

Conservative Women of Los Angeles Oral History Project (Draft)

Descriptive Summary

Title

Conservative Women of Los Angeles Oral History Project

Date

2000 - 2009

Creator

Michelle Nickerson

Extent

Twenty-three (23) oral histories

Repository

Center for Oral and Public History
California State University, Fullerton

Project Abstract

The Conservative Women of Los Angeles project consists of interviews focusing on the experiences of ordinary women involved in conservative politics in Los Angeles and Orange County, California from the 1940s through the 1980s.

Administrative Information

Acquisition

All items in this collection were donated to the Center for Oral and Public History by the interviewer and interviewees.

Access

The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation

Citations must identify the oral history number, interviewee, interviewer, date, project, and the Center for Oral and Public History.

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Nickerson bibliography:

1. Domestic Threats: Women, Gender and Conservation in Cold War Los Angeles, 1945-1966 Nickerson
yr:2004

2. Women, Domesticity, and Postwar Conservatism
Michelle Nickerson
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3. Review of Gottlieb, Vallianatos, Freer, and Dreier, The Next
Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City. Pacific historical
review [0030-8684] Nickerson, 2006 vol:75 iss:2 pg:362

[" The Power of a Morally Indignant
Woman": Republican Women and the
Making of California Conservatism](#)
M Nickerson - Journal of the West, 2003

Abstracts

OH3928

Narrator: Bennett, Joanne (b. 1916)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Joanne Bennett"
Date: July 22, 2002
Language: English
Location: Home of Joanne Bennett, San Marino, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 16 pages

This oral history spans 1916-1960. Bulk dates: 1940s-1960s.

An oral history with Joanne Bennett of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s and 1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of her family's arrival in California; discusses family life and father's employment; educational background; marriage and adoption of son while her husband was overseas; remembers he was the first baby to be adopted in the county while father was overseas; speaks about her divorce and remarriage in 1954; personal and family involvement in fight against communist insurgence in Southern California and infiltration of communist chapter meetings; discusses association with conservative organizations including the Tuesday Morning Study Club, The John Birch Society, Pro-America, Americanism Center, and the Network of Patriotic Letter Writers; details origins and events of the Tuesday Morning Study Club; recounts founding of the little old ladies with tennis shoes group and involvement of Cheryl Walker; speaks of friendship with Matthew Cvetic; acted as distributor for Cvetic's book, *The Big Decision*, and expresses personal views of his patriotic sacrifice; UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] school controversy and reasons for involvement; and finally, participation with the Barry Goldwater [1964] and Ronald Reagan [1966] political campaigns.

OH3929

Narrator: Brown, Alice (b. 1928)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Alice Brown"
Date: November 27, 2000
Language: English
Location: Home of Alice Brown, Los Angeles, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1928-2000. Bulk dates: 1940s-1980s.

An oral history with Alice Brown of Los Angeles, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Brown's childhood and adult life in Los Angeles; her family's arrival in California; parents involvement with the Harvey Line, how they met, and their employment; recalls the Depression and its impact on the Los Angeles area; coming of World War II and economic improvements; recollections of FDR as wartime leader and united war effort; explains history of why she lives in current home; educational background and college life; employment as secretary in various educational institutions; relates membership and involvement with the DAR [Daughter's of the American Revolution], its origins and activities; details relationship with sister through the DAR and her kidney illness; membership in local historical societies; discusses interest in archeological dig near Calico and interest in metaphysics; reasons for not joining a political organizations; how she would describe herself politically; reasons why she is a registered democrat and why she considers herself to be conservative in today's society; recalls seeing Richard Nixon at the 1948 Republican convention and his views toward democrats; explains why she is not a feminist and views on feminism vs. activism; recalls feelings about the Watts Riots [1965] and Civil Rights movement; personal reaction toward Vietnam War; details communist threat to China, Southwest Asia, United States; describes personal view of ideological climate against communism; secularism during the 1960s and shift toward left leaning liberalism; discusses editorial content and political views of *Los Angeles Times*; views of familial relationships; and finally, explains her views of current political and societal divisiveness.

