

Guide to Jesse A. Helms Papers

JHCA.RG2

Record Group 2 - Political Papers and Campaign Files, 1940-2004

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	The Jesse Helms Center Archives
Title	The Jesse A. Helms Papers: Record Group 2 - Political Papers and Campaign Files
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1972-1996
Date [inclusive]	1940-2004
Extent	86.9 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	The Jesse A. Helms collection consists of personal and family papers and the political papers of United States Senator Jesse A. Helms. The collection includes personal and political correspondence, speeches, legislative files, press files, audio and video tapes, photographs and other materials.

Preferred Citation note

The Jesse A. Helms Papers, The Jesse Helms Center Archives, Wingate, NC.

Biographical/Historical note

Jesse Alexander Helms, Jr. was born on October 18, 1921 in Monroe, NC to Jesse Alexander, Sr. and Ethel Mae. A seventh generation Helms' family member to grow up in Monroe, Jesse, Jr. was part of a close knit but poor family that included an older brother, Wriston, and younger sister, Mary Elizabeth. At the age of 9, young Jesse's first job was sweeping the floors of the Monroe Enquirer, the local newspaper. This early introduction to the newspaper world proved to be a watershed moment in Helms early life and in 1939, at the age of 18, Helms began writing sport articles for the Monroe Enquirer, the Journal and The Charlotte News.

Helms attended Wingate University for one year before transferring to Wake Forest College in hopes of advancing his education in journalism. Once enrolled at Wake Forest, Helms took a job on campus writing sports publicity and washing dishes at the boarding house where he stayed. A chance meeting with the managing editor of the Raleigh News & Observer quickly led to an overnight proofreader job with the paper. Holding four jobs and attending college was no easy endeavor, but Helms remained undaunted. Through a series of events and great perseverance Helms went from overnight proofreader to full time sports writer with the News & Observer and eventually withdrew from his university studies to pursue a full time newspaper career. In his 2005 memoir Helms explained, "My own purpose back then wasn't to get a diploma, it was to get the foundation needed for the jobs I wanted to have."

While with the News & Observer, Helms met a woman who changed his life. Dorothy Coble, a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was the editor for the News & Observer's society pages. Helms said, "The best path to my desk in the sports department was past Dot, and I made it my business to travel that path often." The pair formed a lasting friendship that lasted from their marriage on October 31, 1942 until Helms death in 2008.

In the fall of 1941, Helms moved to the Raleigh Times as a regular news reporter and assistant city director. Not long after, with the attacks at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Helms volunteered to serve in the United States Navy. For four years, Helms was a Navy recruiter, although he applied several times for active sea duty and once as an officer trainer (he was rejected because of hearing loss in his left year). Most of his service was spent in Raleigh, with the exception of some time spent in Columbus, Georgia. Upon returning to Raleigh, shortly after the birth of his first daughter, Jane, Helms accepted a position as News Director of WCBT in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. The move to radio was another watershed moment in Helms life, and through this work he met the owner of WRAL, A.J. Fletcher. In 1948, Helms returned to Raleigh to work for Fletcher as the News Director for WRAL and two other statewide radio networks operated by the Capitol Broadcasting Company. Throughout his life, Helms referred to Fletcher as a father figure and credited him as one of the people who challenged him to flesh out his political beliefs.

The 1950 Senate race was Helms first brush with national politics. Fletcher's former law partner Willis Smith ran for the Democratic seat against one term Senator, and former UNC Chapel Hill President, Franklin Porter Graham. Helms, although not officially a part of the Smith campaign, gave Smith his support and encouraged him throughout the race. When Smith won the election he asked Helms to accompany him to Washington, D.C. as his administrative assistant. Following Smith's death, in 1953,

Helms returned to Raleigh as the Executive Director for the North Carolina Bankers Association (NCBA). During that time Helms was also elected to the Raleigh City Council.

Helms never completely stepped away from broadcasting. During his time with the NCBA, Helms hosted a short Sunday program called “Facts of the Matter.” In November 1960, Helms left the NCBA and took a job as Executive Vice President for News Operations at WRAL-TV and Capitol Broadcasting. Between 1960 and 1972 Helms delivered over 2700 “Viewpoints,” a daily editorial program, becoming a household name and putting WRAL-TV in the national spotlight.

