



Alaska State Archives
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Title: Guide to the Constitutional Convention Audio Recordings

Creator: According to regulations adopted by the Alaska Constitutional Convention KFAR Radio in Fairbanks, under station manager Vincent Carrozza, was contracted to tape record all Plenary Sessions of the Convention.

Collection summary: This collection represents approximately 220 hours of all plenary sessions and most meetings of the Committee of the Whole during the Alaska Constitutional Convention held at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks from Nov. 8th, 1955 until Feb. 5th, 1956.

Organizational history: SLA 1955 Ch. 46 March of 1955, the territorial legislature approved “An act to provide for a constitutional convention to prepare a constitution for the proposed state of Alaska...”. The convention chose William A. Egan, president and Thomas B. Stewart, secretary, defined the functions, powers and duties of these officers [Fifty-Five elected delegates] and made rules and regulations to govern the conduct of convention business.

The legislation empowered the convention to prepare a constitution, republican in form, and a state government for the proposed state to be submitted to the people of Alaska to be ratified or rejected.

The governor submitted the ratified constitution through the president of the United States to Congress for approval or disapproval. The convention provided by ordinance in case of ratification of the constitution by the people of Alaska and approval by the congress, that there was to be an election in which the qualified voters of Alaska choose officers for the full state government, including governor, members of the legislature, such other offices the constitution might prescribe, and the authorized member of representatives and senators in congress.

Organizational history cont.: The convention convened in Fairbanks, at the University of Alaska on 8 November 1955 and continued in session for seventy-six days with a fifteen day break in order to hold public hearings. The convention adjourned 6 February 1956.

Collection description: Records include articles on the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, civil rights, elections, apportionment, taxation, and provision for amendments were written by the delegates. Additional problems, unique to Alaska, were considered such as natural resource management and new forms of local government. Two ordinances were submitted for ratification: election of a congressional delegation and the abolition of fish traps.

Extent: ~220 hours of plenary sessions and Committee of the Whole meetings of the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

Arrangement: Recordings are arranged chronologically

Restrictions on access: None, all recordings are open for public use.

Preferred Citation: Constitutional Convention Recordings 1955-1956, Alaska State Archives, Juneau, Alaska.

Related Materials: Series 122, Records of the Secretary of the Constitutional Convention.

Custodial history: The Office of the Governor received custody of the Constitutional Convention recordings and subsequently transferred them to the Alaska State Archives in 1980. Two sets of original recordings marked set "A" and "B" were transferred. These sets were identical recordings except that the "B" set was an edited duplicate for the dates November 8th-18th.

In 1991 the Archives had the original set "A" remastered as part of a preservation project funded by the Office of the Governor under Steve Cowper. This resulted in a remastered set duplicated from the original "A" set and a patron use set copied on to cassette tapes.

In 2008, with funding from the Alaska Historical Society, the recordings were digitized. It was determined after sampling audio from the original "A" set and the remastered set the best digitized copies would be produced from the original "A" set. A total of four digitized copies were made from the original "A" set and distributed to the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Alaska State Library, and the State Archives. The Universities and Library copies were intended for patron use and the Archives copy was designated the official archival record. In 2008 the original set "B" and the patron use cassette tapes made in 1991 were both deaccessioned from the collection.

Format: Original 1955-1956 recordings marked set "A" used cellulose acetate based ¼" tape on 440 7 inch reels. Set "B" consisted of acetate based tapes on 7 inch reels as well.

The 1991 remastered recordings set used 1.5 millimeter thickness, polyester based (Ampex 406) open reel tape, recorded full track at 7.5 inches per second. Copies of these remastered tapes were produced on cassette for patron use at the Alaska State Archives.

The 2008 digital conversion transferred the original set "A" recordings to broadcast .wav files (at 44kHz, 16 bit) and placed them on archival quality audio CD's.

Format cont.: The current web hosted recordings were produced from UAF's set of .wav files placed on archival quality audio CD's. These recordings are 320kps .mp3 files.

Works used in preparation of inventory: Minisis entries and Series folder for Series 123, Constitutional Convention recordings, 1955-1956.