

Fessler, Mary, Papers

Mary Fessler Papers
c.1940-2001



Title Statement

Fessler, Mary, PapersMary Fessler Papers, c.1940-2001 Ms.2001.012

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Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries (0434)
560 Drillfield Drive
Newman Library, Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
Business Number: 540-231-6308
specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



2003 (CC0 1.0)

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-09 07:03:54 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2001.012

Unit Date

c.1940-2001

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Mary McClintock Ryland Fessler (1912-2000) was active in Montgomery County Democratic Party, local government, and civic organizations from the late 1960s through the 1990s. The Mary Fessler Papers span the years ca. 1940-2001, with the bulk of the material dating from 1968-1984. The collection includes personal papers and materials related to the Montgomery County League of Women Voters, Montgomery County Democratic Committee, Ninth-District Democratic Committee, Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, and Blacksburg Library Building Committee.

Extent

5.5 Linear Feet 5 boxes, 2 oversize folders

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Mary Fessler Papers were donated to Special Collections in May 2001 and April 2002.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Mary Fessler Papers was completed in 2003. Additional materials were added in November 2023.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Mary Fessler Papers, Ms2001-012, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Mary McClintock Ryland Fessler (1912-2000) was active in Montgomery County Democratic Party, local government, and civic organizations from the late 1960s through the 1990s. She was a founding member of the Montgomery County League of Women Voters, organized in 1971, and Secretary of the Montgomery County Democratic Committee in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She was appointed to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors in 1977 and served from 1977 to 1985.

Fessler was born in Georgetown, Kentucky, on February 6, 1912. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Westhampton College (now the University of Richmond) in 1932. She taught in the North China American School in Tun Chow, China, and several American schools before moving to Blacksburg in 1951. Her husband, Donald R. Fessler, was a sociologist with the Virginia Tech Extension Service.

Sources: Jenn Burleson, "Library Advocate Will be Missed," *The Roanoke Times*, 9 December 2000, Current, page 1; Obituary, *The Roanoke Times*, 12 December 2000, page B3.

Scope and Content

The Mary Fessler Papers span the years ca. 1940-2001, with the bulk of the material dating from 1968-1984. They are arranged into the following series: Personal Papers, ca. 1940-2001; Montgomery County League of Women Voters, 1948-1980; Montgomery County Democratic Committee, 1967-1993; Ninth-District Democratic Committee, 1979-1981; Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, 1968-1998; and Blacksburg Library Building Committee, 1994-1999.

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors series spans the period 1968-1998 (bulk 1977-1984) and is the largest series in the collection. It is comprised of the following subseries: Minutes, 1977-1984; Correspondence, 1978-1985; Financial Records, 1977-1995; Subject Series, 1968-1998; Annual Reports, 1976-1982; Publications, 1974-1984; Capital Improvements Program Committee, 1978-1987; Montgomery County Community Services Organization, 1974-1979; Montgomery County Planning Commission, 1976-1989; and Montgomery County Public Service Authority, 1969-1973.

Minutes contain Fessler's copies of the official minutes of Board of Supervisor meetings for the period 1977-1984; they also include copies of agendas and official reports submitted to the Board. Correspondence is comprised of letters Fessler received pertaining to county government issues. It is organized into Incoming Correspondence, Inter-office Correspondence, both arranged chronologically; and Correspondence Regarding, arranged alphabetically by subject. Financial Records are comprised of Fessler's copies of budget requests, county revenue projections, and financial reports and analyses. The Capital Improvements Program Committee, Montgomery County Community Services Organization, Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Montgomery County Public Service Authority series are comprised of copies of records of these agencies that were sent to Fessler when she was a member of the Board of Supervisors.

Subject Series, the largest subseries within the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors series, are comprised of materials Fessler collected and filed by subject and document issues of concern to her during her tenure on the Board. They files contain a variety of materials, including copies of county government documents, correspondence with the county government staff, reports, studies, and clippings. Notable subjects include construction of the Roanoke River dam, landfills, and planning for sewage, water, and refuse.

The Montgomery County Democratic Committee series spans the period 1971-1993 and documents the committee's work in support of local, regional, and state Democratic candidates from 1867 to 1971, 1979 to 1981, and in 1993, and Democratic Party conventions. The records are comprised primarily of correspondence, get-out-the-vote materials, and newspaper clippings. Included is a file of correspondence and clippings pertaining to the activities of the state legislature from 1971 to 1974, a file on the re-drawing of magisterial districts in Montgomery County in 1972, and a folder of statistics on the race of registered voters, by precinct, in Montgomery County, 1979 to 1981.

