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#70 League of Women Voters, Pittsburg (Kansas) Chapter, Records, 1965-1991
72 folders

INTRODUCTION

The records and collected materials of the Pittsburg, Kansas, chapter of the League of Women Voters, consisting of local, state, and national documents relating to the activities of the League. Associated with this collection are other publications and newspaper articles produced by the Pittsburg chapter.

DONOR INFORMATION

Materials in the collection were donated to the Leonard H. Axe Library at Pittsburg State University by Dorothy Johnson during the early 1990s.

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

The Pittsburg (Kansas) League of Women Voters was a local chapter of the national organization of the League of Women Voters, first formed in 1919 by Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Women's viewpoints Women League Suffrage Association. The Pittsburg chapter was not organized until the early 1960s. From the beginning, the League strived to provide nonpartisan information to women voters while also trying to improve public policy at the national, state, and local levels. on issues regarding social policy, government, civil rights, and the environment were carried to the federal level in Washington, D. C. by League lobbyists. The League, from the beginning, encountered a variety of detractors, including those who accused the League of supporting communist ideas. In the present era, the League continues to have detractors, especially those who suggest the League promotes a liberal, rather than a nonpartisan, agenda.

Like its national counterpart, the Pittsburg chapter tried to remain nonpartisan while informing women voters on a range of social issues. The Pittsburg chapter primarily focused their local attention on fair housing laws, education, health care, and urban development. On a state-wide level, the local chapter addressed constitutional and social changes regarding crime and correctional facilities. On the national level, the issues ranged from energy to water to international affairs. Publications on these topics were produced, public addresses were delivered, and in-depth studies of the Pittsburg community were conducted. The Pittsburg public school district, local health care options and urban development were three significant studies carried out by the local chapter of the League. League Lines, the local, monthly, publication sheds further insight into the local efforts of the League. The publication also provides information about League members, donors, financial activities, and public relations.

Maintaining an active membership and meeting the financial obligations for nationals dues and publication costs, was a significant challenge for the Pittsburg chapter of the League. From the scattered records included in this collection, it appears the local chapter was organized in the mid-1960s and was disbanded by the mid-1990s. The organization continues to operate in the metropolitan areas of Kansas and other states. It continues to work for social improvement through voter education and lobbying.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in this collection provide an overview of the activities of the Pittsburg, Kansas, chapter of the League of Women Voters. This collection does not represent the official or complete archive of the Pittsburg chapter, rather it consists of the materials gathered by chapter member Dorothy Johnson. The collection is arranged into the following fourteen series; **Organizational Records; Politicians; National Publications; State Publications; Local Publications; Civil Rights; Constitutional Revision; Crime and Corrections; Education, Energy and Water; Governmental Assistance and Taxes; Health Care; International Affairs; and Urban Development and Tourism.** The **Local Publications** series gives the best overview of the Pittsburg chapter activities and the activities of the chapter's members, however, the monthly chapter publication, League Lines, is incomplete.

The **Organizational Records** series consists mostly of Board Reports and Convention information from the national and state level of the LWV. These publications help provide insight into the issues they were focused on along with the financial health of the organization as a whole. Within these state publications, information about the Kansas League of Women Voters chapters is given. This series also contains national activities information and financial reports. The material in this series is primarily from the 1960s.

The **Politicians** series consists of various newspaper articles from local and regional newspapers that discuss local, state and national politicians and political issues. This series also includes newspaper articles about local election results as well as guides to help understand the political stance of the candidates on the issues from the 1960s to the 1970s.

The **National Publications** series mostly consists of the issues from 1965 to 1991 of the monthly League of Women Voters publication, *The National Voter*. These publications helped to promote the organization, while also informing about organization activities and the major political issues. This series also contains various publications to inform voters about the candidates' positions and the issues that were promoted by the national level of LWV and other groups. Within this series also, are newsletters from the Thomas Jefferson Research Center dealing with various societal issues.