By the early 1970s, Helms was encouraged to make a move to run for the United States Senate. Thought reluctant at first, Helms agreed and after a long campaign against Congressman Nick Galifianakis, Helms won the election. Helms remembered hearing Walter Cronkite say, “Down in North Carolina, a fellow named Jesse Helms has been elected to the United States Senate.” Helms was sworn into office in January 1973 and quickly rose to an influential position, often credited as a leader in the rise of the modern conservative movement. By 1978, the Raleigh News & Observer dubbed him “Senator No” for his strong conviction to conservative principles, something he actually considered a compliment throughout his career. Helms was a master of the Senate rules and procedures, routinely reading everything he could on issues brought up for a vote and felt it was his duty and obligation to fully understand the facts before he affected his constituents with legislation.

The Senator was instrumental in establishing the Senate Steering Committee, a committee designed to help formally organize positions and responses. The issues on which Helms focused on during his career varied, but were always deeply rooted to his conservative principles and to what he felt was his moral responsibility. Helms also took a great interest in foreign affairs, rising to the role of Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1995. Later, after working closely with Senator Joe Biden to reform the United Nations, Helms became the first legislator to speak before the United Nations Security Council. In 2001, Helms announced he would not run for a sixth term and, in 2003, retired to Raleigh with his wife, three children and seven grandchildren. Helms lived happily in retirement with his family until his death on July 4, 2008.

Scope and Contents note

The Jesse A. Helms Collection is composed of 2 record groups – Senatorial Papers and Political Papers and Campaign Files.

Senatorial Papers (1953 – 2004) contains material on Helms’ political career as well as files of Senate staff members. Included in the subgroup are Helms’ personal correspondence, work on Senate committees, issue files, speeches, voting records, photographs, audio and video material. Major topics of interest include the Panama Canal, communism, abortion, school busing, national defense, the budget and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Political Papers and Campaign Files (1940 – 2004) contains files from Helms' tenure as an administrative assistant to U.S. Senators Willis Smith and Alton Lennon, Raleigh City Council files, election series files and press files.

Arrangement note

The collection is arranged into two record groups:

Record Group 1: Senatorial Papers, 1973-2002 Record Group 2: Political Papers and Campaign Files, 1940-2004

Administrative Information

Publication Information

The Jesse Helms Center Archives

Conditions Governing Access note

Parts of this collection are open to the public. Some sensitive material has been removed from the collection and placed in the vault. A relocation sheet has been added in those cases. Additionally, some material is restricted and cannot be viewed due to privacy or security concerns.

Conditions Governing Use note

Permission to examine material does not constitute permission to publish. Any publication of the materials in the collection beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. Any publication of the materials in the collection beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. Requests for permission to publish should be addressed to Archives Director, The Jesse Helms Center, PO Box 147, Wingate, NC 28174.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- ABC. American Broadcasting Company.
- Camp Willow Run.
- Carolina Light and Power.
- CBS, Broadcasting Inc..
- Daughters of the American Revolution.
- Electoral College.
- Federal Communications Commission.
- Internal Revenue Service.
- National Association of Broadcasters.
- NBC. National Broadcasting Company.
- North Carolina Bankers Association.
- Raleigh News and Observer.
- Rotary Club.
- UNICEF. United Nations Children's Fund.
- Wingate University. Wingate College.
- WRAL-Raleigh.

Personal Name(s)

- Adams, Hoover, 1920-2012
- Albright, Madeleine, (Madeleine Jana Korbel Albright), 1937 -
- Ashe, Earl
- Baker, Lennox
- Belk, Irvin
- Biden, Joe, (Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr.), 1942 -
- Biegun, Steve, (Stephen E. Biegun)
- Billingslea, Marshall S.
- Black, Charles R., Jr., 1947-
- Boney, Tom
- Bono, (Paul David Hewson), 1960-
- Broughton, Jimmy, (James Wesley Cooper Broughton)
- Bush, George H.W.
- Bush, George W.
- Byrd, Harry R., 1887-1966
- Byrd, Robert, 1917-2010
- Caldwell, John T.
- Carbaugh, John, 1946-2006
- Carmichael, Stokely, 1941-1998
- Carter, Jimmy, (James Earl Carter, Jr.), 1924-
- Castro, Fidel, 1926-