The Ninth-District Democratic Committee series dates from 1977-1981 and is comprised primarily of correspondence from officials of the state Democratic Party and members of the local and regional committees; it also includes ephemera from Democratic campaigns from the period 1980 to 1981. A frequent correspondent is state Democratic Party Chair Richard Davis.

The Montgomery County League of Women Voters series spans the period 1948 to 1980 (bulk 1970-1980). Just one folder, it is comprised primarily of small publications put out by the League of Women Voters in the early 1970s promoting ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

The collection also includes a small series of Personal Papers that span the period ca. 1940-2001. They include a photograph of Fessler, ca. 1940, and a folder of thank-you letters from Virginia Governor Gerald Baliles, Lieutenant Governor Dick Davis, Delegate Rick Boucher, and Attorney General Mary Sue Terry.

Keywords

Blacksburg (Va.)
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Montgomery County (Va.)
Women -- History
Fessler, Mary McClintock Ryland, 1912-2000

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The bulk of the collection is arranged, within series, either chronologically or alphabetically by subject, as indicated in the series descriptions.

Description of Subordinate Components

Personal Papers

Unit Date c.1940-1993

Photographs

Unit Date c.1940, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

General Physical Description note 3 photographs and 1 letter

Scope and Contents note

The file contains a black-and-white studio photograph, ca. 1940, of Mary Fessler, and two color snapshots, n.d., of monuments to General Richard Montgomery in Quebec.

Correspondence

Unit Date 1967-1985

Correspondence with Preston Frazier regarding planning for a Virginia Museum Artmobile lecture in Blacksburg

Unit Date 1967

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Personal letters from Virginia Democrats

Unit Date 1970-1985

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

General Physical Description note 7 letters

Scope and Contents note

Letters from state Democratic leaders Delegate Gerald Baliles, Lieutenant Governor Richard J. Davis, and Attorney General Mary Sue Terry. Also included in the folder is a 1970 letter from Floydine Roberts of the Radford Women's Democratic Club.

Clippings

Unit Date 1980-1985, 1991

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Newspaper clippings on Blacksburg issues. Includes a fund-raising letter from "Concerned Citizens for Nellie's Cave Community."

League of Women Voters

Unit Date 1948-1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This small series is comprised primarily of publications put out by the League of Women Voters in the early 1970s promoting ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Montgomery County Democratic Committee

Unit Date 1967-1993

Scope and Contents note

This series is comprised primarily of correspondence and newspaper clippings, but also includes speeches and writings, campaign literature, and campaign ephemera.

Organizational Materials

Unit Date 1967-1969

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Includes an organizational charts, by-laws, and fund-raising information.

Campaigns

Unit Date 1967-1971; 1993

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6-11 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subseries is comprised of newspaper clippings, correspondence, speeches and writings, and campaign literature.

Conventions

Unit Date 1968-1980

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12-16 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subseries is comprised of clippings, Democratic party publicity and convention literature, correspondence, notes, and delegate lists.

Subject Series

Unit Date 1974-1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17-19 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subseries is comprised of a file of newspaper clippings about State Senator Madison Marye from 1974; and two files of documents pertaining to redistricting in Montgomery County, 1979-1981, including statistics on race and registered voters in Montgomery County in 1981. Also included are campaign posters for Dick Davis, Chuck Robb, Gerald Baliles, Andy Miller, and Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale.

Ninth-District Democratic Committee

Unit Date 1979-1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 20-22 (folder)

oversize 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This series is comprised of records of correspondence, financial records, by-laws, clippings, and campaign ephemera for Democratic candidates for statewide office in the early 1980s.

Montgomery County Board of Supervisors

Unit Date 1968-1998

Unit Date 1977-1984

Directory of Montgomery County Offices, Authorities, Boards, and Commissions

Unit Date 1978-1984

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 23 (folder)

Board Meeting Minutes

Unit Date 1977-1984

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 24-31 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Copies of meeting minutes, agendas, and reports.

Correspondence

Unit Date 1978-1985

Incoming Correspondence

Unit Date 1981-1985

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 32 (folder)

General Physical Description note 4 letters

Scope and Contents note

Includes a letter from Trans-Virginia Public Service Corporation in support of a proposed coal pipeline through Montgomery County and a letter pertaining to strained relations between the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors and the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board.

Inter-office Correspondence

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 33 (folder)

General Physical Description note 10 memoranda

Scope and Contents note

Memoranda from County Administrator Allan Williams to the Board of Supervisors pertaining to legal and personnel policy issues.

Correspondence Regarding

Unit Date 1978-1985

Scope and Contents note

This subseries is comprised primarily of memos from the County Administrator's office to members of the Board pertaining to proposed actions of the Board.

