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Special 50th Anniversary Issue

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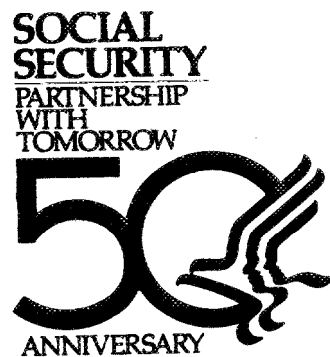
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COVER

OASIS celebrates Social Security's 50th anniversary with 50 candles containing the names of SSA employees. Every 50th employee is listed in order of Social Security number. Here's how to look for your name: lowest numbers (starting with 002), front cover; next lowest, inside front cover; next highest, inside back cover; highest numbers (ending with 701), back cover.

'One of the most successful and popular programs ever established'



Ronald Reagan

On August 14, 1985, our Nation will mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Social Security protects millions of workers and their loved ones against the loss of income they would otherwise face in their old age, or upon the disability or death of the family breadwinner. It provides a solid foundation of economic security upon which workers can add private pensions, savings and insurance to assure their financial well being in retirement, or when they are unable to work. Through Medicare, it also helps elderly and disabled individuals to meet the costs of medical care.

Almost every American now benefits from the Social Security program in some way. More than 120 million people are building their future financial security through work in jobs covered by the system, and approximately 37 million are receiving monthly cash benefits. Nearly all Americans reaching age 65 today are eligible for Social Security benefits. Ninety-five percent of young children and their surviving parents are eligible for benefits should the family breadwinner die, and four out of five workers are protected in the event they should become disabled.

Throughout the years, Social Security has proven to be one of the most successful and popular programs ever established by the Federal Government. With the enactment of Social Security Amendments of 1983, the Social Security system's financial soundness has been assured, both in this decade and for many decades to come. Our young people can feel secure in the knowledge that Social Security will be there to assist them in providing for their families just as it has done since the first benefits were paid in 1940.

I urge all Americans to reflect on the significance of the Social Security Act signed 50 years ago and to celebrate its accomplishments.

HHS Secretary says program is . . .

'Built on the bedrocks of compassion, prudence and equity'

When historians write a retrospective of the 20th century, Social Security will undoubtedly be identified as the most significant piece of domestic legislation enacted during that 100-year period. Born in adversity and tempered by crisis, Social Security--amended on numerous occasions over the years--has done more to lift and keep Americans out of poverty than any other governmental initiative.

When President Roosevelt signed the bill in 1935, millions of Americans were out of work; much of the country's industrial capacity was closed down--financial institutions were in disarray.

The new law authorized old-age insurance benefits for workers in commerce and industry to be financed by a payroll tax on workers and employers. Over the years since the program began, coverage was extended: to dependents of retired workers and survivors (1939), to farm and household workers, to the self-employed, to members of the armed forces (1950). Disability insurance was provided (1956) and Medicare enacted (1965).

The impact of the Social Security program is pervasive; almost every man, woman and child in the United States is touched by it--directly or indirectly. There is hardly a family in America which does not have one or more members receiving benefits, usually an aging parent or grandparent.

Today, 50 years after its enactment, Social Security coverage is virtually universal. *Ninety-five* percent of all jobs are covered. Benefits are provided for:

- disabled insured workers at any age;
- insured workers at 62 (benefits taken before 65 are reduced);
- spouses of retired or disabled workers;
- children of retired, disabled or deceased workers; and
- surviving spouses of deceased workers.

It should be noted that entitlement to the Social Security benefits is guaranteed

by statutory right, and benefits are payable without regard to non-work income or resources. Coverage is *not* a matter of administrative discretion; it is mandatory under the law. And benefits are automatically adjusted to keep pace with inflation.

But the benefits constitute a floor of protection and cannot be expected to do the entire job of income support. Some plan of supplementation should be undertaken, such as private pensions, investments, insurance and savings.

The Social Security program at the half-century mark is fiscally sound. But that has not always been the case. In 1981 the Reagan Administration inherited a Social Security system that faced bankruptcy. Four years later, I am happy to say, the most recent Social Security Trustees Report indicates that OASDI benefits will be paid, on time, until well into the next century even under pessimistic economic assumptions. Last January, in fact, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund paid an installment of \$4.4 billion on loans from the Health Insurance and Disability Trust Funds.

Just as important, the administration of the program is stronger, more responsive and more flexible than ever before. In 1986, Social Security will pay benefits to more Americans than ever--37 million--while technology and management improvements will be able to reduce the workforce by more than 1,600 full-time equivalent positions. That is testimony to good management, wise planning and a concern for taxpayer dollars.

Salvation has also been enhanced by another massive accomplishment--*reducing the growth of medical inflation*. For the first time in years, the increase in hospital costs--and health costs in general--has fallen. One of the major contributing factors in this staunching of the inflationary tide comes as the result of the prospective payment system which we at Health and Human Services have fairly but vigorously instituted and implemented *without* sacrificing quality care and superior treatment.

In Social Security's next 50 years, there will be new challenges. Because of scientific breakthroughs, medical miracles and changes in lifestyles, the American people are living longer. Social Security has been built on the bedrocks of compassion, prudence, and equity. They will remain as the bulwarks of the system as tomorrow's beneficiaries enjoy the blessing that is the Social Security system.