- Chafee, John, (John Lester Hubbard Chafee), 1922-1999
- Christopher, Warren, 1925-2011
- Clinton, Bill, (William Jefferson Clinton), 1946-
- Dole, Bob, (Robert Joseph Dole), 1923-
- Dole, Elizabeth, (Mary Elizabeth Alexander Hanford Dole), 1936-
- East, John Porter, 1931-1986
- Ellis, Thomas F., 1920-
- Ervin, Sam Jr., (Samuel James Ervin, Jr.), 1896-1985
- Faircloth, Lauch, (Duncan McLauchlin Faircloth), 1928-
- Falwell, Jerry Lamon, 1933-2007
- Fletcher, A.J., (Alfred Johnston Fletcher), 1887-1979
- Fonseca, Deborah, (Deborah DeMoss Fonseca)
- Ford, Gerald, (Gerald Rudolph "Jerry" Ford), 1913-2006
- Franklin, William, (William Franklin Graham III), 1952-
- Fuller, Clint, 1920-1993
- Galifinakis, Nick, 1928-
- Gantt, Harvey, 1943-
- Gardner, Jim, 1933-
- Goldwater, Barry, 1909-1998
- Graham, Billy, (William Franklin Graham, Jr.), 1918-
- Graham, Franklin Porter, 1886-1972
- Hatch, Orrin, 1934-
- Holshouser , James, 1934-2013
- Humphrey, Hubert, 1911-1978
- Hunt, Jim, (James Baxter Hunt), 1937-
- Kennedy, John F., 1917-1963
- Kennedy, Robert F., 1925-1968
- Kennedy, Ted, (Edward Moore Kennedy), 1932-2009
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1964
- Lake, Isaac Beverly, 1934-
- Lucier, James
- McAlister, Alexander Worth, 1886-1946
- Meredith, James, 1933-
- Mondale, Walter, 1928-
- Nance, Bud, (James W. Nance), 1922-1999
- Nixon, Richard M., 1913-1994
- Nofziger, Lyn, 1924-2006
- Noriega, Manuel, 1934-
- Peele, James Clarendon, 1918-1987
- Pickens, T. Boone, 1928-
- Pinochet, Augusto, 1915-2006
- Putin, Vladimir, 1952-
- Reagan, Ronald, 1911-2004
- Reno, Janet, 1938-
- Rockefeller, Nelson, 1908-1979

- Sanford, Terry, 1917-1998
- Smith, Willis, 1887-1953
- Sozhenitsyn, Alexander, 1918-2008
- Spaulding, Asa T., 1902-1990
- Thatcher, Margaret, 1925-2013
- Thiessen, Marc, 1968-
- Wallace, George, 1919-1998
- Wrenn, Carter

Subject(s)

- Banking
- Civil Rights
- Cold War
- Communism
- Correspondence
- Elections
- Foreign Aid
- Free Enterprise
- Immigration
- Inflation
- Panama Canal
- Pornography
- Radio
- Speaker Ban Law
- Speeches
- Television
- Vietnam War
- World War II

Record Group 2: Political Papers and Campaign Files

Collection Inventory

Record Group 2: Political Papers and Campaign Files 1940-2004 (Bulk, 1972-1996) 86.9 Linear feet

Series 1: Administrative Assistant to Willis Smith and Alton Lennon 1940-1954 1.2 Linear feet

Scope and Contents note

This series includes correspondence and general office files from Helms' tenure as administrative assistant to Senator Willis Smith and Senator Alton Lennon.

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically.

	Box	Folder
Tobacco Network, Inc. 1950-1951 thru Correspondence: Helms, February 1953	1	1-15
Correspondence: Helms, March 1953 thru Clippings; Senator Smith's Death, 1953	2	1-16
Diplomatic Immunity, 1953 thru Speech Material: "Total economic and Military Aid extended by the United States Government to all Foreign Countries", 1940-1951	3	1-19
Correspondence, July 1-15, 1953 thru Correspondence, 1954	4	1-7

Series 2: Raleigh City Council**Series 2: Raleigh City Council 1951-1961 2.0 Linear feet****Scope and Contents note**

This series includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, studies and print material.