OH3930

Narrator: Carson, Virginia (b. 1909)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Virginia Carson"
Date: March 7, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Virginia Carson, Hancock Park, Los Angeles, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1909-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Virginia Carson of Los Angeles, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. [N.B. Charlie Smith, friend and political activist, relates his views toward current politics in the United States and abroad, thoughts about conservatives and liberal politicians; involvement with political movements; and role as political lobbyist.] Born in New York City, this interview gives an account of Carson's background and musical education in Paris, France; experience as the first case of infantile paralysis [polio] in Westchester County, New York; details first foray into politics and role in election of Connecticut Governor John Lodge [1950]; comments on presence of anti-Semitism during election; describes tenure as head of Barry Goldwater headquarters during 1964 campaign; speaks about The John Birch Society founder Robert Welch and his involvement with Pro-America; arrival in California in 1955; recalls joining The John Birch Society the same day as her husband; founded chapter for women in 1959 and describes meetings and events; involvement with Pro-America, locations and meetings; her election as local, state, and national president of Pro-America, involvement with conservative organizations including: UROC [United Republicans of California] and Network of Patriotic Letter Writers; and finally, explains why she is not a feminist.

OH3931

Narrator: Crosby, Jane (b. 1920)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Jane Crosby"
Date: February 26, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Jane Crosby, San Juan Capistrano, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: edited; 23 pages

This oral history spans 1920-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1980s.

An oral history with Jane Crosby of San Juan Capistrano, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s and founding the United Republicans of California. Born and raised in Pasadena, this interview explains why her parents emigrated from Canada; describes employment in educational institutions; speaks about family life; recalls involvement with Rafferty senate campaign [1968]; comments on Ronald Regan's career and personal/professional association with him; founded UROC [United Republicans of California] with husband, Joseph; reasons for forming UROC; describes membership and meetings of The John Birch Society, Tuesday Morning Study Club, and the Federation of Republican Women, specifically speaking about reasons for involvement and the communist attack on The John Birch Society; comments on changes in the republican party and CRA [California Republican Assembly] since the 1960s; discusses current political involvement; remembers early affiliation with democratic party and reasons for switching to republican conservatism; explains rationale for entering local politics 1950s and opinion about mental health legislation; comments on founding the Americanism Center in early 1960s and why it pulled conservatives together; explains why the Americanism Center closed; describes interior of center and discusses clientele and activities; recalls involvement with Goldwater campaign; discusses personal break with John Birch Society; comments on women's role in politics; speaks about the infiltration of communism in American society; relationship with Phyllis Schafly during Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign through the stop ERA [equal rights amendment] campaign; explains why she does not consider herself a feminist and definition of feminism; and finally, her appointment to the commission of the bicentennial and subsequent controversy.

OH3932

Narrator: Crow, Kathleen (b. 1931)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Kathleen Crow"
Date: July 31, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Kathleen Crow, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1931-2000. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Kathleen Crow of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Crow's entrance in politics and political views; mentions awareness of McCarthy hearings; involvement with political campaigns including Barry Goldwater [1968] and Matt Godfrey; describes participation in The John Birch Society, Tuesday Morning Study Club, Network of Patriotic Letter Writers, UROC [United Republicans of California], and Republican Central Committee; cites impact of east European women on American political activism; expresses personal views on current political and environmental issues; recalls campaigning for Reagan's gubernatorial [1966] and presidential [1980] elections; reasons why she does not consider herself a feminist; explains why she is conservative; and finally, discusses the infiltration of communism throughout society.

OH3933

Narrator: Cullinane, Patricia (b. 1930)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Patricia Cullinane"
Date: May 8, 2001
Language: English
Location: Phone interview with Patricia Cullinane
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 14 pages

This oral history spans 1930-2001. Bulk dates: 1960s.

An oral history with Patricia Cullinane for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1960s. A third generation Californian, this interview gives an account of Cullinane's family life and marriage in 1948; involvement in school board; recounts joining Parents for Rafferty campaign and its organization [1962]; recalls enrolling in Fred Schwartz's School of Anti-Communism; disillusionment following Rafferty campaign and activism with Carden School of Education; stresses the importance of phonics and integrated curriculum in school; opened Carden Hall Sept 15, 1963 and discusses how work affected her role as mother; and cites political influences in 1960s.

OH3934

Narrator: Garoutte, Betty (b.)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Betty Garoutte"
Date: November 28, 2000
Language: English
Location: Home of Betty Garoutte, Los Angeles, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1940s-2000. Bulk dates: 1960s and 1980s.

