

PATTIE P. PETERSON PAPERS

Mss. 2955

Inventory

Compiled by
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Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2013

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Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

SUMMARY

Size.	3 linear ft.
Geographic locations.	Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States.
Inclusive dates.	1955-1977.
Bulk dates.	1964-1973.
Language.	English.
Summary.	The collection consists of correspondence, logs and notes, and printed items relative to civil rights and race relations in Louisiana and the United States, with a focus on Baton Rouge.
Restrictions on access.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations Records, Mss. 4813; Charlton Havard Lyons Papers, Mss. 3075, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Copyright.	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries.
Citation.	Pattie P. Peterson Papers, Mss. 2955, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack locations.	Y:95-97, OS:P

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Pattie P. Peterson, a native of North Carolina, was employed as a secretary in the Louisiana Department of Revenue. As an advocate of civil rights, she worked closely with the African American community in Baton Rouge. In 1964, Governor John McKeithen created the biracial Louisiana Commission on Human Relations, Rights, and Responsibilities in order to reduce racial tension within the state. He recruited General Troy Middleton to chair the Commission and attorneys, John Martzell and Jesse N. Stone to serve as directors. The Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations was established in 1965 as an independent chapter of the Louisiana Council on Human Relations. Its purpose was to foster community awareness of racial discrimination. In 1966, John Martzell hired Peterson as secretary to the Commission. In that position, Peterson worked closely with the Baton Rouge Council. She returned to the Department of Revenue in 1972.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains correspondence, logs and notes, and printed material relating to race relations and desegregation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the civil rights movement in the nation. The collection reflects Pattie Peterson's close association with the African American community, as well as her involvement in public welfare organizations. In addition to race relations and civil rights, correspondence concerns family matters and the Civil Service system in Louisiana. Her correspondents include John Martzell, Judge Carlos Spaht, and Joe Baker.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

- Series I. Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.**
Subseries 1. Family Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.
Subseries 2. General Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.
- Series II. Logs and Notes, 1962-1976, undated.**
- Series III. Printed Items, 1955-1977, undated.**
Subseries 1. Newspaper Clippings 1956-1977, undated.
Subseries 2. Booklets, Serials and Ephemera, 1955-1975, undated.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.

Subseries 1. Family Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.

Typescript copies of letters to her mother comprise a large part of this subseries. In her letters, Peterson discusses her civil rights activities, race relations, public figures, politics and elections, as well as family matters, and bias in the Louisiana Department of Civil Service. She writes about the needs of the black community in Baton Rouge, and the importance of open communication between the black community and government officials. She comments on the integration of the schools and racial incidents that have occurred in Baton Rouge. Peterson recounts her actions upon hearing the news of a violent demonstration in Baton Rouge in which news reporter, Bob Johnson, was severely beaten and five people were killed (Jan. 25, 1972). She also remarks on a demonstration at Southern University in which police killed two students (Nov. 1972). In August of 1972, Peterson tells her mother that she has broken with the black community, placing the blame on the younger generation of blacks (Aug. 6, 1972).

For the most part, family news relates to her relationship with her husband, Albert R. "Pete" Peterson, and her daughter, Patsy. She reports on Pete's health and employment status. She tells her mother about Pete's alcoholism and mental illness, and her difficulties with Patsy. Of note is her account on the flooding in Baton Rouge after a record rainfall (April 21, 1967).

Subseries 2. General Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.

In her letters to public figures, members of the community and individual members of the Louisiana Human Relations Commission, Pattie Peterson discusses race relations, school integration, employment, job discrimination, and poverty in the black community. A reoccurring theme throughout her correspondence is the need to find a peaceful resolution to the growth of racial tension. She frequently communicates with Joe Baker, Judge Carlos Spaht, of the 19th Judicial District Court of Louisiana and John R. Martzell. In early 1966, Martzell hired Peterson as secretary to the Commission (Jan.-Feb. 1966).

