

Elizabeth J. Harper Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2009085454>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011040>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2021

Collection Summary

Title: Elizabeth J. Harper Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1943-1984

Bulk Dates: 1943-1948

ID no.: MSS85454

Creator: Harper, Elizabeth J. (Elizabeth Josephine), 1920-2007

Extent: 80 items

Extent: 1 container plus 1 oversize

Extent: 0.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2009085454>

Summary: Foreign service officer and member of Women's Army Corps. Correspondence, memoranda, oral history transcript, writings, maps, prints, certificates, newspaper clippings, and other material relating primarily to Harper's service in the Women's Army Corps and as a foreign service officer in the Department of State.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Elizabeth J. Harper were transferred from the Prints and Photographs Division to the Manuscript Division in 2009.

Processing History

The papers of Elizabeth J. Harper were arranged and described in 2011 by Connie L. Cartledge. The finding aid was revised in 2021.

Transfers

One book, *Women in the Department of State: Their Role in American Foreign Affairs*, has been transferred to the Manuscript Division Reading Room reference collection.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include Frontline Diplomacy: the U.S. Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, which contains a transcript of an oral history interview with Elizabeth J. Harper conducted in 1992 (see <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000019>).

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Elizabeth J. Harper Papers are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Elizabeth J. Harper are open to research. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Elizabeth J. Harper Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1920, Apr. 22	Born, Sapulpa, Okla.
1943-1946	Served in Women's Army Corps in the Pacific
1946-1949	Civilian employee with the United States Army during the United States occupation of Japan
1952	B.A., George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Appointed United States foreign service officer, State Department
1952-1954	Consular officer, Medan, Indonesia
1954-1965	Consular officer, Japan, with postings in Tokyo, Osaka-Kobe, and Naha
1965-1969	Deputy chief, Regulations and Legislation Division, Visa Office, State Department, Washington, D.C.
1969-1970	Chief, Field Operations Division, Visa Office, State Department, Washington, D.C.
1970-1971	Deputy director for visa policies, Visa Office, State Department, Washington, D.C. (also appointed as the first Federal Women's Program coordinator)
1972	Attended Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy, State Department, Washington, D.C.
1973-1979	Consul general of the United States, Montreal, Canada
1979-1980	Deputy assistant secretary for visa services, Bureau of Consular Affairs, State Department, Washington, D.C.
1980	Retired from State Department, Washington, D.C.
1980-2007	Consultant on immigration issues to State Department, Washington, D.C.
2007, July 22	Died, Dumfries, Va.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Elizabeth Josephine ("B. J.") Harper (1920-2007) span the years 1943-1984, with the majority concentrated between 1943 and 1948. The bulk of the collection relates to Harper's military service from 1943 to 1946, and to her work as a civilian employee with the army during the occupation of Japan, 1946-1949. Most of the correspondence consists of Harper's letters to her family describing her training and camp life at Fort Bliss, Texas, and her deployment to the South Pacific. In her letters dating from 1944, she describes her barracks, the camp, the native inhabitants, and her work as an army clerk while stationed at New Guinea. Also included in the correspondence are letters describing her tenure in Japan during the occupation by United States troops after World War II.

The collection also includes an oral history interview with Harper pertaining to her career as a foreign service officer with the Department of State. Topics include her postings as a consular officer in Medan, Indonesia, 1952-1954; consular officer in Japan, 1954-1965; administrative positions in Washington, D.C., 1965-1972; and consul general in Montreal, Canada, 1973-1979. The oral history also describes Harper's work in assisting Jimmy Carter's administration in dealing with the entry of Iranians into the United States after the seizure of the United States embassy in Tehran. As a consultant after retiring from the Department of State, Harper continued to play a prominent role on immigration cases involving Iran. In addition the collection contains a narrative written by Blanche W. Wisenthal about her visit to China and a draft article by Kimpei Sheba of the *Nippon Times* about the occupation of Japan by United States soldiers.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Carter, Jimmy, 1924-
Harper family--Correspondence.
Harper, Elizabeth J. (Elizabeth Josephine), 1920-2007.
Sheba, Kimpei, 1902 or 1903-1996.
Wisenthal, Blanche W., 1919-

Organizations

United States. Army--Military life.
United States. Army. Women's Army Corps.
United States. Department of State.
United States. Embassy (Iran)
United States. Foreign Service.

Subjects

Diplomatic and consular service, American--Canada--Montreal.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Indonesia--Medan.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Japan.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Washington (D.C.)
Iran Hostage Crisis, 1979-1981.
Iranians--United States.
World War, 1939-1945--Pacific Area.
World War, 1939-1945--Participation, Female.
World War, 1939-1945--Women.

Places

Canada--Foreign relations--United States.
China--Description and travel.
Fort Bliss (Tex.)--History.
Indonesia--Foreign relations--United States.
Iran--Foreign relations--United States.
Japan--Foreign relations--United States.
Japan--History--Allied occupation, 1945-1952.
New Guinea--Description and travel.
United States--Foreign relations--Canada.
United States--Foreign relations--Indonesia.
United States--Foreign relations--Iran.
United States--Foreign relations--Japan.

Titles

B.J. Harper papers
Elizabeth Josephine Harper papers
Nippon times.

Occupations

Foreign service officers.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1943-1948, 1979 (6 folders)
BOX 1	Maps, 1940s, undated <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 1	Miscellany, 1946-1948, undated
BOX 1	Oral history interview, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass., 1984
BOX 1	Prints, Japanese, 1978 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 1	State Department, 1952, 1959-1963, 1973-1978, undated
BOX 1	Writings
BOX 1	By Harper, circa 1959
BOX 1	By others, 1948, undated
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Maps, 1940s, undated (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	Prints, Japanese, 1978 (Container 1)