An oral history with Betty Garoutte of Los Angeles County California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] and political involvement in Southern California during the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Garoutte's background and vocations in early adult life; discusses membership in various lineage organizations including the DAR; opinion on non-political approach of DAR; discusses why she is not a feminist; how she would describe herself politically; reasons why considers herself to be conservative; views on abortion and death penalty; voting record the 1960s and opinion on Regan's presidential election [1980]; details interest in genealogy; value of DAR being organization for women and why she joined; and finally, discusses children's political affiliations.

OH3935

Narrator: Harbour, Ruth (b. 1920)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Ruth Harbour"
Date: July 24, 2001
Language: English
Location: Huntington Library, San Marino, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1920-2000. Bulk dates: 1960s.

An oral history with Ruth Harbour of San Marino, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Brown's childhood and adult life in Los Angeles; parent's employment; describes educational background; details joining The John Birch Society with husband and her own founding chapter; recalls political influences and publications; involvement with San Marino Republican Club and its role in 1960s elections; recalls work with Peggy Cise and organizing speaking events; involvement with precinct work in Reagan's gubernatorial campaign [1966]; recounts seeing Nixon in person; opinion on FDR and role in World War II; expresses conservative views about abortion, illegal immigration, and Civil Rights Movement; describes organization of The John Birch Society; explains why she is not a feminist; and finally, describes women's role in the conservative movement.

OH3936

Narrator: Hanrahan, Suzanne (b. 1924)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Suzanne Hanrahan"
Date: July 29, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Suzanne Hanrahan, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1934-2001. Bulk dates: 1940s-2001.

An oral history with Suzanne Hanrahan of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Hanrahan's family background; describes educational background; work as nurses aid during WWII; gives an account of her entrance in politics and development of political consciousness; recalls joining The John Birch Society and organization of her chapter; discusses gender separation in politics; involvement with Pro America and UROC [United Republicans of California]; influence of Fulton Louis Jr., Barry Goldwater, Joseph McCarthy, and Fred Schwartz; explains why she does not consider herself a feminist; discusses view of free masonry; and finally, the influence of illegal immigration on Clinton's impeachment by the House of Representatives [1998].

OH3937

Narrator: Jensen, Marjorie (b. 1909)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Marjorie Jensen"
Date: July 15, 2002
Language: English
Location: Home of Marjorie Jensen, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 13 pages

This oral history spans 1909-2002. Bulk dates: 1940s-1960s.

An oral history with Marjorie Jensen of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Jensen's family background and husband's occupation; arrival in California in 1941; entrance in politics through children's education; involvement with Pro America; influence of Dr. Watts; hosting and organization of Tuesday Morning Study Club meetings and meeting locations; discusses financial hardship associated with meetings; relationship with Florence Fowler Lyons; views about UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization]; participation and leadership in Network of Patriotic Letter Writers; recalls finding locations for and directing network; membership in The John Birch Society; describes celebrating anniversary of Birch Society; relationship between Americanism Center and Network of Patriotic Letter Writers; expresses disillusionment with Republican party; explains interest in working at the polls; and finally, describes meeting Barry Goldwater.

OH3938

Narrator: Knowles, Virginia (b. 1924)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Virginia Knowles"
Date: February 21, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Virginia Knowles, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 19 pages

This oral history spans 1924-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Virginia Knowles of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Knowles family background; her educational background and employment; recalls her parents' political influence at Republicans; involvement in and organization of Republican Women's Club; discusses the founding of UROC [United Republicans of California]; purpose and differences of Republican federations, assemblies, and UROC; gender involvement and jobs with campaigns; volunteered for Americanism Center; discusses belief in Republican ideology; describes role of women in the Republican party; participation in The John Birch Society; explains why she is not a feminist; and details involvement in Network of Patriotic Letter Writers.

OH3939

Narrator: Koenig, Marie (b. 1919)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Marie Koenig"
Date: April 5, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Marie Koenig, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 21 pages

This oral history spans 1919-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Marie Koenig of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Born in New Orleans, this interview gives an account of Koenig's childhood and educational background; her work with Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals; husband's life and career; discusses her family and occupational background; cites community volunteer work; origins of political activism; discusses founding of American Public Relations Forum; involvement in Republican Women's Federation, National Federation of Republican Women, UROC [United Republicans of California], Tuesday Morning Study Club, Network of Patriotic Letter Writers, and Fred Schwartz's School of Anti-Communism; describes husband's political involvement and founding of Alta Dena Americanism Center; remembers campaigning for Alaska Mental Health Bill of 1956; describes her feelings on patriotism; recalls work in WWII in Signal Corps; discusses the role of women in the Republican party; explains why she is not a feminist and the change of women's role in politics; and finally, recalls activism in Goldwater's campaign.

