

Edith Van Horn Collection
Papers, 1939-1997
(Predominantly, 1952-1990)

7.5 linear feet

Accession #1698
DALNET #
OCLC #

The papers of Edith Van Horn were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in October of 1997 by Ms. Van Horn and were opened for research in May of 1998. Additional papers were placed in the Archives after her death in 1998 and opened for research in July of 2000.

Harriet Edith "Edie" Van Horn was born in Rangoon, Burma on February 7, 1919. She was the daughter of Baptist educational missionaries, Clarence Eugene and Alice (Owells) Van Horn. In 1926 her family returned from Burma and settled in Nashville, Tennessee. Ms. Van Horn attended Denison University in Granville, Ohio to study art and philosophy. There she served as vice president of the Alpha Omega Pi sorority. She graduated from Denison in 1941 with a bachelor of arts degree. Subsequently, she set her sights on graduate school and accepted a position as graduate assistant at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

Before she could finish her graduate studies, the United States entered World War II. Therefore, in 1942 Ms. Van Horn took a job on the assembly line at Goodyear Aircraft Corporation in Akron, Ohio. She served as a committeeperson in the United Auto Workers Local 856. When she was laid off from Goodyear in 1944, she traveled to Santa Monica, California and accepted a job at Douglas Aircraft Corporation, where she served as chief steward to Local 17.

In 1945 she moved back to the Midwest and began working as a wire harness assembler in the wire room at Chrysler's Dodge Main plant in Hamtramck, Michigan. In 1946 she was elected chief steward of Local 3 and became entrenched in union activities and issues concerning working women. As chief steward, she was the first woman to serve on the UAW Local 3 Executive Board. She was elected a delegate to the UAW constitutional convention several times as well. In 1952 and 1954 Ms. Van Horn was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee in Detroit and in 1957 she was subpoenaed to appear before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee in Washington, D.C. In 1958, while she was laid off, she co-chaired the Production and Skilled Workers Unemployment Committee of Local 3. She served as chief steward at Dodge Main until 1963, when she was appointed International Representative in the UAW's Citizenship Department (now called the Community Action Program or CAP).

In the 1970s, while still working for the UAW, Ms. Van Horn's interests turned more towards issues regarding women and minorities. Early in the decade she helped to found the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) and was also a charter member of the National Organization for Women (NOW). She was a member of the NAACP and also one of the union women who took part in the founding conference of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in 1973. She served as national coordinator of CLUW and shared the position of Midwest chairperson with Addie Wyatt of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. In 1975 the Detroit chapter of NOW named her "Feminist of the Year."

In 1981 Ms. Van Horn became interested in violence against women, specifically as it relates to the criminal side effects of pornography. She retired from the UAW in April of 1984, but was called back the same year to work on the Mondale-Ferraro presidential campaign. During this election year, she was appointed chairwoman of the subcommittee on rape of the City of Detroit's Task Force on Crime. As a resident of Detroit, she was involved with the City Planning Commission on issues like flooding and abandoned houses as well.

In 1986 she was honored by her alma mater, Denison University, as the first recipient of the "Women's Week Alumna Award," where her good friend Gloria Steinem spoke at the ceremony. In her later years Ms. Van Horn moved to Empire, Michigan and took pleasure in working with the Empire Beautification Group. She died on January 27, 1998 at the age of 78.

The papers of Edith Van Horn consist of reports, minutes, speeches, notes, flyers, correspondence, clippings, articles and labor and feminist publications. They primarily cover her years at Dodge Main and her activism in women's issues in the 1970s and '80s. Of special interest are her "Red Squad" files, which consist mostly of police files from the late 1940s and 1950s dealing with her alleged connection to the Communist Party. Also of interest is Ms. Van Horn's correspondence with feminist, Gloria Steinem, which spanned more than 20 years. Related material may be found in the Coalition of Labor Union Women Collection, the Mildred Jeffrey Collection and the UAW Local 3 Collection.

RESEARCHERS USING THIS COLLECTION MUST SIGN A RESTRICTED USE FORM. NO NAMES APPEARING IN THE DETROIT POLICE RED SQUAD FILE, OTHER THAN THAT OF EDITH VAN HORN, MAY BE CITED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL NAMED. NO UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL IN RESTRICTED FILES MAY BE COPIED.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Abortion
Auto Industry Worker - Michigan

Child Care
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
Communist Party
Civil Rights
Democratic Party
Dennison University
Detroit (Michigan) - Crime
Detroit (Michigan) - Public Works
Employment Discrimination
Equal Rights Amendment
Feminism
Infant Mortality
National Organization of Women (NOW)
National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)
Pornography
Pro-Choice Movement
Rape
Red Squad
Reproductive Rights
Important subjects (cont'd):

Sexual Abuse
Sexual Harassment
Sterilization
Trade Unions - Automobile Industry Workers
Trade Unions - Elections
Trade Unions - Organizing
Unemployment
Violence Against Women
Women and Politics
Women Labor Leaders
Women's Rights
Working Women

Among the important correspondents are:

Bill Dodds
Geraldine Ferraro
Douglas Fraser
Erma Henderson
Mildred Jeffrey
Odessa Komer
Olga Madar
Joyce Miller
Roy Reuther

Walter Reuther
Gloria Steinem
Steven Yokich

An index to subjects and correspondents in Part 2 of the collection will be found on page 7.