The **State Publications** series contains issues from 1978 to 1989 of the Legislative Newsletter published monthly by the League of Women Voters of Kansas. This series also includes a few issues of the League of Women Voters of Kansas *Board Talk* from 1987. This series also includes the *Kansas League of Women Voters* newsletter from 1965 to 1990, and 1960s issues of the newsletter *Government Research Center for the University of Kansas*. These publications also discuss issues that were important to the Kansas League of Women Voters and other state groups.

The **Local Publications** series consists of several issues of the *League Line* newsletters, which were published by the Pittsburg League of Women Voters. These publications discuss the issues they were focused on, their members, their financial report, and local businesses and individuals that donated to the Pittsburg chapter. Issues of this monthly publication from 1965 to

1982 are included. This series also includes one copy of Know Your County: Crawford County and one issue of *The Voter* newsletter, the publication of the Johnson County League of Women Voters.

The **Civil Rights series** contains a copy of the Pittsburg Fair Housing Ordinance G-82 passed in on August 13, 1968, which prohibited “discrimination in the sale, purchase, lease, rental or financing of housing and accommodations and real property because of race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry.” National Fair Housing pamphlets are also included in this series, as are local newspaper articles about the Eva Jessye Collection that was donated to the Pittsburg State University Library, Special Collections, in 1977.

The **Constitutional Revision series** contains material dealing with proposed changes to the Kansas Constitution in 1968, including materials that were distributed by the Kansas League of Women Voters to the local chapters. The proposed Constitutional changes covered a wide range of issues, including lowering the voting age from 21 to 18; moving gubernatorial elections to non-presidential election years; and enacting a shorter ballot for state offices that only included the governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. Other materials in this series concern the enactment of qualifications for people running for office, the increase of House member’s terms from two years to four years, and allowing the state legislature to classify property for tax purposes.

The **Crime and Correction series** contains two reports regarding the Probation and Parole Index Statute, and the Kansas Court System. Also included is an article showing the Pittsburg League of Women Voters were involved in local issues surrounding the Juvenile Court System. Copies of Kansas Council on Crime and Delinquency News and Contact Newsletters from the 1970s and a few newspaper articles complete this series.

The **Education series** contains a study of the Pittsburg school District completed by the Pittsburg League Women Voters in 1968 and in 1972. Both of these studies analyzed the school’s performance and facilities. The 1971-1972 study also analyzed various departments in the school. This series also contains various newspaper articles that discuss the conditions or changes that the schools were facing at that time and how schools were receiving their funding both locally and nationwide. This series also contains a copy of the 1985–1987 League of Women Voters of Kansas Study of the Governance of Public Education in Kansas.

The **Energy and Water series** contains information about the proposed low level radioactive waste facility operated by U.S. Ecology, a subsidiary of American Ecology in Kansas in the late 1980s. Also included are various reports about radioactive material compiled by Farm Bureau and the Kansas Department of Health. Other water-related materials are about the usage of dams, the maintenance of water resources, and improvements that were made to the water treatment plant in Fort Scott.

The **Government Assistance and Taxes series** contains brochures about loans for veterans dating from the 1950s, and a 1971 brochure about welfare misconceptions. This series also

includes information about taxes and tax changes from the 1960s to the late 1970s and information about the effects of the truck license changes on local citizens in 1978.

The **Health Care series** consists of information dealing with affordable healthcare, free choice, home health care, mental health, and medical facilities. None of these materials, collected from the 1960s to the 1980s, were published by the League of Women.

The **International Affairs series** consists of information about international relations in the form of United Nations Reference guides and an issue of Current Review of Foreign Policy printed by the League of Women Voters of the United States, both from the 1960s. An issue of the publication Center for Peace Concerns from 1986 is also included. This series also contains information about refugees and information about terrorists in Nicaragua during the 1980s.

The **Urban Development and Tourism series** contains issues of the Pittsburg League of Women Voters, "Let's Ask the League" column that was published by the Pittsburg Headlight during the 1970s. This series also includes newspaper articles regarding local issues such as levies, property taxes, roads, sewers, a proposed Frontenac subdivision, and a Report of Conditions of a Pittsburg bank. This series also includes tourism pamphlets from local and national tourism attractions.

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