Records of the Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging: A Guide to Its Records at the Jimmy Carter Library

Collection Summary

Creator: Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging

Title: Records of the Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging


Quantity: 17 linear feet, 39 containers

Identification:
- Accession Number: 80-1
- National Archives Identifier: 1112

Scope and Content:
This collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, drafts, schedules, publications, telephone logs, speeches, invitations, notes, itineraries, and news clippings. The material relates to the Carter Administration’s effort to address senior citizen issues such as social security, housing, low-income energy for the elderly, health insurance, aging issues, retirement, and nutrition. Also included are comprehensive examinations, studies, graphs, and budget data and benefit formulas that provide a detailed view of the social security system.

Creator Information: Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging

The Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging dealt with issues relating to the elderly and acted as liaison with the Federal Commission on Aging. The office was responsible for the formulation of policies for aged issues and initiatives, including reauthorization of the Older American Act of 1965. The office responded personally to all correspondence that was received and handled by White House Staff requests related to senior citizens. The office also coordinated activities between the Counselor on Aging and the Federal Council on the Aging.

Nelson Cruikshank was appointed in 1977 as Adviser and Counselor on the Aged to President Carter, and as Chairman of the Federal Council on Aging until he left in 1980. Hal Sheppard served in this role from 1980-1981.
Biographical information on key office personnel is located at the end of the finding aid.

Restrictions:
Restrictions on Access: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with applicable executive order(s), which governs National Security policies, applicable statutes/agency restrictions, and material which has been closed in accordance with the donor’s deed of gift.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction: Copyright interest in these papers has been donated to the United States Government. Some of the records may be subject to copyright restrictions (i.e. newspapers, publications, etc.). Researchers should contact the publisher for further information.

Related Material:
Related materials in this repository: White House Central Files, Subject File Categories: Health Services, Chronic Diseases-Health of Aged (HE-4-1); Department of Health and Human Services (FG22); Administration on Aging, Office of Human Development (FG 22-4-1); Federal Council on Aging (FG 129); President’s Council on Aging (FG 239); Labor Management Relations, Conditions-Employment-Unemployment, Aged (LA 2-1); Welfare Geriatrics (WE 5); Welfare, Social Security (WE7); White House Office Files of Stu Eizenstat: Elderly [CF, O/A 727] Box 196

Index Terms:
Limited to major topics under each category
Persons: Nelson Cruikshank, Harold L. Sheppard, Richard Conn


Subjects: Social Security, aged, health care, gerontology, retirement, and housing

Types of Material: Correspondence, memoranda, notes, briefing materials, speeches, press releases, publications, invitations, and news clippings

Administrative Information:
Preferred citation: [Type of Document], [Names of Sender and Recipient or Title of Document], [Date], [Collection Title], [Series Title], [Folder Title], [Box Number], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Acquisition information: These historical materials were received under provisions of the instrument of gift that Jimmy Carter signed January 31, 1981.

Processing information: The first series of the collection was opened in 1989. The open dates are indicated in the series descriptions.
System of Arrangement:
The records of the Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging are divided into six series:

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Detailed Description of the Collection

**Nelson Cruikshank’s Subject Files**
Scope and Content: Containers 1-18. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of memoranda, notes reports, speech drafts, briefing material, correspondence, press releases, resumes, news clippings, invitations, and publications. Also included are comprehensive studies, charts and graphs, and budget data with benefits formulas that provide a detailed view of the social security system. Topics include social security, the aged, and national health insurance. Arranged alphabetically by folder title and chronologically there under.

**Nelson Cruikshank’s Correspondence Alpha Files**
Scope and Content: Containers 19-21. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of correspondence, notes, memoranda, printed material, news clippings, and invitations. The materials include Cruikshank’s responses to legislators, organizations, and private citizens. Arranged alphabetically by last name.

**Nelson Cruikshank’s Correspondence Chronological Files**
Scope and Content: Containers 22-23. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, printed material, and news clippings. The material includes Cruikshank’s responses to legislators, organizations, and private citizens. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

**Nelson Cruikshank’s Chronological Files**
Scope and Content: Containers 23-27. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of invitations, notes, printed material, and telephone call sheets. Arranged chronologically.

**Harold L. Sheppard’s Subject Files**
Scope and Content: Containers 1-5. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, drafts, schedules, publications, invitations, notes, itineraries, and news clippings. Topics include the aged, retirement, and gerontology. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.
Richard Conn’s Subject Files
Scope and Content: Containers 1-7. This series was opened in July 1989. This series consists of correspondence, publications, photographs, press releases, news clippings, speeches, speech drafts, notes, background reports, agendas, testimony transcripts, invitations, and schedules. Topics include social security, housing, health care, and the aged. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

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Biographical Information

Nelson Cruikshank

Nelson Hale Cruikshank was born in Bradner, Ohio on June 21, 1902. He attended Oberlin College and later transferred to Ohio Wesleyan University where he graduated with a B.A. in economics and theology. He obtained a Master of Divinity degree in 1929. His experiences working with the poor and elderly convinced him of the need for legislation to address the problems of these groups. Cruikshank worked closely with local labor unions, eventually splitting his time between pastoral work and union organizing.

He moved to Washington, D.C. in 1936 and worked for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) as a labor relations officer. He later transferred to the FSA’s Migratory Farm Labor Program, where he worked to establish several hundred camps for farm workers migrating out of the Dust Bowl. (A program later made famous in John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath.)

Cruikshank retired as National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC) president in 1977 to become President Jimmy Carter's adviser and counselor on the aged, and as Chairman of the Federal Council on Aging. He led successful efforts to preserve and expand Social Security benefits for the elderly and people with disabilities. He was known nationally in the United States as an expert on Social Security, Medicare and policies on the aged.

In 1980, Cruikshank left the Carter administration to head up an education and research effort with the organization Save Our Security (SOS). SOS was established in 1979 by Wilbur Cohen, one of the original drafters of the Social Security Act. Cruikshank directed the Nelson Cruikshank Social Insurance Study Project for SOS. Later, he moved to Philadelphia in 1984 and passed away on June 19, 1986.

Harold L. Sheppard

Harold L. Sheppard was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1922. He received a M.A. from the University of Chicago in 1945, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1948. He was an Associate Professor of Sociology at Wayne State University from 1947-1959. Sheppard served as Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Aging from 1959-1960. He served as Assistant Administrator for Operations for the Area Redevelopment Administration from 1961-1963.

From 1963 to 1975, he worked as a staff social scientist at W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. He was also the Director for the Center on Work and Aging at the American Institute for Research. He served as Counselor to President Carter on Aging from 1980 to 1981.

Richard Conn
Richard Conn was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1925. Conn worked for the Department of Labor prior to being detailed to the Office of the Counselor to the President on Aging. He served as Assistant to the Counselor to the President on Aging from 1977-1980.