



ArchivesSpace

Headley (Albert J. Jr.) Papers

An inventory of Albert J. Headley, Jr. at DC Public Library

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Stage

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Summary Information

Repository:	Stage
Title:	Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers
ID:	035
Date [inclusive]:	1945-1976
Physical Description:	5.75 linear feet; 12 boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

: A native Washingtonian, Albert J. Headley, Jr. (d. 1978) was actively involved with his community throughout his life. A leader in both civic and church organizations, Headley became a "prominent community activist," according to his obituary in the Washington Post.

Albert J. Headley, Jr., was born in Southwest Washington, DC (c. 1905), the son of Albert J. and Gertrude Headley. His father was a well-known police officer who began duty as a bicycle officer in the Southwest area (then known as "Bloodfield"), instituted the first traffic regulations in Washington as head of the Traffic Bureau, and retired as Assistant Superintendent of Police. Headley, Jr., graduated from Eastern High School and attended Bliss Electrical School. Employed by Potomac Electric Power Company in 1928, he rose to become power station operator. In the mid 1930s he joined Capitol Transit Company as a claims attorney after earning his law degree from the National Law School. During World War II, Headley served in the Office of the Provost Marshall General of the Army Air Corps, as head of plant security in the United States. He received the Legion of Merit and the Order of the British Empire for his distinguished service. He joined the Veterans' Administration in 1946, retiring in 1972. At the time of his retirement he held a position with the VA Board of Appeals for Veteran Benefits. Headley married Margaret Shireman Headley, a fellow Washingtonian, who shared his interest in church leadership, in 1947.

Around 1958, Headley became president of the Southwest Citizen's Association, one of the well-established Washington, DC neighborhood groups. In the 1950s, the organization began to protest many of the urban renewal projects enacted by the US Congress. Congress passed the Redevelopment Act in Washington, DC in 1946. This bill established the Redevelopment Land Agency and empowered the agency to assemble large tracts of land for development, but suffered from lack of funding. The Housing Act of 1949 and a 1954 bill that coined the term "urban renewal" provided the funding to "guarantee to every family 'a decent home and a suitable living environment.'" At this time, the Southwest, part of the original Washington City designed by Pierre L'Enfant, was home to a diverse population that included many low-income residents and a large African-American community. Because many homes in the area were located in alleys, and some lacked indoor plumbing and electricity, Congress selected the Southwest as the test case for urban renewal. Boundaries of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area stretched from the Washington Channel on the east to South Capitol Street on the west, and from the Anacostia River north to the Mall and the Capitol Building (see Appendix A). The concept for the "new Southwest" included an inner city freeway that cut through the center of the neighborhood (see Appendix B), a modern shopping mall, and many apartment complexes. The decision to tear down the entire area to accomplish these goals affected 22,000 residents and numerous small businesses, churches, and schools. Local citizens' and civic associations welcomed revitalization, but wanted to examine the impact of the changes on residents of the area. The Southwest Citizens' Association pushed for open public meetings, passed resolutions concerning pending legislation, dispensed information, and set up a grievance committee that advocated citizens' rights. Headley served several years in the late 1950s as president and remained active in the group through the 1960s.

Headley also was the Southwest's representative to the Federation of Citizens' Associations of the District of Columbia and the Vice-Chair of its City Planning Committee. Headley was active in St. Dominic's parish, a member of the Holy Name Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the John Carroll Society.

Headley was in his seventies when he died of a stroke on August 24, 1978.

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Scope and Contents

The papers of Albert J. Headley consist of 5.75 linear feet of materials dealing almost exclusively with the issue of urban development. The materials span the years 1945 to 1976, with the bulk of the items dating from 1955 to 1968. There are a few documents related to Headley's activities in the local Catholic Church and several hand-drawn family trees. Headley collected the majority of materials. Community groups such as the National Conference of Catholic Charities, Downtown Progress, Federation of Citizens' Associations, and the Southwest Citizens' Association's contributed newsletters, resolutions, and correspondence. Headley also collected reports, meeting notices, legislation, and informational brochures from many government agencies including the Government of the District of Columbia, DC Redevelopment Land Agency, and the Washington Zoning Revision Office. Other materials include: ground breaking programs, flyers, advertisements, court decisions, church programs, copies of public

laws and bills, articles, public testimony, drafts, magazines, and newspaper clippings. Some of the topics that relate to urban renewal are: the Southwest area of DC, the Northwest area of DC, general issues of urban renewal in the US, freeway construction, housing developments, legislation, beautification, and relocation. Other urban issues touched upon include model school, juvenile delinquency, traffic, and public transportation.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Stage

Custodial History

The papers of Albert J. Headley were donated to the Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library by Margaret S. Headley on July 9, 1991, in the memory of her husband, Albert J. Headley, Jr.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Neighborhoods
- Urban renewal
- Gentrification

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Churches, Religious Organizations, and Personal Papers, 1959-1969

Scope and Contents

This Series contains Headley's collection of materials produced by churches or religious organizations. It contains written statements, reports, press releases, building plans for new churches, articles, Crises Downtown, and working drafts of the report by the Reverend Robert G. Howes. Also in this series are a number of personal items, including programs and invitations to church services, conference registration, a treasurer's report, and hand-drawn charts of Headley's family tree. The materials span the period 1959 to 1969; the bulk of the items date from the early 1960's. Topics include school prayer, local diocesan business, and prayer service. Urban renewal topics include relocation,

building plans, and the effects of the changes on residents. The materials are arranged alphabetically by originating organization; within the folders the items are arranged chronologically.

