

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES**

**Guide to the Oral Histories**  
**1969-1998**

**Record Group 16: Oral Histories**

**Revised May 22, 2017**  
**Updated 2018**  
**Revised again May, 2024**

Montgomery County Archives  
Montgomery County Records Center  
8540 Anniversary Circle, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
(301) 926-5002  
[archive@montgomeryhistory.org](mailto:archive@montgomeryhistory.org)  
[www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**Guide to the Oral Histories**  
**1969-1998**  
**Record Group 16: Oral Histories**

**PROVENANCE**

The oral history interviews were conducted as part of several different initiatives. In the early 1970's, the League of Women Voters conducted an oral history project in an effort to record significant aspects of Montgomery County history and to mark the commemoration of the nation's bicentennial. The resulting tapes and interviews were donated to the Rockville Branch Library of the Department of Public Libraries which turned the collection over to the Archives.

Fifty nine interviews of Stella Biddison Werner were conducted by Joseph H. Green of the Department of Public Libraries from November 1971 to August 1975. Transcripts of the interviews were maintained at the Rockville Regional Library as part of the library's local history collection, and were turned over to the Archives in October 1997. The interviews with Ms. Werner are only partially represented here; the full collection is housed in Montgomery History's Jane C. Sween Research Library.

Interviews with several county officials were conducted between 1986 and 1990 by History Associates Incorporated, a historical and archival services firm located in Rockville, Maryland. This work was completed as part of the Montgomery County Current History program which is administered by the County Archives. An oral history of Neal Potter was conducted by Anne Brown for the Montgomery County Archives in 1997-1998.

Seven interviews were conducted by the Department of Social Services in the early 1990s on VHS tapes, and were donated to the Archives as part of a larger collection.

**EXTENT**

3.16 cubic feet:

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The collection of oral histories of prominent civic leaders and government officials of Montgomery County comprises 3.16 cu. ft. and augments the official records created by government departments. The histories provide a fuller picture of the County's past by providing personal interpretations of individuals who were involved with shaping County affairs.

The record group is arranged into two series with two appendices:

Series I: Oral History Transcripts

Series II: Oral History Recordings

*Subseries 1: Reel-to-Reel Tapes*

*Subseries 2: Audio Cassettes*

*Subseries 3: Video Cassettes*

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Series I: Transcripts, 1969-1998**

**(1.66 cubic feet)**

This series consists of transcribed oral history interviews. Transcripts in this series may not have a corresponding recording in Series II: Oral History Recordings. The content of several interviews is available only as abstracts or summaries of the interviews rather than verbatim transcripts. Incomplete, restricted, or non-traditional material is located at the end of the series. In addition to the transcripts, the series may include attachments such as drawings or newspaper clippings pertaining to a specific interview. These materials are located in the folder of the transcripts to which they relate. The series is arranged alphabetically by last name of the person interviewed.

*Note: interviews previously in this series conducted by the Montgomery County Historical Society were returned to Montgomery History's oral history collection in 2024.*

### **Series II: Oral History Recordings, 1969-1998**

**(1.5 cubic feet)**

This series consists of audio cassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, and video cassettes containing recordings of oral history interviews. Recordings in this series may not have corresponding transcripts in Series I.

#### ***Subseries 1: Reel-to-Reel Tapes, 1969-1975***

***(1 cubic feet)***

This subseries contains tapes of interviews conducted by the League of Women Voters and of other projects undertaken during the 1970s.

The tapes are arranged alphabetically by last name of the individual interviewed.

#### ***Subseries 2: Audio Cassettes, 1972-1998***

***(0.5 cubic feet)***

The majority of the oral histories in this collection were recorded on audio cassette, or transferred to audio cassette from reel-to-reel tapes. The subseries is primarily comprised of interviews conducted in the mid 1970s by the League of Women Voters, and during the late 1980s and 1990s by History Associates as part of the Archives' Current History Project, also known as the Oral History Project.

The cassettes are arranged alphabetically by last name of the individual interviewed.

#### ***Subseries 3: Video Cassettes, 1990-1991***

***(9 items)***

These cassettes were donated to the Archives by the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 1997 as part of a larger collection of paper and photographic records. The recordings include interviews with key DSS staff including Executive Director Harriet Herman, and Gladys Benson, a senior case supervisor for the Department from 1934 to 1971. Recordings for which no oral history release forms were received are restricted. The recordings of Harriet Herman and Gladys Benson are duplicated on audio cassette which are stored in Subseries 2.

The tapes are arranged alphabetically by last name of interviewee.

