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OETTINGER

**OETTINGER, KATHERINE BROWNELL      OH-500    432 pp. w/index   PRCQ**

Chief of the Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1957-68 and Deputy Assistant Secretary, 1968-69.

DESCRIPTION:

**Part I: New York and Northampton**

Chapter I – Family background: Nyack, New York; home in which she grew up; her grandmother's electric car; the Brownells (paternal side); grandfather's early career as teacher; his later career on the New York Stock Exchange; death of grandfather in 1910; grandmother's family background; grandfather's funeral; death of her father; favorite childhood activities; the Bennets (maternal side); grandfather's business interests; grandmother's influence.

Chapter II – Childhood: Relationship with her sister; father's death; fear that she would become an orphan; Miss Worden's Boarding School at Hastings-on-the-Hudson; writing as a child; memories of her parents together; how her mother managed after her father's death.

Chapter III – Teenager, New York City: Attending public school in New York City; the entrance examination for Hunter College High School; teacher, Dorothy Bunter, who became her mentor; independent life in high school; stepfather, Norman Lee Johnson; difficulty in adjusting to a stepfather; working at settlement-house summer camps; accompanying social workers to tenement houses; work of the Charity Organization Society.

Chapter IV – Smith College: life as an undergraduate; opening a tea house in her senior year; job as business manager of Literary Monthly; college financial arrangements; skill at sewing her own clothes; social life at Smith; debating team; influential faculty members; scholarship to the graduate School of Social Work; Dorothy Stebbins Bowles; graduation with honors; honorary doctoral degree in 1957; dating; specialized training in social work; influential professors; field work in psychiatric social work in St. Paul, MN; master's thesis on the emotional situation of children in the same family who have different I.Q.s; life in a settlement house in St. Paul.

**Part II: Career and Family**

Chapter V – Beginning professional practice, 1926-1931: New York Charity Organization Society; early work experiences; Associated Child Guidance Clinic; working for psychiatrists as social worker to affluent families; life in New York in the 1920s.

Chapter VI – Mental health consultant: Move to Scranton to work as mental health consultant with Visiting Nurse Association; one of only 4 visiting nurse associations with mental health emphasis; belief in casework in a public health setting; Hillside Home and

Hospital controversy; crusade against electroshock therapy (ECT) abuse, desire to gain psychological training in order to set up practice as psychiatric social worker; Pennsylvania State College at Rorschach; Rorschach training; counseling families against ECT led to trial for practicing medicine.

Chapter VII – Marriage and family: Malcolm H. Oettinger; husband's illness; move to Harrisburg; working mother; raising children; boarding school; sons as adolescents and adults.

Chapter VIII – From WPA to the National Mental Health Act: Community development; working with nurses' and mothers' groups; WPA nursery schools; Committee on the Care of Children in Wartime; child guidance clinic movement; National Mental Health Act of 1946.

Chapter IX – Pennsylvania Bureau of Mental Health, 1950-1954: Role as chairman of the Northeast Mental Health Division of the Pennsylvania Mental Health Association; candidate for head of the Division of Community Services; seen as liaison between Pennsylvania and national mental health organizations; funneling National Mental Health act money into community organizations; psychiatric training for nurses; Division of Community Services; the national mental health community.

Chapter X – Boston University School of Social Work, 1954-1957: Importance of her association with the National Institute for Mental Health; candidate for Dean of the School of Social Work; faculty responsive to her ideas; working toward a more effective program; Federal money for student training; requirements for Master's degree students; faculty development; decrease in number of students; faculty meetings.

### **Part III: The Federal Scene**

Chapter XI – U.S. Children's Bureau, 1957-1958: Selection as the Fifth Chief; swearing in; setting priorities; gifted children; juvenile delinquency; administrative staff had good national reputation; Mildred Arnold and the Division of Social Services; Helen Witmer and the Division of Research; smoking prevention; Charles Schottland; HEW inner councils; participation in weekly HEW staff meetings; Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth; forty Federal agencies with an association with children and youth; constituency network; meeting with a wide range of voluntary organizations; relationship with the State and Territorial Health Officers group; Surgeon General; House Appropriations Committee hearing; her relationship with committee chairman John Fogarty; funds for applied research and demonstration grants; four Presidential transitions; six HEW Secretaries; three commissioners; technical staff; publications; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Children's Bureau; 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth; mission emphases, 1960's; bills that grew out of the 1960 conference; day care and working mothers; family planning.

Chapter XII – Deputy Assistant Secretary of HEW, 1968-1969: 1967 Ford Foundation report on HEW; appointment as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population and Family Planning in response to the report; program on family planning policy; educational and other outreach activities; difference in her values and those of the Nixon administration; resignation.

**Part IV: The International Scene**

Chapter XIII – Consultant: International Association of Schools of Social Work; Inter-American Dialogue Center; teenage pregnancy; UNICEF; international family planning and population education; the family in transition; East-West Center; social work manpower for family planning; population tribune; book on adolescent pregnancy, Not My Daughter.

[Women in the Federal Government Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, interview by Jacqueline K. Parker, November 10-11, 16, 20-21, December 4-7, 1982, July 15-17, 1983]