OH3940

Narrator: Lamoreaux, Joan (b. 1932)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Joan Lamoreaux"
Date: March 1, 2002
Language: English
Location: Home of Joan Lamoreaux, Arcadia, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1932-2002. Bulk dates: 1940s-1960s.

An oral history with Joan Lamoreaux of Arcadia, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Lamoreaux's family background and motherhood; discusses membership in, founding of and organization of Republican Women's Club; recounts family's background in The John Birch Society; remembers running Republican Headquarters [1960s] and discusses gender/political roles in campaign work; involvement in Goldwater campaign [1968]; views about political conservatism, women's liberation movement, and the media; recalls involvement with Reagan's gubernatorial campaign [1980]; recollections about President Clinton's presidency; recounts attending first inauguration of President George Bush; and finally cites changes in politics since 1950.

OH3941

Narrator: Leigh, Louise (b. 1914)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Louise Leigh"
Date: July 30, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Louise Leigh, El Monte, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1914-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Louise Leigh of El Monte, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Leigh's family and educational background; entrance in politics through Nixon/Kennedy election [1960]; reasons for not joining The John Birch Society; views on communism in the United States; cites differences between liberalism and conservatism; involvement with CRA [California Republican Assembly]; recalls 1963 CRA presidential election and Goldwater/Rockefeller campaign [1964]; discusses current political involvement; describes organizational structure of CRA; differences between female members of CRA and Republican Women's Federation; gender involvement in Republican party; expresses belief in constitutionalism; explains why she does not consider herself a feminist and reaction to women's movement; and finally, expresses opinion on why young women are not involved in politics.

OH3942

Narrator: Lewis, Mary (b. 1934)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Mary Lewis"
Date: December 19, 2000
Language: English
Location: Home of Mary Lewis, San Marino, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1934-2000. Bulk dates: 1940s-2000.

An oral history with Mary Lewis of San Marino for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Lewis' family life on St. Simons island; describes her educational background and various occupations in banking and real estate; explains genealogical background and colonial roots; involvement in San Marino Women's Club and Garden Club; details membership in Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Colonists, and Colonial Dames Seventeenth Century; describes museum involvement and organizational structure of DAR; political background; opinion of politics of the *Los Angeles Times*; cites grievances against Democratic party; and finally, expresses views toward feminist movement.

OH3943

Narrator: Martin, Elizabeth (b. 1919)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Elizabeth Martin"
Date: June 25, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Elizabeth Martin, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1919-2001. Bulk dates: 1940s-1960s.

An oral history with Elizabeth Martin of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Martin's volunteerism in Red Cross Nurses Corps; work for Navy intelligence in anti-communist activities; discusses her love of the teaching profession; talks about her educational background and work at TWA Airline; describes her husband's family and architectural background; how she developed political awareness through The John Birch Society; reminisces about political background as lifelong Republican; mentions children's membership in The John Birch Society youth chapter; involvement with Christian Resistance to Atheistic Communism; discusses social resistance to The John Birch Society and its impact on her political outlook; recalls son's military tour in Vietnam; mentions joining Pro America; cites differences between Birch Society and Pro America; describes organizational structure and demographics of the John Birch Society meetings; discusses involvement in local campaigns; reasons why she does not consider herself a feminist; and finally, recalls housing and impact of Birch Society guests from around eastern Europe and the Middle East.

OH3944

Narrator: Moseley, Virginia (b. 1923)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Virginia Moseley"
Date: December 1, 2000
Language: English
Location: Home of Virginia Moseley, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1923-2000. Bulk dates: 1940s-2000.