## BOX INVENTORY

### Series I: Oral History Transcripts

#### Box 1

Abbe, Leslie Morgan, 1971  
Bain, Henry, 1969  
Bennett, James V., 1975  
Bloomer, Esther, 1971  
Bullard, Anne, 1974 [Draft]  
Bullard, Dexter M., 1969  
Cahoon, David, 1989 [Abstract]  
Christeller, Norman, 1992 [Summary]  
Coffman, John W., 1972  
Curtis, Frances Vinson, 1972  
Dalrymple, Gertrude Bradley, 1971  
Donaldson Mary Macabee, 1972  
Eig, Sam, 1972  
Engle, Lavinia, 1971 (5f)

#### Box 2

Farquhar, Richard, 1977  
Farquhar, Roger B., 1972  
Gardner, Allen H., 1973  
Gilchrist, Charles W., 1986-1987  
Gleason, James P., 1987  
Greene, Alexander J., 1988 [Abstract]  
Gustafson, Forest V. D., 1971 (with Ofsthun, Neil A.)  
Himstead, Dorothy, 1972  
Hostetler, Alice, 1971  
Hovsepian, Dickran, 1988 [Abstract]  
Jarvis, Edith Claude, 1971  
Jewell, Edgar Guy, 1973  
Jones, Margaret Taylor, 1971  
McGuckian, Paul, 1989 [Abstract]  
Menke, John, 1989 [Abstract]

#### Box 3

Mohler, Mary B., 1972  
Moreland, George B., 1974  
Nichols, Betty, 1975  
Ofsthun, Neil A., November 1971  
Potter, Neal, 1997-1998  
Rovner, Edmund F., 1986 [Abstract]  
Sandifer, Irene R., 1971  
Siegel, Joyce B., 1972

Sims, Lewis B. [1975]  
Smith, Lathrop, 1971  
Walter, Malcolm D., 1974

**Box 4**

Werner, Stella Biddison, 1971-1975  
    Volume 1: Early Years, 1952 (6 folders)  
    Volume 2: 1952-1957 (5 folders)  
    Volume 3: 1957-1960 (4 folders)

**Box 5**

“Old Timers” discuss county politics: Neumann, John W.; Carlin, Austin; Cromwell, James J.;  
    Hewitt, Frank L.; Levitan, Laurence; Mathias, Joseph M.; Sedgwick, Byron,  
    1987  
Dawson, Rose K. [RESTRICTED] 1974  
Miller, Robert [RESTRICTED] 1974  
Wilson, Herman Monroe and Lillian Earnest [RESTRICTED], 1974

**Series II: Oral History Recordings**

***Subseries I: Reel-to-Reel Tapes***

**Box 6**

Abbe, Leslie Morgan, 1971  
Bain, Henry, 1969  
Bennett, James, V., 1975 (No. 1; concluding remarks on No. 1)  
Bennet, James V., 1975 and Smith, Lathrop, 1971 (No. 2)  
Bloomer, Esther, 1971  
Bullard, Anne (Located in RG 18, LWV)  
Bullard, Dexter M., 1975  
Coffman, John W., 1972  
Curtis, Frances Vinson, 1972  
Dalrymple, Gertrude Bradley, 1971  
Dawson, Rose (Located in RG 18, LWV)  
Donaldson, Mary, n.d., and Mohler, Mary P., [1972]  
Eig, Sam, 1972  
Engle, Lavinia, 1971 (5 reels)  
Gardner, Allen H., 1973  
Gustafson, Forest, 1971, and Ofsthun, Neil, 1971  
Himstead, Dorothy, 1972  
Hostetler, Alice, 1971  
Jarvis, Edith Claude, 1971  
Jewell, Edgar Guy, 1973  
Jones, Margaret T., 1971, and Mohler, Mary P., 1972  
Leary, Kathleen (Located in RG 18, LWV)  
Miller, Robert F. (Located in RG 18, LWV)  
Moreland, George B., 1974 (2 reels)

*(Series II: Oral History Recordings, Cont.)*

Sandifer, Irene, 1971  
Siegel, Joyce, 1972  
Smith, Lathrop, 1971 (2 reels; concluding remarks on Bennett, James)  
Walker, Helen Claxton, 1971, and Sandifer, Irene, 1971  
Werner, Stella, c. 1951-1958 (6 reels)

