Don H. Clausen Congressional Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Don H. Clausen Congressional Papers

Dates: 1963-1983

Collection Number: 1999.05

Creator/Collector: Don H. Clausen

Extent: 144 cubic feet (146 boxes)

Repository: Humboldt State University Library

Abstract: The Don H. Clausen Congressional Papers document Mr. Clausen’s House of Representative service January 1963 – January 1983 as well as selected materials about his career and public service since 1983. Highlights of the collection are materials relating to the creation of Redwood National Park (in 1968) and its expansion (in 1978), securing the funding for the Lake Sonoma/Warm Springs Dam project, the King Range National Recreation Area, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, establishing the 200 mile off-shore fishing limit, the forestry and wine industries, the rivers—especially Eel, Russian, and Klamath, Native American concerns, and aviation—especially aviation education. The photographs (1582 folders) are detailed in a database that is searchable in this finding aid.

Language of Material: English

Access
The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
Gifted to Humboldt State University by Don H. Clausen between 1983 and 2000. Upon Congressman Clausen’s departure from Congress in January 1983 portions of his congressional papers were distributed to Humboldt State University, Mendocino Community College and Santa Rosa Junior College. Mr. Clausen retained an additional portion of the records, stored in two locations: a family home in Humboldt County and at a moving and storage company in Eureka, CA. In 1986 the portion given to Mendocino Community College was transferred to Humboldt State University. Apparently sometime in the late 1980s Santa Rosa Junior College transferred its portion of the papers to the HSU Library. Between 1997 and 2000 materials from both the Clausen home and the moving and storage company were transferred to Humboldt State University Library.

Biography/Administrative History
Don Clausen was elected to the House of Representatives in a special election in January 1963. For the next twenty years he represented the citizens of the geographically large and culturally diverse (then) 2nd California Congressional District. Clausen, who began his political career in 1955 by winning a seat on the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, worked diligently promoting his vision of Home Rule: wanting the greatest amount of decision making power to be closest to the local level. "There's no telling how much good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit for it," are the upbeat words Clausen framed and hung on his office wall. This was how Don Clausen approached being in the minority party the entire time he served in the House of Representatives. Donald Holst Clausen was born in Ferndale, California on April 27, 1923. He spent his childhood days on the dairy farm his parents, Henry August and Marie Holst Clausen, worked - just as his grandparents had before them. The three Clausen boys shared the farm work, were athletic, participated in 4-H, and took turns entering their prize-winning livestock at the Humboldt County and California State fairs. Don's first elective office was as President of the Ferndale 4-H Club. Just as Don finished high school he was injured while working on the farm when a spear of alfalfa pierced his ear. Luckily the horses pulling the hay wagon kept still long enough for Don's brother to pull the unconscious Don to safety. The injury resulted in a hearing loss that later that same year forced Don to leave his freshman year at San Jose State University. He then entered the banking business. When the United States entered WWII he enlisted in the Navy and enrolled in the Naval Aviation V-5 Training Program. Soon after that his mother noticed that his hearing had returned to normal. Don credits the air acrobatic portion of his training with his recovery. After serving as a carrier pilot in the Pacific Mr. Clausen returned to California's north coast and resumed his banking position in Crescent City. But flying had changed his life and he had made a promise to a fellow Navy pilot. He would do what he could to help other average,
country kids - like themselves - to have access to flight training and opportunities in aviation careers. Quickly he found a way to start a flight school and ambulance/charter service at the new Del Norte County Airport as well as an aviation program in the local high school. In 1949 Don Clausen and Ollie Piper were married. They have two daughters, Beverly and Dawn Marie, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. In the 1950s Clausen entered local politics, winning a seat on the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors and becoming active in the Republican Party at the state and local levels. These activities put Clausen in a position to run for the congressional seat in 1962. While in Congress, Clausen served on the Public Works and Transportation and the Interior and Insular Affairs committees. Because of unusually fast turnover in the House of Representatives in the 1970s Clausen was able to advance rapidly in seniority. This allowed him to be involved in committee leadership matters and in advancing legislation. The Congressional Papers collection is richer as a result of this circumstance. When Clausen left Congress in 1983 President Reagan appointed him to the Department of Transportation where he worked with the Federal Aviation Administration to strengthen aviation education programs and to monitor the FAA in implementing legislation as Congress had intended. Clausen remained involved with the FAA until 1990. In 1991 he and Ollie left Washington and returned to their home in the southern part of his old district. Don Clausen has been awarded the Brewer Trophy (by the National Aviation Association) and the Crown Circle Award (by the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education), the nation's two highest awards in Aviation-Aerospace Education. In 1997 he was awarded the Humboldt State University Distinguished Service Medal in honor of his support for Humboldt State University while serving in the House of Representatives. See the Related Works section of this Finding Aid for additional biographical information.

**Scope and Content of Collection**
The Don H. Clausen Congressional Papers document Mr. Clausen's Congressional service January 1963 - January 1983 as well as selected materials relating to his career and public service since 1983. Initially Clausen's northern California coastal district extended from San Francisco Bay to the Oregon border. District boundary changes gradually moved the southern boundary up to mid-Sonoma County and sometimes included the inland counties of Lake, Glenn and Trinity. Clausen represented California's First District from 1963 to 1975, thereafter from 1975 to 1983 the district was California's Second District. The papers were produced or accumulated by Mr. Clausen and his staff. Accumulated papers came from congressional committees, government agencies, constituents, colleagues, political organizations, and the media. Clausen's committee service was primarily on the Public Works and Transportation and the Interior and Insular Affairs committees. Sub-committee for the Public Works and Transportation Committee included Federal Aid to Highways, Public Transit, Aviation, Water Resources, Economic Development, and Public Buildings and Grounds. Sub-committees for the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee included Indian Affairs, Water and Power Resources, Public Lands, National Parks and Recreation, Energy and the Environment, and Trust Territories. The collection contains significant records for these committees and subcommittees for the main issues taken up by them. Highlights of the collection are materials relating to the creation of Redwood National Park (in 1968) and its expansion (in 1978), securing the funding for the Lake Sonoma/Warm Springs Dam project, the King Range National Recreation Area, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, establishing the 200 mile fishing limit off the US coasts, the forest products and wine industries, the rivers -especially Eel, Russian, and Klamath, Native American concerns, and aviation - especially aviation education. The photographs (1582 folders) are detailed in a database that is searchable in this finding aid.

**Indexing Terms**
- Clausen, Don Holst
- Redwood National Park (Calif.) - History
- Warm Springs Dam
- Lake Sonoma
- Aeronautics - Study and teaching
- California, Northern - History
- California, Northern - Politics and government
- Russian River
- Eel River
- Klamath River
- King Range