Title/Description	Instances	
Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Men, 1958-1961	Box 1	Folder 1
Christ Methodist Church, Undated	Box 1	Folder 2
Fifth Baptist Church, 1963-1965	Box 1	Folder 3
Genealogy Charts, Undated	Box 1	Folder 4
Massachusetts Citizens for Public Prayer, 1964	Box 1	Folder 5
National Council of Catholic Men, 1960-1961	Box 1	Folder 6
Southwest Ministerial Alliance, Undated	Box 1	Folder 7
St. Dominic's Church, 1961-1968	Box 1	Folder 8
Westminster United Presbyterian Church, Undated	Box 1	Folder 9

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Series 2: Businesses and Organizations, 1956-1975

Scope and Contents

This Series holds the manuscripts and printed materials that Headley acquired from business and community organizations. It contains materials collected from several Washington, DC area neighborhood groups—including the Southwest Citizens' Association and the Federation of Citizens' Associations—local business organizations, political associations, and special interest groups. The materials consist of correspondence, public testimony, resolutions, reports, flyers, advertisements, and newsletters. Topics include citizens' rights, the right for District residents to vote in Presidential elections, juvenile delinquency, city planning, zoning, development, mortgage loans, relocation, and resident grievances. Correspondence of the Southwest Citizens' Association is responded to by the DC Redevelopment Land Agency in its file located in Series III. The files of the Southwest Community Council and the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly contain some materials published jointly. Items generated after 1962 by the Washington Housing Association are found under the group's new title: the Washington Planning and Housing Association. The earliest materials date from 1956, the latest date from 1975. The majority of items span the years 1958 to 1965. Materials are arranged alphabetically by originating organization; within the folders the items are arranged chronologically.

Title/Description	Instances	
Applied Parking Techniques, 1975	Box 2	Folder 1
American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, 1960-1961	Box 2	Folder 2
Barney Neighborhood House, 1970s	Box 2	Folder 3
Capitol Park Housing Development, Undated	Box 2	Folder 4
Citizens for Presidential Vote for the District of Columbia, 1961	Box 2	Folder 5
DC Federation of Civic Associations Inc., 1960s	Box 2	Folder 6
Downtown Progress, 1960	Box 2	Folder 7

Downtown Progress, 1961	Box 2	Folder 8
Downtown Progress, 1963	Box 2	Folder 9
Downtown Progress, 1964-1975	Box 2	Folder 10
Edward J. Flynn Co., 1964	Box 2	Folder 11
First National Realty Corp., Undated	Box 2	Folder 12
Human Events, 1960	Box 2	Folder 13
Junior Chamber of Commerce, 1960	Box 2	Folder 14
Kalorama Citizens' Associations, 1962-1963	Box 2	Folder 15
Metropolitan Association of General Improvement Contractors, 1958	Box 2	Folder 16
National Association of Social Workers, 1956	Box 2	Folder 17
Sol Investment Co., Undated	Box 2	Folder 18
Southwest Community Council, 1964-1965	Box 2	Folder 19
Southwest Community Credit Union, 1969	Box 2	Folder 20
Washington Real Estate Board, 1956	Box 2	Folder 21

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Series 3: Local and Federal Government, 1945-1970

Scope and Contents

This Series includes materials Headley received or collected from various local governmental agencies as well as from the United States Congress. The government agencies range from the Department of Buildings and Grounds, the Department of Highways and Traffic, and the Public Housing Administration, to the Federal City Council, the Government of the District of Columbia, and the Board of Commissioners. Also included are the National Capital Planning Commission and the District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency. Appendix C illustrates the varied relationships between the departments that controlled the Washington, DC urban renewal projects. Headley collected not only maps, brochures, notices, and reports, but also invitations, copies of bills and public laws, court decisions, fiscal statements, and surveys of both land and people. Two items, a Christmas card and a small map, did not have a statement of responsibility. Since they were clearly governmental in origination, they have been placed in an artificial group entitled "Images." Responses to correspondence with the District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency are located in the Southwest Citizens' Association file in Series II. The Washington Metropolitan Regional Conference changed its name in 1961 to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; materials can be found under both folder titles. The earliest item in the series is a copy of the first urban renewal law passed in 1945 and the last item is dated 1970. The bulk of the items span the years 1956 to 1965. Materials are arranged alphabetically by originating organization; within the folders the items are arranged chronologically.