Arrangement note

Alphabetically by subject of the correspondence.

Appointments to Library and School Boards

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 34 (folder)

Drainage, Secondary Roads, and Flood Insurance

Unit Date 1978-1979

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 35 (folder)

Flood Control

Unit Date 1988

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 36 (folder)

New River Community College

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 37 (folder)

Reassessment

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 38 (folder)

Roanoke Airport**Unit Date** 1985**box-folder** 1 (box)**Container** 39 (folder)**School Boards, Special Town Districts, and other "sensitive issues"****Unit Date** 1978-1985**box-folder** 1 (box)**Container** 40 (folder)**Scope and Contents note**

This file includes information pertaining to Block Grant applications, potential annexation by the Town of Christiansburg, Economic Development Commission Progress Reports, town representation on the School Board, and tensions between school administrators and the School Board.

School Liaison, Vote on School Board, and Computer School**Unit Date** 1978**box-folder** 1 (box)**Container** 41 (folder)**Scope and Contents note**

This file also contains correspondence pertaining to other subjects, such as dog-leash laws and the construction of a new fire substation on Price's Fork Road.

Transportation**Unit Date** 1976-1980**box-folder** 1 (box)**Container** 42 (folder)**Wyatt Industrial Park****Unit Date** 1984**box-folder** 1 (box)**Container** 43 (folder)**Financial Records****Unit Date** 1977-1995**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries is comprised mostly of annual financial reports and audits; it also includes budget requests for fiscal year 1977-1978.

Budget Requests, Budgets, and Revenue Projections**Unit Date** 1977-1995**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 1-5 (folder)**Financial Statements, Analyses, and Reports****Unit Date** 1970-1992**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 6-15 (folder)**Audits****Unit Date** 1977-1984**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 16-26 (folder)

Accountant's Report on Special Study**Unit Date** 1983**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 27 (folder)**Budget, County School Debt Fund****Unit Date** 1982-1983**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 28 (folder)**Subject Series****Unit Date** 1968-1988**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries is comprised of subject files Fessler kept on issues pertaining to issues before the Montgomery County board of Supervisors. The files may contain clippings, documents, studies and reports, and correspondence.

Adams Quarry/Harman Farms Conditional Use Permit**Unit Date** 1977-1978**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 29-35 (folder)**Airports****Unit Date** 1985**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 36 (folder)**Scope and Contents note**

"Comparison of Services Provided to the New River Valley by Roanoke Municipal Airport, Virginia Tech Airport, and the New River Valley Airport"

Assessments**Unit Date** 1980-1985**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 37 (folder)**Blacksburg, town of****Unit Date** 1983-1985**box-folder** 2 (box)**Container** 38 (folder)**oversize** 2 (folder)**Scope and Contents note**

Proposed budget for fiscal year 1983 and 1984; a map of the Land Use Plan adopted by the Blacksburg Town Council on February 26, 1985; and a map, "Geology of the Blacksburg Quadrangle," created by M.J. Bartholomew and W.D. Lowry in 1979.

Blacksburg City Status**Unit Date** 1976-1982**box-folder** 3 (box)**Container** 1-3 (folder)**Scope and Contents note**

Includes a report, "The Fiscal Impact of City Status for the Town of Blacksburg," prepared for County of Montgomery, Virginia, an analysis of the report, and clippings.

Blacksburg in the Eighties

Unit Date 1982

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Summary of reports.

Bond Referendum, Montgomery County

Unit Date 1988

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

CETA, Montgomery County, Annual Plan and Financial Report

Unit Date 1979

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Community Data, Montgomery County

Unit Date 1982-1984

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Promotional publications published by the Montgomery County Economic Development Commission.

Community Services Board

Unit Date 1978-1985

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 8-10 (folder)

Drunk Driving, Montgomery County Task Force on; final report

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Fairview District Home

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Flood Insurance Study, Montgomery County

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Report compiled by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Administration.

German Club, construction of complex

Unit Date 1979

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Historic Preservation, Craig Cemetery, County Courthouse

Unit Date 1977-1982

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Human Resources Policies

Unit Date 1972-1978, n.d.

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 16-20 (folder)

Industrial Development Authority, Montgomery County

Unit Date 1985

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 21 (folder)

Industrial Sand Development Project

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 22-23 (folder)

oversize 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Materials pertaining to a proposed development; include five blue-lines of site-development plans.

