

REGISTER OF THE HARRY S. DENT PAPERS
1943 - 1987

Harry Shuler Dent, 1930 -

Mss 158, 16 cu. ft., 11 vol.

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Harry Shuler Dent, 1930-
Papers, 1943 - 1987; bulk 1969 - 1982
Mss 158, 15.975 cu. ft., 11 vol.

INTRODUCTION

This collection consists of the White House files and the personal papers of Harry S. Dent. The majority of the collection concerns his work for the Republican Party and for the Nixon White House. In addition, there are records concerning the Billy Graham Crusade held in Columbia, South Carolina in 1987.

The papers were donated to Clemson University Libraries in December 1988 and February 1989 by Harry S. Dent. There are no restrictions on the use of the collection beyond those of Special Collections. The collection was processed and the register prepared by James Cross and Laurie Varenhorst in 1994. Student assistants Maureen Bassett and Laurie Poston helped with the processing.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Harry Shuler Dent was born in St. Matthews, South Carolina on February 21, 1930, the son of Hampton Nathaniel Dent, Sr. and Sally Prickett. He graduated from Presbyterian College in 1951 and received his LLB from George Washington University in 1957 and his LLM from Georgetown University in 1959. He married Elizabeth Inez Francis in 1951; they had four children.

Dent entered the Army in 1951 as a second lieutenant and was released as a first lieutenant after serving in the 24th Infantry Division, Far East Command, from 1952 - 1953. He became administrative assistant to Strom Thurmond in 1955 and held this position until 1965, when he became chairman of the South Carolina Republican Party. In 1968 Dent became Deputy Counsel to President Nixon and in 1969 Special Counsel, and served in this position until he resigned in December 1972. He served as general counsel to the Republican National Committee from 1973 - 1974. Dent has served as President's representative to the Sabine River Compact Administration since 1977 and as a member of the advisory committee to the Campaign Advising Service of the Republican National Committee since 1978.

He became a partner in the law firm Dent and Kennedy in 1965 and continued with that firm until 1968 ; he later became a partner in the firm of Whaley, McCutchen, Blanton and Dent (1973 - 1974) and senior partner of the firm Dent, Kirkland, Taylor and Wilson. Dent has acted as a correspondent for several South Carolina newspapers and radio stations. He has been very involved in the evangelical activities of the Southern Baptists and was chairman of the South Carolina Billy Graham Crusade (1986 - 1987). He is the author of three books : *Prodigal South Returns to Power* (1978), *Layman Looks Through the Bible for God's Will* (1983) and *Cover Up: the Watergate in All of Us* (1986).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Harry S. Dent Papers span the period from 1943 - 1987, organized into five series: White House Files, Personal, Billy Graham Crusade, Legal and Scrapbooks; the Legal series is closed to researchers until 2000. Folders in the White House Files subseries are arranged alphabetically by folder title within each year and chronologically within each folder; the other series are arranged alphabetically by folder title, and then chronologically within each folder. The scrapbook volumes are in roughly chronological order. Square brackets are placed around information provided by the processors ; it was not originally part of the folder title. Words in some of the folder titles are underlined to show the proper filing sequence. Some dates are parenthesized ; they show the span dates for a specific heading in the folder. Photographs and memorabilia have been removed from the papers.

Aside from the scrapbooks, there is very little material on Dent's life and career prior to becoming Deputy Council to the President in 1968. Nor is there material in the papers relating to his personal life and literary efforts from 1983 - 1985. Presently, the bulk of the collection dates from 1969 - 1982.

The White House Files series consists primarily of correspondence and memoranda between Dent and other members of the White House staff such as John Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman. As one of Nixon's political advisors, Dent was not only involved in inter-Republican Party politics, campaigning and patronage, but foreign and domestic policy as well — calculating the political ramifications for Republican Party of administration policy in such areas as textile trade negotiations and busing, particularly in the South. Much of the material relates to the build-up towards the 1972 presidential campaign and the need to build Republican Party power at the state level and in the federal bureaucracy.

The Personal series continues the political focus of the papers, with the majority of the files relating to the Republican Party, the elections of 1974, 1976 and 1978 and his book, *The Prodigal South Returns to Power*. This series also reflects Dent's increasing participation in religious activities, his activities as a speaker and his work with organizations such as the Baptist College at Charleston and the Prayer Breakfast Group. The Billy Graham Crusade series, which contain the (mostly fundraising) records of the South Carolina Billy Graham Crusade enlarges upon Dent's activities in the evangelical movement. The Crusade series material supplements that held by the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Illinois, which includes oral history interviews with Dent and his wife, Elizabeth.

The Dent Papers will be of especial interest to researchers interested in U.S. and Southern politics, the Nixon administration, the Republican Party, the 1972 and 1976 presidential campaigns, political patronage, the textile trade, busing, ethnic groups (including African Americans) in politics and the 1970, 1974 and 1978 political campaigns. There is also information relating to the evangelical movement and to Strom Thurmond.