In her early letters, Peterson suggests separate but equal schools, commenting that black educators should try to encourage black children to remain in their own schools (Sept. Oct. 1963). Peterson comments on the racial unrest in Baton Rouge and her own fear of reprisal because her support of equal rights for African Americans (Sept. 12, 1963). In the same letter, she tells of an eight foot cross burning at Glenn Oaks School and a shot fired at a school bus. She comments on racial tension in Bogalusa (April-July 1965) and Mandeville (Oct. 2, 1968), and she mentions the White Citizens Council (April 29, 1965, Oct. 2, 1969). In her letters to officials in North Carolina, she seeks advice on how to achieve peaceful school desegregation (1963). Letters of the 1970s focus more on job discrimination in state agencies and the school system, and state civil service rules. Peterson questions why the black community no longer welcomes her (July 18, 1972).

Series II. Logs and notes, 1962-1976, undated.

This group consists of notes and logs, sermons, and speeches relating to race relations, discrimination in the workplace, the education of African Americans, and the Louisiana Department of Civil Service. Papers also record the views of the members of the black community as told to her by her personal contacts, recounting conversations and events. Some notes are in shorthand.

Series III. Printed Items, 1955-1977, undated.

Subseries 1. Newspaper Clippings 1956-1977, undated.

Newspaper clippings pertain to the civil right movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Topics include demonstrations and racial violence, education, employment, minorities, politics, and Southern University in Baton Rouge, La. Articles on education include news reports on integration and busing. Clippings related to employment concern the inequities in the workplace and the lack of jobs available to blacks. For the most part, clippings on minorities relate to the concerns of women and Native Americans. Those on politics relay news on the local, state, and national issues, and include news on the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Clippings about Southern University concern student unrest and the death of two students.

Note: Newspaper clippings are arranged alphabetically by topic.

Subseries 2. Booklets, Serials and Ephemera, 1955-1975, undated.

This subseries contains newsletters, booklets, programs, reports, and flyers that pertain to social equality, education, and race relations. Notable in this group is a flyer titled *The Plot to Impose "Black Supremacy upon the South,"* (1955), argues that the NAACP, is conspiring to impose a black government on southern whites. Also of note are the findings of an official inquiry into the death of two Southern University students, *Report of the Attorney General's Special Commission of Inquiry of the Southern University Tragedy of November 16, 1973* (July 1973). Several scattered issues of the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations newsletter are also found (Jan. 1973-April 1977).

INDEX TERMS

Terms	Series. Subseries
African Americans--Civil rights--Louisiana--Baton Rouge.	I.1-2, III
Baker, Joe.	I.1-2
Baton Rouge (La.)--Race relations.	I.1-2-III
Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations.	III
Civil rights movement.	I.1-2, III.1
Civil rights--Louisiana.	I.1-2-III
Civil rights--United States.	III
Ku Klux Klan (1915-)	III.1
Louisiana Dept. of Civil Service.	I.1-2, II
Louisiana. Governor's Commission on Human Relations, Rights, and Responsibilities.	I.1-2
Louisiana--Politics and government--20 th century.	I.1-2, III
Louisiana--Race relations.	I-III
Martzell, John R., 1937-2007.	I.1-2
Peterson, Pattie P, 1916-1977.	I-III
School integration--Louisiana--Baton Rouge.	I.2, III.1
Spaht, Carlos G., 1906-2002.	I.2
Stone, Jesse N., 1927-2001.	I.1
United States--Politics and government--20 th century.	I.1, III.1
United States--Race relations.	I.2, III
White Citizens Council (La.)	I.2

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u>			
<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folders</u>	<u>Contents with dates</u>
Y:95	1	1-14	Series I. Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated. Subseries 1. Family Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.
	2	1-12	Subseries 2. General Correspondence, 1961-1977, undated.
	2	13-20	Series II. Logs and Notes, 1962-1976, undated.
Y:96	3	1-6	Series III. Printed Items, 1955-1977, undated. Subseries 1. Newspaper Clippings 1963-1977, undated.
		7-13	Demonstrations and racial violence, 1963-1977, undated.
		14-16	Education, 1956-1977, undated.
		17-20	Employment, 1964-1977, undated.
		21-29	Minorities, 1963-1977, undated.
		30-46	Politics, state and local, 1963-1977, undated.
		47-49	Politics, national, 1963-1977, undated.
Y:97	4	1-6	Southern University, 1972-1977, undated.
Y:96	3	50-62	Oversize newspaper clippings 1956-1965, undated.
Y:96	3	50-62	Subseries 2. Booklets, Serials and Ephemera, 1955-1975, undated.
OS:P		1	Subseries 2. Ephemera, 1961-1972, undated.