Title/Description	Instances	
Area M Board—DC Commissioner's Youth Council, 1959	Box 3	Folder 1
Department of Buildings and Grounds, 1959	Box 3	Folder 2
Board of Commissioners for the District of Columbia, 1955-1959	Box 3	Folder 3

Board of Commissioners for the District of Columbia, 1961-1962	Box 3	Folder 4
DC Redevelopment Land Agency, 1957-1958	Box 3	Folder 5
Board of Education, 1960	Box 3	Folder 6
Federal Courts, 1957	Box 3	Folder 7
Federal City Council, 1956	Box 3	Folder 8
Health and Welfare Council of the National Capitol Area, Undated	Box 3	Folder 9
Highways and Traffic - DC, 1957-1962	Box 3	Folder 10
Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1960-1964	Box 3	Folder 11
Images, Undated	Box 3	Folder 12
Department of Licenses and Inspections, 1960	Box 3	Folder 13
Metropolitan Police Department, 1961	Box 3	Folder 14
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 1962-1969	Box 3	Folder 15
Committee for a More Beautiful Capitol, 1969	Box 3	Folder 16
National Capitol Housing Authority, 1958-1959	Box 3	Folder 17
National Capitol Planning Commission, 1952-1959	Box 3	Folder 18
Public Housing Administration, 1961	Box 3	Folder 19
Urban Renewal Legal Branch, Undated	Box 4	Folder 1
Office of Urban Renewal, 1959-1966	Box 4	Folder 2
US Congress, 1945-1961	Box 4	Folder 3
Washington Metropolitan Regional Conference, 1960-1961	Box 4	Folder 4
Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, 1970	Box 4	Folder 5
Washington Zoning Revision Office, 1955-1956	Box 4	Folder 6
Washington Zoning Revision Office, 1956	Box 4	Folder 7
Washington Zoning Revision Office, 1956	Box 4	Folder 8

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Series 4: Articles on Urban Renewal, 1952-1976

Scope and Contents

This Series contains articles collected or clipped by Headley from magazines and newspapers. The articles contained within this series were written by staff writers. Magazine articles written by prominent leaders of organizations represented in the collection are filed with the organization's materials. Magazines include Reader's Digest, Time, and Life Magazine. The majority of newspaper articles were clipped from the Washington Post, the Washington Times, and the Washington Star. Headley began his scrapbooks in 1952 and continued until 1976. Articles cover urban renewal projects both in the District of Columbia and in other cities. The magazines are arranged

alphabetically and then chronologically. The newspaper clippings are roughly chronological, although Headley rearranged some items published within days of each other in order to paste them on a page. It was assumed that undated items were appropriately placed by date when glued on the page.

Title/Description	Instances	
American Home, Undated	Box 5	Folder 1
American Motorist, Undated	Box 5	Folder 2
Federal Bar Association, Undated	Box 5	Folder 3
George Washington University Magazine, Undated	Box 5	Folder 4
Harper's Magazine, Undated	Box 5	Folder 5
Life Magazine, Undated	Box 5	Folder 6
Reader's Digest, Undated	Box 5	Folder 7
Saturday Evening Post, Undated	Box 5	Folder 8
Time: The Weekly News Magazine, Undated	Box 5	Folder 9
Washington Newspapers, Undated	Box 5	Folder 10
Washington Newspapers, Undated	Box 5	Folder 11
Washington Newspapers, Undated	Box 5	Folder 12
Untitled, 1957-1959	Box 6	Folder 1
Untitled, 1959-1960	Box 6	Folder 2
Untitled, May 1960-November 1960	Box 7	Folder 1
Untitled, December 1960-June 1961	Box 7	Folder 2
Untitled, July 1961-November 1961	Box 7	Folder 3
Untitled, November 1961-December 1962	Box 8	Folder 1
Untitled, January 1963-January 1964	Box 8	Folder 2
Untitled, January 1964-December 1964	Box 9	Folder 1
Untitled, January 1965-December 1966	Box 9	Folder 2
Untitled, January 1967-December 1969	Box 10	Folder 1
Untitled, January 1970-December 1972	Box 10	Folder 2
Untitled, January 1973-January 1976	Box 10	Folder 3
Miscellaneous, Undated	Box 11	Folder 1

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Series 5: Oversize

Title/Description	Instances
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National Conference of Catholic Charities, 1959-1960	Box 12	Folder 1
Downtown Progress, 1962	Box 12	Folder 2
Federation of Citizens Associations, 1957-1965	Box 12	Folder 3
Independent Citizens of Adams Morgan, 1963	Box 12	Folder 4
Southwest Citizens' Association, 1957-1961	Box 12	Folder 5
Southwest Displaced Persons Grievance Committee, 1960	Box 12	Folder 6
Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, 1963-1969	Box 12	Folder 7
Southwest Project, 1958-1959	Box 12	Folder 8
Washington Housing Association, 1956-1961	Box 12	Folder 9
Washington Planning and Housing Association, 1962-1963	Box 12	Folder 10
Webb and Knapp Inc., 1961	Box 12	Folder 11
DC Redevelopment Land Agency, 1959-1963	Box 12	Folder 12
Government of DC, Undated	Box 12	Folder 13
National Capital Planning Commission, 1959-1962	Box 12	Folder 14
Architectural Forum: The Magazine of Building, January 1956	Box 12	Folder 15

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