***Subseries 2: Audio Cassettes***

**Box 7**

Abbe, Leslie, 1971 (3 cassettes)  
Bain, Henry, 1969 (2 cassettes)  
Bennett, James, 1975 (2 cassettes)  
Bloomer, Esther, 1971 (2 cassettes)  
Bullard, Anne (2 cassettes)  
Bullard, Dexter M. 1975  
Cahoon, David, 1989-1990 (3 cassettes)  
Coffman, John, 1972 (3 cassettes)  
Curtis, Francis, 1972  
Dalrymple, Gertrude, 1971 (2 cassettes)  
Dawson, Rose (4 cassettes) (Located in RG 18, LWV)  
Donaldson, Mary, 1972 (2 cassettes)  
Eig, Sam, 1972 (3 cassettes)  
Engle, Lavinia, 1971 (4 cassettes)  
Gardner, Allen H., 1973 (2 cassettes)

**Box 8**

Gilchrist, Charles W., 1986, 1987 (2 cassettes)  
Gleason, James P., 1987 (2 cassettes)  
Greene, Alexander, 1988 (2 cassettes)  
Gustafson, Forest, 1971  
Himstead, Dorothy, 1972  
Hostetler, Alice, 1971 (2 cassettes)  
Hovsepian, Dickran, 1988 (3 cassettes)  
Jarvis, Edith Claude, 1971  
Jewell, Edgar Guy, 1973 (3 cassettes)  
Jones, Margaret Taylor, 1971 (3 cassettes)  
Lee, E. Brooke, 1977 (8 cassettes)  
McGuckian, Paul, 1989 (2 cassettes)  
Menke, John, 1989 (2 cassettes)  
Mohler, Mary B., 1972 (3 cassettes)

**Box 9**

Moreland, George B., 1974 (2 cassettes)  
Ofsthun, Neal A., 1971

*(Series II: Oral History Recordings, Cont.)*

***Subseries 2: Audio Cassettes, Box 9 cont.***

Potter, Neal, 1997-1998 (4 cassettes)  
Praisner, Marilyn J. (1 cassette)  
Rovner, Edmund F., 1986 (2 cassettes)  
Sandifer, Irene, 1971 (3 cassettes)  
Siegel, Joyce, 1972 (3 cassettes)  
Sims, Lewis, 1975  
Smith, Lathrop, 1971 (2 cassettes)  
Walker, Helen C., 1971

***Series II: Oral History Recordings; Subseries 3: Video Cassettes***

**Box 10**

Benson, Gladys, n.d. (1 cassette; 1 VHS tape)  
Bishop, Ann, April 22, 1990 (**RESTRICTED**)  
Bishop Ann, April 23, 1990 (**RESTRICTED**)  
Caulk, Robert, August 29, 1991 (**RESTRICTED**)  
Herman, Harriet, June 12, 1990 (2 cassettes)  
Herman, Harriet, Edit, n.d. (1 VHS 6/12/1990; 1 VHS n.d.; 1 cassette)  
Oswald, Mary Lou, April 25, 1990  
Scott, Pat, March 1990  
Smith, Catherine, June 12, 1990  
Smith, Jim, March 3, 1990 (on Ann Bishop tape, April 22, 1990)

**APPENDIX: Biographical Abstracts**

**ABBE, LESLIE MORGAN** (1898- )

Member of the Board of Education in the 1940s and President of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Council of Montgomery County from 1945-1947. Involved in the Charter Movement, Rockville government, the County Committee on Negro Schools, and various civic organizations including the Rockville Citizen's Committee for Good Government (CGG). Served as Chairman of the City of Rockville Planning Commission from 1956 to 1959 and served on the Rockville Board of Appeals from 1960 to 1964.

**Topics:** Involvement in education, the Charter movement, Rockville government, and various civic organizations. Interviewed September 13, 1971 and December 15, 1971 by Anne Elsbree for MBL.

**BAIN, HENRY**

*Montgomery County Political History, 1860-1948*

Recording of a lecture given February 26, 1969, to the Oral History Committee of the Montgomery County League of Women Voters.

**BENNETT, JAMES V.**

*Recollections of Marie Bennett*

**Topics:** Life with Marie Bennet; her background as a student at Brown; her involvement with the League of Women Voters, the Chevy Chase Women's Club, the Montgomery County Women's Club Forum, the Charter movement, the PTA, and Walter Reed Hospital; and her tenure as President of the League of Women Voters. Interviewed March 13, 1975 by Evelyn Asrael for MBL.

**BLOOMER, ESTHER WILLING BROOKE** (1893-1981)

Civic leader. Involved in the Montgomery County PTA from 1938-1947, the League of Women Voters from 1946-1970s and the PTA Education Committee of the League from 1955-1956. Also editor of *The Maryland Voter*.