Contents

15 manuscript boxes

Part 1, Boxes 1-8, 1939-1987:

Correspondence, clippings and other material relating to Edith Van Horn's work at Dodge Main and her interest and activities in women's issues, such as rape, abortion and pay equity.

Part 2, Boxes 9-15, 1945-1997:

Correspondence, clippings and other material relating to Edith Van Horn's work at Dodge Main and her interest and activities in women's issues, such as rape, abortion and pay equity.

Non-manuscript Material:

One storage box of photographic prints and negatives related to Edith Van Horn's private and public life, campaign stickers of various women candidates and a couple of medals have been placed in the Archives Audio Visual Collection.

Part 1

Box 1

1. Abortion, 1977-85, n.d.
2. Chrysler Corporation vs. Harriet Van Horn, et al., 1958
3. City of Detroit Task Force on Crime; Correspondence, 1984
- 4-5. City of Detroit Task Force on Crime; General, 1983-85, n.d.
- 6-7. City of Detroit Task Force on Crime; Pornography, 1977-85
8. City of Detroit Task Force on Crime; Speeches, Notes, 1985, n.d.
- 9-10. City of Detroit Task Force on Crime; Violence Against Women,
Clippings, 1973-87, n.d.

Box 2

1. City Planning Committee, Detroit; Abandoned Houses, 1985
2. City Planning Committee, Detroit; Abandoned Houses, Clippings, 1984-
85
- 3-4. City Planning Committee, Detroit; Flooding, 1985-86
5. City Planning Committee, Detroit; Flooding, Clippings, 1985-86
- 6-9. CLUW; Agendas and Meeting Minutes, 1973-80, n.d.
- 10-12. CLUW; Clippings, 1970-79, n.d.

Box 3

- 1-2. CLUW; Correspondence, 1973-79, n.d.
- 3-4. CLUW; Correspondence, Edith Van Horn, 1972-84, n.d.
- 5-7. CLUW; General, 1971-79, n.d.
8. CLUW; Internal Structure, 1974-79, n.d.
9. CLUW; Publications, Brochures and Fliers, 1973-84, n.d.
- 10-11. CLUW; Resolutions
12. Equal Rights Amendment, 1970-83, n.d.

Box 4

- 1-3. Feminism and Feminist Organizations, 1969-85, n.d.
4. House Un-American Activities Committee, 1952-58
5. House Un-American Activities Committee; Clippings, 1952-54, n.d.
6. Infant Mortality, 1982-85
7. Little and Garzia Cases, 1975
8. McGee, Willie, Rape Case, 1951
9. Mondale-Ferraro Presidential Campaign, 1984
10. Norman, Karen, Murder Case, 1984
11. Other Material, 1949-83, n.d.

12-14. Personal, 1941-84, n.d.

Box 5

- 1-6. Printed Material, 1970-89, n.d.
7. Pregnancy, 1976-85, n.d.
8. Racial Discrimination, 1973-80
9. Reagan Administration, 1981-82, n.d.
10. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, 1957
- 11-12. Speaking Engagements, 1975-86

Box 6

1. Speeches and Notes, 1970s-80s
2. UAW and Chrysler, 1960s
- 3-4. UAW Local 3 (Dodge Main); Miscellaneous, 1948-57
5. UAW Local 3; Elections, 1949
6. UAW Local 3; Elections, Officer and Delegate, 1950s-60s
- 7-8. UAW Local 3; Grievances, 1939-58, n.d.
9. UAW Local 108 (McCormick Works), 1950-51, n.d.
10. UAW Local 600, 1950-58
11. UAW; Big Three Negotiations and Agreements, 1942-50

Box 7

1. UAW; Chrysler Negotiations and Agreements, 1942-61
2. UAW; Chrysler Strike, 1958-59
3. UAW; Other Material, 1950-84, n.d.
4. UAW Production and Skilled Workers Unemployment Committee; Correspondence, 1959, n.d.
5. UAW Production and Skilled Workers Unemployment Committee; General, 1959, n.d.
6. UAW, Production and Skilled Workers Unemployment Committee; March on Washington, D.C., 1959
7. UAW; Reuther's Proposal to End Inflation, 1957
8. UAW; Unemployment Solutions, 1957-84
9. Violence Against Children, 1981-87, n.d.
10. Voter Registration, 1971-83

Box 8

1. Women's Candidates, 1971-86
2. Women's Vote Project, 1984
3. Working Women; Child Care, 1971-80, n.d.
4. Working Women; Equal Pay, 1951-85, n.d.
5. Working Women; General, 1944-86, n.d.