An oral history with Virginia Moseley of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of the migration to California post-WWII; how she met her husband and his military service; describes her educational background and volunteer activities; gives history of family background and life during the Depression; recalls membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution [DAR]; talks about precinct work for Democrat party and transition to conservatism; discusses her views of a woman's role in society and why she is not a feminist; compares Republican Women's Clubs versus Democratic Women's Clubs; participation in; recalls community involvement with Church Women's United, PTA, Sunday School, and Continuation High School of Teenage Mothers; current beliefs in Republican social ideology versus Democratic party platform; and finally, discusses the history and value of DAR as women's organization.

OH3945

Narrator: Ranuzzi, Florence (b. 1908)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Florence Ranuzzi"
Date: February 12, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Florence Ranuzzi, Tehachapi, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: verbatim transcript; 83 pages

This oral history spans 1908-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Florence Ranuzzi of Tehachapi, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. Mrs. Ranuzzi's daughter, Mary Cunningham, also participated in the interview and shared her perspective on many of the topics discussed. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Ranuzzi's involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s and the founding the Poor Richard's Book Shop in Los Angeles in 1960. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Ranuzzi's family history and film career at RKO and MGM; parents employment and mothers business career; her involvement with the Pasadena Women's City Club, local Mother's Club, and Pro America; speaks about founding the first patriotic bookshop in Los Angeles, Poor Richard's, and the controversy surrounding its opening; recalls housing Barry Goldwater's headquarters at Poor Richard's; cites origins of political activism and concurrent influence of communist bloc countries in the 1950s; expresses opinion on role of women in the conservative movement; recalls threats and acts of violence directed toward Ranuzzi and her family; tells about moving Poor Richard's to Montana after the Watts Riots [1965]; explains the inner works on the bookstore, its support of anti-communist activities, and her husband's managerial role; discusses the role and organization of women in conservative movement and subsequent impact of the Vietnam War; talks about the control of UC Berkeley over the surrounding area and its political impact on her daughter; recounts well known Hollywood stars who came to Poor Richard's; Cunningham discusses her perception of conservatism as a teenager and living in paranoia at threats; recalls the Alaska Mental Health Bill of 1956 and political fallout; shares about being subpoenaed for a supposed conspiracy to overthrow the government; details organization and activism of The John Birch Society; how politics changed her life and how she took precautions to keeping her family safe from the crackpots; impact of Poor Richard's on the community; Cunningham recalls tenure as 1964 Goldwater Girl; cites changes in conservatism from 1950s to 1980s; explains why she does not characterize herself as a feminist but an American; Cunningham furthers the discussion as to why she is also not a feminist and her views of the feminist movement; Cunningham discusses process of becoming a debutante in Pasadena; addresses stereotypes associated with conservatives, Jews, and communists; and finally, Ranuzzi reads various letters of appreciation directed to Poor Richard's Book Shop and a speech about the evils of communism.

OH3946

Narrator: Schneider, Ruth (b. 19)
Riley, Marguerita (b. 1923)

Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson

Title: “An Oral History with Ruth Schneider and Marguerita Riley”

Date: February 27, 2001

Language: English

Location: Home of Ruth Schneider, La Canada, California

Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County

Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1923-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Ruth Schneider and Marguerita Riley of La Canada, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson’s dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview talks about Riley’s background as a Pasadena native, family history and the lifesaving flotation device invented by father; Schneider recounts her childhood in Beverly Hills, family background and father’s business as marketplace stall owner; also speaks about her marriage and husband’s career as a lawyer; both women discuss their memories of Robert Welch, founder of The John Birch Society and his political philosophy; emphasis on education through Birch Society; addresses publishing industry and views about its influences; explains importance of the Twelve Candles [books recommended by Welch]; influence of McGuffey readers in conservative bookstores; origins of political activism; Riley’s involvement in the Young Republicans and precinct work in Eisenhower’s election [1952]; explains demographics in Young Republican club and how she became aware of The John Birch Society; Schneider and Riley speak about the philosophy of The John Birch Society and reasons for joining; son’s involvement with anti-establishment; Schneider and Riley recount activism in Goldwater campaign [1964]; discusses Robert Welch’s political values and belief in congressional activism; opinions on President Eisenhower’s Cold War policies; recalls presidential primary election with Robert Taft versus Dwight Eisenhower; origins of political activism and recall parent’s patriotic legacy; shares views on feminist movement and its impact on women’s happiness; speaks about the racist accusations against The John Birch Society; discusses views on the communist infiltration in Civil Rights Movement; reflects on women’s role in the conservative movement; and finally, talks about the lack of social graces in today’s society.

