's congressional years and address such topics as high prices, Republican elections, and Abraham Lincoln. The majority, however, dated 1959 to 1961 and given when Harden was touring the United States as Special Assistant to the Postmaster General, attack the distribution of "obscene" material through the United States mail service. Groups addressed include women's organizations, rotary clubs, and post office employees. Items regarding Harden's public service role such as flag presentations and post office dedications, as well as the 1961 Raccoon Lake

Recreation Area Dedication are also included.

Other items in the collection include political and personal expense accounts, appointment books, and calendars. Military academy appointments made by Harden when in Congress span the years 1951 to 1959 and comprise three boxes. Issues such as aging, health and nutrition, and women in politics are also covered. Clippings from various newspapers, dated from the 1940s to the 1970s, document Harden's personal and political life. Republican material including Richard M. Nixon speeches and election material from the late sixties and seventies are among the miscellaneous items. Speech notes, expense books, check books, note pads, address books, and diaries are contained in the remaining five boxes of the collection.

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- 8 Committee on Un-American Activities Information 1956
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- 12 Citizens Advisory Committee on Literature, December 1959
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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

- 1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
- 2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
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- 4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0584).
- 5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.