6. Working Women; General, Clippings, 1972-83, n.d.
7. Working Women; Sexual Harassment, 1976-81, n.d.
8. Working Women; Sterilization, 1973-85, n.d.

Part 2

Box 9

1. Autobiography; Draft
2. Autobiography; Notes, Other Material
3. Awards, Certificates, 1945-91, n.d.
4. Biographical Material, 1984-97
5. Children's Issues; Clippings, miscellaneous, 1969-91, n.d.
6. Correspondence; Bill Doods, 1967-69, n.d.
- 7-13. Correspondence; General, 1951-97, n.d.
14. Correspondence; Roy Reuther, 1964-67, n.d.
15. Cucchi, Shirley, 1983-96, n.d.

Box 10

1. Dodge Plant Election, 1960
2. Eleanor Smeal Report, 1983-85
- 3-4. Equal Rights Amendment; Clippings, 1963-89, n.d.
- 5-8. Equal Rights Amendment; General, 1969-85, n.d.
9. Henderson, Erma, 1972-90, n.d.
10. Labor Union Women; Clippings, 1963-93, n.d.
- 11-13. Labor Union Women; CLUW, 1970-82

Box 11

1. Labor Union Women; CLUW, 1983-92, n.d.
- 2-3. Labor Union Women; General, 1964-93
4. Labor Union Women; UAW Board, Clippings, 1964-72
5. Labor Union Women; UAW Board, General, 1964-83
6. Land Title, Abstract
- 7-8. National Women's Political Caucus, 1971-89, n.d.
- 9-12. Notes, Speeches, 1972-93, n.d.

Box 12

1. Overtime Strike, Dodge, 1958
- 2-3. Pornography, 1983-86, n.d.
- 4-6. Rape, 1973-93, n.d.
7. Red Squad; Correspondence, clippings, 1952-90
8. Red Squad; Other Material, 1952-57
9. Red Squad; Police Files, 1948-60, n.d.
10. Reproductive Rights; Clippings, 1970-90, n.d.
11. Reproductive Rights; Other Material, 1979-90, n.d.

12. Rosie the Riveter Education Project, 1980

Box 13

- 1-2. Sexual Harassment, 1977-93, n.d.
3. Steinem, Gloria; Articles, 1970-93
4. Steinem, Gloria; Clippings, 1970-92
- 5-7. Steinem, Gloria; Correspondence, 1970-96, n.d.
8. Steinem, Gloria; Other Material, 1971-93
9. Violence Against Women, 1968-90, n.d.
10. Women and Politics; Clippings, 1960-94, n.d.
- 11-13. Women and Politics; General, 1952-70

Box 14

1. Women and Politics, General, 1971-93, n.d.
2. Women's Defense and Education Committee, 1975
- 3-7. Women's Issues, General, 1963-95, n.d.
- 8-10. Working Women, Clippings, 1956-97, n.d.
- 11-12. Working Women, General, 1952-77

Box 15

- 1-3. Working Women, General, 1978-94, n.d.
4. Denison University, Sesquicentennial Yearbook, 1981

Index to Subjects and Correspondents in Part 2
(Correspondence is indicated by an asterisk)

Abortion, 12:10-11
*Abzug, Bella, 9:9-10
*Bayh, Birch, 9:9
*Biden, Joseph, 13:9
*Blanchard, James, 9:15
*Clinton, Bill, 9:12
*Cucchi, Shirley, 9:15
*Dodds, Bill, 9:6, 14:12
*Engler, John, 9:15
Equal Rights Amendment, 10:3-8
Ferraro, Geraldine, 9:10, 9:12
*Fraser, Douglas, 9:8, 9:12
*Friedan, Betty, 11:8
*Griffin, Robert P., 9:9
*Hart, Philip, 9:9
*Henderson, Erma, 9:15, 10:9, 12:5, 14:2
*Humphrey, Hubert H., 9:7
*Kennedy, Edward M., 9:9-10
*Kennedy, John F., 9:7
*Kerner, Otto, 9:7
*Komer, Odessa, 9:10-13, 10:7, 13:1, 14:2,
Labor Union Women, 10:10-13, 11:1-5
*Madar, Olga, 9:9, 11:5
*Madden, Margaret, 9:7
*McGovern, George, 9:9
*Mikulski, Barbara, 9:10-11
*Milliken, Helen, 9:11-12
*Mondale, Walter, 9:10
Rape, 12:4-6
Red Squad, 12:7-9
*Reuther, Roy, 9:14
*Reuther, Walter P., 9:7-8
*Schroeder, Pat, 9:9, 9:11- 13
Sexual Harassment, 13:1-2
*Steinem, Gloria, 11:7, 13:5-7
*Swainson, John B., 9:7, 13:11
*Williams, G. Mennen, 9:7
*Williams, Nancy, 9:7
Women's Organizations, 10:11-13, 11:1, 11:7-8