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# The Jean Chance Research File on Henrietta Poynter

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Jean Chance

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# **The Jean Chance Research File on Henrietta Poynter**

A Collection Guide by  
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Special Collections and Archives  
Nelson Poynter Memorial Library  
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

22 June 2004

## Introduction to the Collection

Dr. Jean Chance, a retired professor of journalism, joined the faculty of the University of Florida (UF) in 1969. During the late 1980s, while serving as an associate professor in the UF College of Journalism and Communications, Chance received a sabbatical to research Henrietta Poynter's influence and leadership at the *St. Petersburg Times* and *Congressional Quarterly*. This collection includes research files, notes, and photocopied documents collected by Chance during her sabbatical, as well as a paper delivered at the 1989 meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC). In addition to her work in the classroom, Chance held appointments as chair of the University Senate and the UF Intercollegiate Athletic Committee. She retired from her fulltime assignment at the University of Florida in May 2003.

The two document boxes of correspondence, public documents, clippings, and other research materials were received from Professor Chance through David Shedden, library director at the Poynter Institute. The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library took possession of these materials in May 2004.

### Biographical Note: Henrietta M. Poynter

*The following biographical note is based upon research by Professor Jean Chance:*

A native of New York, Henrietta Malkiel was born on 25 April 1901 to Russian Jewish immigrants. She attended public and private schools, including Hunter College High School. During the early 1920s, she earned an A.B. degree from Columbia University. Shortly thereafter, she became a dramatic and feature editor for popular magazines, including *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. Between 1929 and 1931, Henrietta became the foreign editor at *Vogue*. She became a freelance writer and took part in theatrical production activities in New York and Paris during the early 1930s, later serving as a talent scout, artist, and writers' manager. By the beginning of World War II, she worked as assistant chief in the program division of the agency that later became the Voice of America. She served as assistant to Director John Houseman, an actor and producer best known for his dramatic performance as Professor Charles W. Kingsfield, Jr., in the acclaimed movie and television series, *The Paper Chase*.

Henrietta Makiel married Nelson Paul Poynter on 8 August 1942. They exchanged vows in Williams, Arizona, while Poynter had taken leave from the *St. Petersburg Times* to serve as chief of the Office of War Information's Movie Bureau in Hollywood, California. Upon returning to St. Petersburg, the Poynters were frustrated by the difficulty they had in obtaining timely and accurate information about political activities in Washington, D.C. In an attempt to develop a clearinghouse for information that would assist them with their duties at the *St. Petersburg Times*, Nelson and Henrietta Poynter co-founded Congressional Quarterly Incorporated. They co-edited issues of *Congressional Quarterly*. In 1953, Henrietta assumed responsibilities as associate editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*. The following year, she became vice president and trustee of the Poynter Fund.

Henrietta Poynter passed away on 26 January 1968. She suffered from a stroke. In April of the following year, the Florida Legislature honored her in passing resolutions that commemorated her as "one of the nation's leading authorities on the United States Congress." Her husband died on 15 June 1978, shortly after attending dedication ceremonies for the expansion of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus.

## **Preservation Note**

The materials in this collection occupy two acid-free document boxes. While preservation measures may slow the physical deterioration of such items, these steps cannot prevent damage from occurring. To prevent further damage to the fragile materials in this collection, avoid exposing them to light for an extended period of time. Please report any tears or other damage so that library staff may take appropriate preservation or conservation measures. Protective gloves should be worn when handling all photographs. While no restrictions limit access to this collection, library staff will evaluate photocopying or digitization requests on an individual basis to ensure the long-term preservation of this unique collection. Patrons using this collection must adhere to copyright and fair-use guidelines and provide proper citation of sources appearing in their research.

## **Provenance of the Jean Chance Research File**

This collection falls under the Journalism and Media provenance of the Special Collections and Archives department, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, USF St. Petersburg.

## **Scope and Contents**

The contents occupy two document boxes (approximately one linear foot). Inclusive dates cover the mid-1930s to early 1990s, with the bulk of the material covering the period from 1978 through 1989.

## **Related Collections**

Researchers interested in the business and professional activities of Nelson Poynter should also examine the Papers of Nelson Poynter, our library's signature collection. Scholars with an interest in the relationship between various constituent organizations created by Poynter should also consult the library and archives at the Poynter Institute. Appointments to examine these materials should be made directly with that repository.

## **Container Listing**

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 1**

**Subject: Publications and Presentations by Jean Chance**

**Contents:** Chance, Jean C. "Henrietta Poynter of *Congressional Quarterly* and the *St. Petersburg Times*," paper prepared for presentation at the AEJMC Southeastern Regional Colloquium, Chapel Hill, NC, April 1989.