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically.

	Box	Folder
City Council, 1954 thru City Council, December, 1958	5	1-16
City Council, February, 1959 thru City Council, June-July, 1961	6	1-14
City Council Election/Flyers and Newspaper Clippings, 1959 thru City Charter, c.1958	7	1-13
Urban Renewal, 1958 thru Newspaper Clippings, 1957-1960, undated	8	1-11
Annual Report, Department of Public Works, City of Raleigh, 1955-1956 thru "Raleigh Police Department Manual", undated	9	1-12

Series 3: Elections Series 1972-1996 61.5 Linear feet

Box
10-132

Scope and Contents note

This series includes materials from all five of Senator Helms' Senatorial elections, including correspondence, newspaper articles, rules and regulations, polls, fund raising materials, financial documents and ads. Use of this series is restricted.

Series 4: Press Files

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically by election year and alphabetically within each election.

Series 4: Press Files 1961-2004 22.2 Linear feet

Scope and Contents note

This series contains newspapers, magazine articles and other general press files related to Senator Helms and his time in the Senate.

Arrangement note

Subseries are arranged chronologically or alphabetically as noted.

Subseries 4.1: Magazine Articles about Helms 1953-2004 3.0 Linear feet

Arrangement note

Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains magazine articles about Jesse Helms.

Box Folder

Magazine Articles: New Executive Secretary, The Tarheel Banker, November 1953 thru Members Tell How to Make Congress Work Better, US News and World Report, November 17, 1975

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1-21

Magazine Articles: Right They Are, Newsweek, August 23, 1976 thru The New Right, We're Ready to Lead, Cover Story, Conservative Digest, October, 1980

134

1-24

Subseries 4.2: "Congressional Quarterly" Articles by or about Helms

Magazine Articles: Jesse Takes Charge, by Richard Whittle, Tarheel, January 1981 thru Tom Wicker May Not be a Small-D Democrat but Jesse Helms is a Big-C Constitutional Conservative, Conservative Digest, November 1982	135	1-32
Magazine Articles: North Carolina Conservative Tom Ellis, Cover Story, The Review of the News, January 5, 1983 thru The Stouthearted Jesse Helms, Conservative Digest, January, February, 1989	136	1-32
Magazine Articles: Lawmakers Take Aim at Chemical Weapons, Freedom, May, June, 1989 thru Is It Art or Tax-Paid Obscenity, The NEA Controversy, by Sen Helms, Journal of Law and Policy, 1994	137	1-35
Magazine Articles: The World According to Helms, Cover Story, Independent Weekly, January 4, 1995 thru Between the Lines, Bill Weld's Secret Scheme, George, December 1997	138	1-30
Magazine Articles: The Twilight of a Demagogue, GQ, February, 1998 thru Still the Goodliest Land, Embassy News, Vol 4, no 3, nd	139	1-18
Subseries 4.2: "Congressional Quarterly" Articles by or about Helms 1978-1988 0.5 Linear feet		
Arrangement note		
Arranged chronologically.		
Scope and Contents note		
This subseries contains "Congressional Quarterly" articles written by Senator Helms or articles about Senator Helms.		
	Box	Folder

Subseries 4.3: "Human Events" Articles by or about Helms

Congressional Quarterly: Robert Byrd on Senate Scheduling, Carter and Congress, Sept 2, 1978 thru Helms, Democrats at Odds on Foreign Policy Nominees, October 9, 1982	140	1-24
Congressional Quarterly: Tactical Errors, Disunity Blunt New Right Social Legislation, October 16, 1982 thru Miscellaneous Articles, 1981	141	1-23

Subseries 4.3: "Human Events" Articles by or about Helms 1973-2000 0.5 Linear feet**Arrangement note**

Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains articles written by and about Senator Helms that appeared in "Human Events," the nation's first conservative weekly newspaper.