OH3947

Narrator: Trowbridge, Virginia (b. 1933)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Virginia Trowbridge"
Date: February 15, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Virginia Trowbridge, Pasadena, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: edited transcript; 14 pages

This oral history spans 1933-2001. Bulk dates: 1960s.

An oral history with Virginia Trowbridge of Pasadena, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Trowbridge's involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1960s. A native Californian, this interview gives an account of Trowbridge's educational background and work as a legal secretary; discusses her involvement at church; recounts husband's military service and occupational background; recalls involvement with Republican Women's Club and its emphasis on political education; details volunteerism at the Americanism Center; recounts passion for Goldwater's 1964 campaign; talks about origins of political activism and work in PTA; mentions creating a library cataloging system at her children's school; recalls active life as stay-at-home mom; reasons for not joining The John Birch Society; explains her views about feminism; talks about women's involvement in politics; and finally explains her husband's political involvement.

OH3948

Narrator: Whitesell, Janice (b. 1920)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Janice Whitesell"
Date: January 23, 2001
Language: English
Location: Home of Janice Whitesell, Alhambra, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1920-2001. Bulk dates: 1940s-2001.

An oral history with Janice Whitesell of Alhambra, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview addresses Whitesell's childhood in Pennsylvania and move to California in 1945; educational background and various employment ventures; church involvement and its importance in her life; membership in the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] and various positions held, including chaplain; speaks about the value of the DAR as a patriotic organization and why patriotism is so important to her personally; importance of imparting American history to students; why she does not consider herself a feminist and views towards the feminist movement; opinion about the current two party political spectrum; recalls 1964 Barry Goldwater; discusses value of DAR as women's only organization; opinions about 2000 presidential election; and finally, speaks about why she is a republican. .

OH3949

Narrator: Whitmore, Marcella (b. 1917)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Marcella Whitmore"
Date: March 9, 2001
Language: English
Location: Arcadia Republican Headquarters, Arcadia, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1917-2001. Bulk dates: 1950s-1960s.

An oral history with Marcella Whitmore of Arcadia, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, originally conducted for Nickerson's dissertation. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Specifically, this interview gives an account of Whitmore's family background history as longtime members of Republican Party; husband's occupational background; speaks about working for local assemblyman; origins of political activism; details involvement with local precinct work and founding of Arcadia Republican Organization; talks about holding various leadership positions in California Republican Party after 1960; discusses importance of California in the Republican Party; describes work as membership chairman and how she increased membership in Republican Women's Federation; reasons for not including abortion as part of the Federation platform; recalls visit to the White House following Reagan's presidential election [1980]; speaks about influence of Reagan within party; explains the work of the Republican Women's Federation; talks about Joe Shell's gubernatorial campaign [1962]; recalls the founding of UROC [United Republican's of California] and personal work with the PTA; mentions involvement with Max Rafferty's campaign and Parents for Rafferty; reflects on role of women in Republican party; and finally, explains why she does not consider herself a feminist.

OH3950

Narrator: Hilands, Lucy (b. 1938)
Interviewer: Michelle Nickerson
Title: "An Oral History with Lucy Hilands"
Date: July 23, 2001
Language: English
Location: Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California
Project: Conservative Women in Los Angeles County
Status: not transcribed

This oral history spans 1938-2001. Bulk dates: 1960s-2001.

An oral history with Lucy Hilands of San Marino, California, for the Conservative Women in Los Angeles County Oral History Project, Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about her involvement with the conservative movement in Southern California during the 1950s-1960s. Grew up in Portland, family background; recalls time as airline stewardess with United Airlines; details involvement with local precinct work through Republican Headquarters; Pasadena Women's Federated Club; speaks about difficulty of remaining politically active with young family; husband's involvement with anti-communist organizations; describes principles behind passionate conservative mindset; explains origins of political activism; addresses the impact of social issues, such as immigration, on her life and children's education; speaks about gender expectations in the political sphere; recalls involvement with The John Birch Society, California Republican Assembly, and Republican Women's Club of San Marino; describes personal value of conservatism as belonging to a community; reasons for joining The John Birch Society; speaks about lack of conservatism in younger generations and disillusionment in current politics; discusses ideas of constitutionalism and big government in current society; and finally, how communism survived the fall of the Soviet Union.