**Topics:** Origins of Montgomery College, the Bethesda Public Library Advisory Council, the YWCA, and the segregated school system with an emphasis on the Scotland School.

Interviewed September 13, 1971 by Blossom Holland for MBL.

**BULLARD, DEXTER M., M.D.** (1898- )

Psychiatric physician at Chestnut Lodge from 1925-1931, Medical Director of Chestnut Lodge from 1931-1969, and Rockville resident from 1908. Interviewed May 1, 1975 by Jeannine Jeffs for MBL.

**COFFMAN, JOHN W.** (1909-1981)

Owner-editor of the *Takoma Journal*, 1946-55.

**Topics:** Takoma Park from the 1920s-1972. Discusses the City of Takoma Park, Takoma Park Library, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the opening of New Hampshire Avenue in 1939, the League of Women Voters, the Charter Movement, and the organization of



Montgomery College. Interviewed April 13, 1972 by Mary Donaldson for MBL.

**CURTIS, FRANCES VINSON (1915- )**

Civic leader born in Germantown, Maryland.

**Topics:** Scotland, association with AME Zion Church, growing up in Quince Orchard, relationship with local white churches, and social service programs within the black community. Interviewed February 18, 1972 by Helen Scharf for MBL.

**DALRYMPLE, GERTRUDE BRADLEY (1900- )**

Journalist and civic leader; editor of Bethesda Journal from 1940-1943; editor of the Bethesda Record from 1944-1952; correspondent with Washington Evening Star from 1942-1952.

**Topics:** Involvement in the newspaper business; working in the Charter Movement; women's clubs in Bethesda, including the Quota Club; the Bethesda Library Association prior to the formation of the County library system; the building of Suburban Hospital; working at the National Institutes of Health during the 1950s; and membership in the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church. Interviewed October 28, 1971 by Margaret Cutler for MBL.

**DONALDSON, MARY MACABEE (1907- )**

Member of Suburban Hospital Association from 1942, the Montgomery County Chapter of the American Red Cross from 1942-1963 and the Planned Parenthood League from 1955-61.

Interviewed February 7, 1972 by Helen Scharf for MBL.

**EIG, SAM (1898-1982)**

*Last of the Pioneer Entrepreneurs: Merchant, Developer, Philanthropist*

**Topics:** A Russian immigrant's experiences in this country, including land development, early Silver Spring, the building of the East-West Highway, and the Charter Movement. Interviewed August 23, 1972 by John R. Foley for MBL.

**ENGLE, LAVINIA (1892-1979)**

*Suffragist, Member of the Maryland General Assembly, Civic Leader*

**Topics:** Women's suffrage movement; County politics in the 1920s and 1930s; Engle family involvement in the Forest Glen community; and Quaker communities. Interviewed January 30, 1971 and March 13, 1971 by Margaret Cutler and Phyllis Levine for MBL.

**FARQUHAR, ROGER B. III (1916- )**

Journalist with the *Washington Daily News* and the *Washington Post* and editor of the *Montgomery County Sentinel*.

**Topics:** County politics and the Quaker community in Sandy Spring. Interviewed May 19, 1973 and May 26, 1973 by Margaret Cutler for MBL.

**GARDNER, ALLEN**

Lawyer and civic leader. Involved in the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) and served as Chairman of the MCCF Special Committee of Seven to Promote the Study of the Brookings Institution Report. Became first President of the Montgomery County Charter Committee (MCCC) and served as a member of the County Council from 1949-1954.

**Topics:** Montgomery County Charter Committee and County politics in the 1930s and 1940s. Interviewed May 17, 1973 by Jack Foley for MBL.

**GILCHRIST, CHARLES W.**

Maryland State Senator from 1974-1978 and Montgomery County Executive from 1978-1986.

Interviewed December 30, 1986 and January 2, 1987 by Jeannine Jeffs for MCA.

**GLEASON, JAMES P.**

Montgomery County Councilmember from 1968-1970 and Montgomery County Executive from 1970-1978.

Interviewed June 18, 1987, June 25, 1987, and July 20, 1987 by Jeannine Jeffs for MCA.

**GREENE, ALEXANDER J.**

Rockville City Councilmember from 1954-1958; Rockville City Mayor from 1958-1962; involved in the Montgomery County Bureau of the Budget and the Montgomery County Housing Authority in the 1960s; and advisor and intergovernmental programs coordinator for County Executive Gilchrist in the 1980s.

Interviewed June 21, 1988 and June 22, 1988 for MCA.

**GUSTAFSON, FOREST**

Director of Montgomery County Department of Recreation, 1953-1970s.