Landfills

Unit Date 1977-1985

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 24-44 (folder)

oversize 1 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subseries is comprised primarily of materials documenting construction of the Mid-County Landfill; it includes a document prepared by Olver Incorporated, Consulting Engineers and Environmental Laboratories, "Operation and Development Manual for the Mid-County Landfill, Part III, Montgomery County, Virginia." Also included is a blue-line map, n.d., showing the proposed site for the landfill.

Local Government Volunteerism, Ad-Hoc Committee to Study

Unit Date 1985

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 45 (folder)

Mall, Montgomery County

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 46 (folder)

New River Valley Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services Board Budget Requests

Unit Date 1981-1982

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 47-48 (folder)

Proco Garage

Unit Date 1977-1978

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 49 (folder)

Recreation Department

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Roanoke River Dam

Unit Date 1978-1985

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 2-10 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subject series is comprised of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water supply and flood management studies and a feasibility reports, handwritten notes, clippings, correspondence, and papers documenting the Upper Basin Public Assistance Committee.

Schools

Unit Date 1977

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Sewage, Failing Septic Tanks

Unit Date 1989

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Draft discussion paper produced by the State Water Control Board in response to passage of Senate Joint Resolution 161.

Sewage, Water and Refuse planning, consulting engineers report for county comprehensive plan

Unit Date 1968

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

General Physical Description note 100-page report with charts and maps

Sewer, Slate Branch Interceptor Line

Unit Date 1981

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Solid Waste Alternatives

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Southwest Virginia Health Systems Agency, Emergency Medical Services

Unit Date 1978

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Spotlighting Deer Ordinance

Unit Date 1980

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

Subdivision Ordinance

Unit Date 1976

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Progress report on the proposed revision of the ordinance.

Tax Issues

Unit Date 1975-1977

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

Virginia Association of Counties, Legislation

Unit Date 1977-1978

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 20-21 (folder)

Waste and Wastewater Facilities in Montgomery County, Countywide Study

Unit Date 1986

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 22-23 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Study by Anderson & Associations, Inc., Consulting Engineers.

Women's Resource Center

Unit Date 1985

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 24 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Budget Packet.

Annual Reports

Unit Date 1976-1982

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 25-27 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Annual reports for Montgomery County Information and Referral Service, 1976-1977; the New River Valley Alcohol Safety Action Program, 1978-1979; and the Montgomery County Planning Commission, 1982.

Publications

Unit Date 1974-1984

"ABCs of School Finance," Virginia Education Association

Unit Date 1974

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 28 (folder)

"Beeks Big Book"

Unit Date 1985

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 29 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Book of writings by elementary school children, with a letter of appreciation addressed to Mary Fessler.

Local Tax Rates

Unit Date Tax Year 1979

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 30 (folder)

Virginia Municipal League Newsletter

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 4 (box)

Container 31 (folder)

Capital Improvements Program Committee

Unit Date 1978-1987

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 1-6 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Recommendations to the Planning Commission, project request forms, and proposed capital improvement programs for fiscal years 1982-1983 and 1986-1987.

Montgomery County Community Services Organization, Inc.

Unit Date 1974-1979

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 7-13 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

By-laws, membership directory, minutes, reports, grant applications and correspondence, and audit.

Montgomery County Planning Commission

Unit Date 1976-1989

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 14-20 (folder)

oversize 1 (folder)

oversize 2 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Records documenting the work of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Records are comprised of correspondence, reports, studies, budget requests, a 1976 draft of a proposed comprehensive plan, and a 1978 Planning Department evaluation of office space in the county. Also included is a map, "Environmental and Cultural Features of Montgomery County," prepared for the Commission in 1982.

Montgomery County Public Service Authority

Unit Date 1969-1973

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 21-29 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

This subseries documents Fessler's work, in her capacity as a member of the Board of Supervisors, managing the activities of the Montgomery County Public Service Authority, which was created by the Board in the early 1970s to manage public utilities in the county. Records include background information on the organization of the Public Service Authority, correspondence, meeting minutes, agendas, financial statements, subject files. Also included is an oversize publication, "Recommended Service Areas," 1975, prepared for the Board of Supervisors. It includes several maps showing existing and planned development and the demand it would create for expanded water and sewer lines.

Blacksburg Library Building Committee, Montgomery-Floyd Library Board

Unit Date 1994-1999

box-folder 5 (box)

Container 30 (folder)

Scope and Contents note

Minutes, correspondence, and clippings.

Oversize Materials

Unit Date 1975, 1980, n.d.

Campaign Poster

Unit Date 1980

oversize 1 (folder)

Proposed and Present Sewer Layouts

Unit Date 1975

oversize 1 (folder)

Proposed Site Development in Montgomery County

oversize 1 (folder)

Geology of Blacksburg Quadrant (map)

oversize 2 (folder)