	Box	Folder
Human Events: Nixon Should Reverse Course on Legal Services, Human Events, December 22, 1973 thru US Still Treats Taiwan as Stepchild, Human Events, December 9, 1989	142	1-22
Human Events: Helms Unsung Hero in Noriega Ouster, Human Events, January 20, 1990 thru House Welcomes Communists to WTO, Human Events, June 2, 2000	143	1-26

Subseries 4.4: "Reports" 1973-1984 4.2 Linear feet

	Box	Folder
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Subseries 4.5: General Press Files

Reports: Report, May 21, 1973 thru Reports, nd, 1973	144	1-66
Reports: Report 70, January 14, 1975 thru Report 119, December 29, 1975	145	1-50
Reports: Report 120, January 5, 1976 thru Report 171, December 27, 1976	146	1-52
Reports: Report 172, January 3, 1977 thru Report 223, December 26, 1977	147	1-52
Reports: Report 224, January 2, 1978 thru Report 266, October 23, 1978	148	1-43
Reports: Report 267, February 5, 1979 thru Report 315, December 31, 1979	149	1-49
Reports: Report 316, January 7, 1980, Windfall Profits Tax thru Report 366, December 22, 1980	150	1-51
Reports: Report 367, January 5, 1981, New Years Message thru Report 419, December 28, 1981	151	1-54
Reports: Report 420, January 4, 1982 thru Report 471, December 27, 1982	152	1-52
Reports: Report 472, January 3, 1983 thru Report 523, December 26, 1983	153	1-52
Reports: Report 524, January 2, 1984 thru Weekly Radio Report Notebook, 1975, 1982, not in order, with gaps	154	1-33
Subseries 4.5: General Press Files 1972-1996 12.0 Linear feet		

Subseries 4.5: General Press Files

Arrangement note

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains cartoons, transcripts, messages, statements, newspaper clippings and news releases.

	Box	Folder
Press: Abortion, 1995 thru Cartoons, 1984	155	1-19
Press: Cartoons, 1984 thru Citizen, Man Ahead of His Time, October 28, 1996	156	1-16
Press: Correspondence, Miscellaneous, 1977 thru Helms on Issues and Biographical Information	157	1-20
Press: Helms Op-Ed re: Tax Laws, 1996 thru Media, 1982	158	1-11
Press: Media Articles, 1980 thru A New Policy for Latin America, Journal of Social and Political Affairs, by Helms, January, 1976	159	1-16
Press: New Releases, January, February, 1973 thru News Releases, March 1975	160	1-26
Press: News Releases, April, 1975 thru News Releases, March, 1978	161	1-34
Press: News Releases, April, 1978 thru News Releases, June, 1984	162	1-57

Subseries 4.5: General Press Files

Press: News Releases, July, 1984 thru News Releases, nd	163	1-40
Press: Newsletters, Various, 1973 thru Newspaper Clippings, Election, 1990	164	1-11
Press: Newspaper Clippings, Election, 1992 thru Newspaper Clippings, Gays and AIDS, 1993	165	1-9
Press: Newspaper Clippings, GOP, 1993 thru Newspaper Clippings, Helms Probe, Chile, 1986	166	1-8
Press: Newspaper Clippings, Hurricane Fran, 1996 thru Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 1980	167	1-18
Press: Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 1981 thru Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 1991	168	1-11
Press: Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 1992 thru Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 2000	169	1-9
Press: Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous, 2001 thru Newspaper Clippings, Retirement, 2001	170	1-11
Press: Newspaper Clippings, South Africa Trip, Hoover Adams Stories, 1987 thru Press Regarding Iraq, 1992	171	1-20
Press: Republican National Convention, 1980 thru Transcript of Tape Sent to WCPE, 89.7 Radio in Wake Forest for Fundraiser, 2000	172	1-15

Subseries 4.6: Newspapers

Press: Transcripts, Weekly Radio Tapes, 1975 thru Newspaper Clippings, Younger, Judge Evelle J, 1964	173	1-16
		Box
Press: Newspaper Clippings, January 1972 thru Newspaper Clippings, December 2000		174
Press: Cartoon Book, 1984		175
Press: Cartoons		176
Press: Cartoons		177
Press: Cartoons, Originals, unprocessed		178
Press: Column Index and Press Index		179
	Box	Folder
Press: Index, Newspaper Clippings, 1986, notebook thru Press Requests, 1983, notebook	180	1-6

Subseries 4.6: Newspapers 1961-2001 2.0 Linear feet**Arrangement note**

Arranged by chronologically.

Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains newspapers or news paper clippings collected by Senator Helms or his staff.