**Topics:** Early days of recreation programs in Montgomery County in 1942 under the Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), and the transfer of the program to the County government in 1953; creation of a senior citizens center on Forest Glen Road in 1971; and relationships with the County Executive, the County Council and the Board of Education. Interviewed October 12, 1971 by Maureen Hinkle for MBL.

**HIMSTEAD, DOROTHY (1895-1988)**

President of the League of Women Voters from 1946-1948 and member of the first County Council from 1949-1950.

Interviewed June 30, 1972 by Blossom Holland for MBL.

**HOSTETLER, ALICE MARIE WATTS (1901- )**

Involved in the Women's National Democratic Club in the 1940s, served on the Montgomery County Charter Board from 1942-1943 and was elected a member of the Maryland House of Delegates for 1961-62 and 1966.

**Topics:** Democratic Party organization, the Charter Movement and the League of Women Voters. Interviewed June 16, 1971 by Margaret Cutler for MBL.

**HOVSEPIAN, DICKRAN Y.**

Rockville City Mayor from 1954-1958, President of the Montgomery County Citizens Planning Association in the 1960s, and Montgomery County Councilmember from 1970 to 1978.

Interviewed June 17, 1988 and June 27, 1988 for MCA.

**JARVIS, EDITH CLAUDE**

*A History of Chevy Chase Village*

**Topic:** Reminiscences, 1902-1971. Interviewed July 17, 1971 by Paula Locker for MBL.

**JEWELL, EDGAR GUY (1901- )**

Teacher, principal and administrator in the Montgomery County School system from 1921-1971.

**Topic:** Reminiscences of county schooling in Barnsville in 1908. Interviewed 1971 by Beryl Saylor for MBL.

**JONES, MARGARET TAYLOR (1907-1977)**

*Teacher, Supervisor, Principal: From a Segregated System to an Integrated System -- Montgomery County Public Schools, 1931-71*

**Topic:** Teaching in rural black schools and the Scotland community. Interviewed November 3, 1971 by Anne Elsbree for MBL.

**MOHLER, MARY BURTON (1903-1986)**

Educator and Civic Leader, 1923-1972.

**Topics:** Montgomery County Public Schools: Woodside Elementary, Leland Jr. High School, and Bethesda Chevy Chase High School. Interviewed February 4, 1972 by Blossom Holland for MBL.

**MORELAND, GEORGE B. (1901- )**

Director of Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries, 1951-69.

Interviewed October 26, 1974 by Norman Finkler for MBL.

**OFSTHUN, NEIL A.**

Director of Recreation and Parks for City of Rockville in the 1960s.

Interviewed November 9, 1971 by Maureen K. Hinkle for MBL.

**POTTER, NEAL (1915- )**

Elected to County Council in 1970 and re-elected in all subsequent election years until 1986, serving three times as Council president. Served as County Executive from 1990-1994 and returned to the legislative branch of County government in 1994 as Councilmember-at-large.

Interviewed December 12, 1997 and February 13, 1998 by Anne E. Brown for MCA.

**ROVNER, EDMUND F.**

Special Assistant to Montgomery County Executive Gilchrist, 1981-86.

Interviewed December 10, 1986 and December 16, 1986 for MCA.

**SANDIFER, IRENE R.**

Educator and civic leader during the 1940s and 1950s.

Interviewed October 16, 1971 by Blossom Holland for MBL.

**SIEGEL, JOYCE B.**

**Topics:** Scotland and Scotland Community Development, Inc., in the 1960s. Interviewed March-April, 1972 by Margaret Cutler for MBL.

**SIMS, LEWIS B. (1909- )**

Public administrator and civic leader.

**Topic:** Charter Movement. Interviewed April, 1972 and June, 1972 by Maureen Hinkle and Helen Scharf for MBL.

**SMITH, LATHROP E. (1902-1971)**

*Twenty-Five Years of Community Participation, 1946-1971*

**Topics:** Farm Bureau; Upper Montgomery County Planning Commission; County Council; Board of Education; and Montgomery Soil Conservation District. Interviewed August, 1971 by Helen M. Scharf for MBL.

**WALKER, HELEN CLAXTON (1896-1980)**

Educator, civic leader, and member of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

Interviewed October 21, 1971 by Blossom Holland for MBL.

**WERNER, STELLA (1901-1981)**

President of Montgomery County Council in the 1950s.

**Topics:** Childhood, family, social life, and civic and political career including the Charter movement and the County Council. Interviewed in sixty separate interviews from 1971-1975 by Joseph H. Green.