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 2**

**Subject: Research Sabbatical (by Jean Chance) at Poynter Institute**

**Contents:** Correspondence, sabbatical reports, and other information about Professor Chance's 1987-1988 sabbatical at the University of Florida and in residence at the Poynter Institute.

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 3**

**Subject:** Poynter, Henrietta—General Research Correspondence by J. Chance

**Contents:** Correspondence to and from Chance as she contacted federal repositories (such as the National Archives and Records Administration) and other research facilities (including the New York Public Library).

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 4**

**Subject:** Poynter, Henrietta—General Research Notes by J. Chance

**Contents:** Handwritten notes, typed index cards, and other miscellaneous materials documenting the information found during Chance's research.

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 5**

**Subject:** Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests on the Poynters

**Contents:** Correspondence with various federal offices, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Justice Department, and Assistant Secretary of Defense. Also, photocopies of investigative documents, mostly collected from the FBI, that include heavily blacked out and censored sections.

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 6**

**Subject:** Oral History Transcripts (A-G)

**Contents:** Transcripts, notes, and associated materials for interviews conducted with Cortland Anderson, Don Baldwin, Clifton D. Camp II, John Chancellor, Alvah H. Chapman II, Virginia Frankel, Burt Garnett

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 7**

**Subject:** Oral History Transcripts (H-Z)

**Contents:** Transcripts, notes, and associated materials for interviews conducted with Robert Haiman, Tom Harris, John Houseman, Robert Pittman, Marion K. Poynter.

### **BOX 1, FOLDER 8**

**Subject:** Photographs

**Contents:** Photocopies and original prints.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 1**

**Subject:** **Bibliography of Articles by Nelson and Henrietta Poynter**

**Contents:** Typewritten list, covers the period from 1957 through 1968.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 2**

**Subject:** *Congressional Quarterly*—History and Background

**Contents:** Information about the original purpose and history of *Congressional Quarterly*, including a computer printout of a 1988 informal history written by Hoyt Gimlin known as the *CQ Chronicles*.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 3**

**Subject:** **Jamison, Eleanor Poynter—Clippings and Correspondence**

**Contents:** Includes a 26 August 1987 obituary from the *St. Petersburg Times*.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 4**

**Subject:** **Malkiel, Theresa S.—Articles (Scholarly/Monographic) Examining Her Life**

**Contents:** Published materials about Henrietta's mother, a Jewish sweatshop worker in New York City who later became a labor leader.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 5**

**Subject:** **Malkiel, Theresa S.—Articles (Newspaper) during Her Lifetime**

**Contents:** Includes photocopies of articles, many from the *New York Times*.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 6**

**Subject:** **Malkiel, Theresa S.—“Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker”**

**Contents:** A photocopy of Malkiel's *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker: A Story of the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike in New York*, a fictional account of sweatshops, women laborers, and life in New York City.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 7**

**Subject:** **Poynter, Nelson**

**Contents:** Miscellaneous letters and clippings. See also: Papers of Nelson Poynter.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 8**

**Subject:** Lucy Morgan's Research File on Nelson Poynter

**Contents:** Photocopied materials provided to Chance by longtime *St. Petersburg Times* reporter Lucy Morgan.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 9**

**Subject:** Poynter, Nelson, and Catherine F. Poynter—Divorce (February 1942)

**Contents:** Photocopied legal documents, clippings (pre-divorce), and correspondence about Catherine Ferguson Poynter and Nelson Poynter. Catherine Poynter, later remarried as Catherine Stephenson, organized local women into a group which later developed into the St. Petersburg League of Women Voters.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 10**

**Subject:** Poynter, Henrietta—Love Letters to Nelson/Wedding Announcements

**Contents:** Correspondence between Nelson and Henrietta, as well as clippings and other materials announcing their summer 1942 wedding.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 11**

**Subject:** Poynter, Henrietta—General Biographical Materials

**Contents:** Clippings, biographical directories, notes, and other items that document the activities of Henrietta Poynter. Also included is a timeline created by Chance.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 12**

**Subject:** Poynter, Henrietta—Death, Obituary Notices, Estate

**Contents:** Clippings, correspondence, and notes related to Henrietta Poynter's declining health, death, and estate.

### **BOX 2, FOLDER 13**

**Subject:** "Mrs. Wilson" Letters

**Contents:** Photocopied correspondence regarding "Mrs. Wilson."