

RESEARCH NOTE

THE MARGARET CHASE SMITH LIBRARY



Located in Senator Smith's home town of Skowhegan, Maine, the Margaret Chase Smith Library was constructed in 1982 as a repository for artifacts and manuscripts as they relate to one person's integrity, high standards, and scrupulous career in public service.

Since its dedication in August 1982 the Margaret Chase Smith Library in Skowhegan has been open to researchers interested in twentieth century United States and Maine history. The library is a specialized archive that serves as the repository for Senator Smith's congressional papers.

In 1940 Margaret Chase Smith succeeded her late husband in the U.S. House of Representatives where she served four terms until her election to the U.S. Senate in 1948. Her career spanned six presidential administrations from Franklin D. Roosevelt through Richard M. Nixon's first term. In Congress she served on several prominent committees and earned widespread respect for her close attention to the details of her job and

MARGARET CHASE SMITH LIBRARY

the concerns of her constituents. She took seriously the obligation to attend committee hearings and participate in floor votes. The first woman to be elected to both houses of Congress, Senator Smith also was the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency by a major party when twenty-seven delegates supported her at the 1964 Republican convention in San Francisco. Throughout her congressional career Smith maintained a strong interest in military affairs. After three years in the House, she secured a seat on the Naval Affairs Committee. She chaired key subcommittees of the Senate Armed Services Committee and later became its ranking Republican member. It was solely through her efforts that women were granted permanent status in the armed services. Smith also served on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Senator Smith gained a national reputation as a guardian of individual rights and the protector of free speech when she delivered her Declaration of Conscience address in the Senate condemning the tactics and excesses of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. The June 1, 1950 speech established her national reputation and resulted in calls for her to be placed on the vice presidential ticket in 1952.

The Margaret Chase Smith Library archives are organized in four general categories.

1. Over ninety file drawers, each measuring one linear foot, contain approximately 300,000 primary source documents consisting of correspondence and supporting materials between Senator Smith and presidents, congressional colleagues, state and local officials, constituents, and others.

2. Over 500 scrapbooks maintained by Smith and her staffs document her career as seen in the local, state, national, and international press. The scrapbooks contain copies of the newspaper column Smith wrote from her House and Senate offices. Entitled "Washington and You," the column appeared as a weekly feature from 1941 until 1949, when it was published five days per week in every Maine newspaper and syndicated nationally in more than thirty publications. The column continued to 1954, allowing Senator Smith to maintain weekly and daily contact with her constituents. The columns reveal Smith's

views on major domestic and foreign policy events and provide a look into her personality.

3. The collection contains over 40 bound volumes of speeches, public statements, and releases issued by Smith's office. Selected committee hearings are included but these are not complete. Researchers should consult a depository for government documents such as that at Fogler Library at the University of Maine for complete hearings and government reports relevant to Smith's career.

4. The Library contains an extensive photograph and auto/video tape collection. Over 3,000 photographs feature leading national and international policy makers. Audio and video tapes contain interviews and footage of national and international events. Among the videos are a group of tapes filmed by Edward R. Murrow's crew from the 1950s program, *See It Now*. Murrow sent a film crew to accompany Smith on her twenty-three-nation world trip in 1954 and 1955. Highlighting these tapes are interviews Smith conducted with Franco, Nasser, Nehru, Chiang Kai Shek, and Burma's U Nu, along with a debate conducted by Smith between Malcolm Muggeridge and Aneurin Bevan, a speech by Churchill, and other interviews. Other video tapes include a *Face the Nation* debate between Smith and Eleanor Roosevelt just before the 1956 presidential election and during the Suez Crisis. These tapes augment the archival files and round out the collection on important Cold War international issues in Europe, Asia, and what came to be called the Third World.

The Library's collection is organized topically. Many documents focus on McCarthyism and related topics, such as Communism, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Justice Department, and Internal Security legislation. Other files are organized around major committees, presidential administrations, state congressional delegations, major political figures, public policy projects, and constituent concerns. Researchers interested in later-twentieth-century U.S. and Maine history will find helpful documents on a variety of subjects. A significant amount of material deals with events within Maine.

MARGARET CHASE SMITH LIBRARY

Legislative-executive relations may be explored through files relating to the presidential administrations. For example, numerous documents from the Eisenhower files shed light on Senator Smith's relations with the president. Senator Smith was involved in two contentious Supreme Court nomination processes when President Nixon attempted to implement his southern strategy by nominating G. Harold Carswell and Clement C. Haynsworth to the U.S. Supreme Court during his first administration.

Correspondence between Senator Smith and her congressional colleagues helps to illuminate motivations behind policies. For example, although not voluminous, missives between Smith and Senator William Jenner relating to the Japanese Peace Treaty shed light on Cold War concerns in Asia. There are significant files relating to Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon policies on the Viet Nam War and student protest.

Files pertaining to Maine political figures contain a significant amount of primary source materials. Smith's relations with her colleagues within the Maine Congressional Delegation reveal political changes the state experienced in the 1950s with the landmark election of Edmund S. Muskie as governor. The Ralph Owen Brewster file contains fascinating information on this colorful governor and senator. Cross-referenced with files such as the Bird Commission Report on the 1952 liquor scandal involving Brewster and then-Governor Frederick G. Payne, the Brewster materials provide insight into Maine political history and changes in the national Republican party's "Old Guard."

Other files of interest to Maine historians include voluminous materials on the Passamaquoddy Power Tidal Project and the Dickey-Lincoln School Hydroelectric Power Project, of which Senator Smith was a strong supporter.

Files with appreciable information on significant public figures include:

- Albert "Jim" Abrahamson, former WPA administrator for Maine.
- George Aiken, former governor and U.S. senator from Vermont.
- Barry Goldwater, 1964 Republican presidential candidate and U.S. senator from Arizona, especially materials relating to the Armed Services Committee.

MARGARET CHASE SMITH LIBRARY

- Neil Bishop, unsuccessful candidate for U.S. Senate in 1970.
- Frances P. Bolton, representative from Ohio.
- Lucia Cormier, Democratic candidate who opposed Smith for the Senate in 1960 (the first instance of two women vying for a U.S. Senate seat).
- Richard Russell, senator from Georgia, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee.
- William Hathaway, who defeated Smith for the Senate in 1972.
- Horace Hildreth, former governor of Maine, ambassador to Pakistan, and opponent of Smith in the 1948 election.
- J. Edgar Hoover.
- Stanley Tupper, former congressman from Maine, materials relating to the 1964 presidential election.
- John Stennis, senator from Mississippi.
- Robert A.G. Monks, who opposed Smith in the 1972 Republican primary.
- Robert McNamara, secretary of defense during the Kennedy/Johnson administrations.

Other files of importance include Aeronautics and Space Sciences Committee; Armed Services Committee; Bath Iron Works; Elections files, 1936-1972; Electoral College file, with documents supporting Smith's proposal to abolish the Electoral College; Press Relationship file; United Nations; and Smith's World Trip.

A guide to the Archives, containing guidelines for conducting research, is available upon request. Ada E. Leeke Fellowship grants ranging between \$300 and \$1,500 are available to defer costs of travel and lodging. For further information, write to the Director, Margaret Chase Smith Library, P.O. Box 366, Skowhegan, Maine 04976, or call 207-474-7133. The library has on-line fax-modem capability with access to URSUS AND COMPUSERVE for additional resource searches.

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