Margaret M. Heckler

'Tradition of prompt, courteous, accurate and efficient service'



The nineteenth century philosopher Hegel once wrote that "What experience and history teach is this--that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it." He obviously wrote before the advent of Social Security. When I look back over the 50 years of Social Security in the United States and review how our Nation took the lessons of the past and adapted them to the future, creating the most successful social programs in our Nation's history, I know that, at least in this instance, there was an exception to Hegel's philosophy. The people, the principles, the wisdom and foresight of many in government that created Social Security and brought it from its infancy in 1935 to the mature and successful set of programs that is Social Security in 1985 used the lessons of history and experience wisely, with compassion and with imagination. We must do no less for the future.

Although I do not have direct experience with the tremendous accomplishments of the 1930s, it was then that the original Social Security Act was designed, the fundamental principles that have guided the program ever since were conceived, and many of the innovative administrative approaches needed to run a national program of earnings-related social insurance were first developed. By the time I came on the scene in 1947, we were paying monthly benefits to almost 2 million people at an annual rate of nearly \$566 million--a far cry from the very early days, when I'm told we once made a 17 cent lump-sum retirement payment. And how much further from today, when OASDI benefits are going to 37 million people at a rate of \$188 billion a year.

Yet, as far removed as today's Social Security statistics may seem from those of 1947, let alone still earlier times, there are certain fundamental principles that form a direct linkage between the program as it was then and the program as it exists today. They reflect, I believe, our ability to learn from history and experience, to see what worked and did not work, and to couple this pragmatic knowledge with a visionary sense of what the country needed in order to build the most effective and important social programs in the United States. To my mind, the past--and indeed the future--success of Social Security is rooted in these four basic principles.

- The concept of "earned right." Perhaps the most fundamental source of public support for Social Security is the idea that retirement and survivor benefits (and, later, disability benefits) belong to eligible individuals as a matter of right, based on work in covered employment.
- The floor-of-protection concept. Social Security is intended to provide for only the most basic income needs of retired or disabled workers, and survivors of deceased workers. It replaces only a portion of income lost due to retirement, disability or death, and is weighted toward more fully replacing the income of individuals with lower earnings during their working years. In this way it provides a floor or foundation onto which many beneficiaries may build by adding income from private sources such as individual savings and private pensions.
- Continual adjustment to the needs of our society. Throughout their history, the Social Security programs have been dynamic, altering to meet the changing needs and attitudes of the American people. The original legislation was correctly described as "a cornerstone in a structure which is being built but is by no means com-

plete.” The extension of coverage to new groups of workers beginning in the 1950s, the addition of Disability Insurance in 1954-56, Medicare in 1965, and Supplemental Security Income in 1974 are all reflections of this principle. Less obvious but equally important changes have been the indexing of benefits to price increases, the stabilization of initial retirement benefit levels as a percentage of the current value of preretirement earnings, and the elimination of gender-based distinctions in the law.

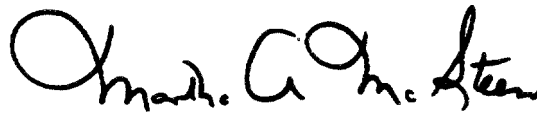
- A tradition of service to the public. From our earliest days, the men and women of the Social Security Administration have prided themselves on providing all Americans with prompt, courteous, accurate and efficient service. We have not always succeeded fully, but we have always tried for these goals. And today, when the provision of such service requires the most up-to-date and comprehensive computer systems, we are embarked on a massive Systems Modernization Plan designed to provide “state of the art” capabilities to our service delivery.

I do not mean to imply that adherence to these principles has always been accomplished without difficulty, or that we have a flawless or trouble-free Social Security system. Anyone who has read the newspapers, watched television, or followed the news some other way during the past few years surely knows that this is not the case. But the financial crises of the early 1980s in the OASDI programs have been resolved by the Social Security Amendments of 1983--the Board of Trustees recently reported that the combined programs were in sound financial shape for the next 75 years--and we are well on our way to correcting other deficiencies in the Disability Insurance program.

Most important, as President Reagan stated when he signed the 1983 amendments, is the Nation’s continued commitment to the vitality of the Social Security programs:

“This Bill demonstrates for all time our Nation’s ironclad commitment to Social Security. It assures the elderly that America will always keep the promises made in troubled times a half a century ago. It assures those who are still working that they, too, have a pact with the future. From this day forward, they have our pledge that they will get their fair share of benefits when they retire.”

We have a sound basis for the next 50 years of Social Security. We have 50 years of experience in the successful application of proven principles. If we, as a nation, learn from this experience and apply it wisely to the challenges and opportunities that face the Social Security programs--the treatment of women in a changing society, increases in longevity and their implications for retirement policy, and a host of others--these programs will continue to well and faithfully serve our national needs.



“From our earliest days, the men and women of SSA have prided themselves on providing all Americans with prompt, courteous, accurate and efficient service.”

Previewing Our Golden Anniversary

The November OASIS will feature coverage of local observances of our 50th anniversary. If you would like your office's activities included, please send a brief description of them and photographs to the Editor, OASIS, 4-H-10 West Highrise, Baltimore, Md. 21235, by September 3.

A nationwide celebration will mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act the week of August 11-17. The centerpiece of this observance is scheduled August 14 in the Altmeyer Auditorium at SSA headquarters in Woodlawn. At that time, the U.S. Postal Service will have its first-day issuance of a special commemorative stamp in honor of Social Security's birthday.

HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler, Labor Secretary William Brock and former HHS Secretary Wilbur Cohen have been invited to share the dais with Acting Commissioner Martha McSteen and Postmaster General Paul Carlin. Baltimore Postmaster Thomas Straub will also be on hand.

Other events planned for that week include:

- Open houses--All SSA field offices across the Nation have been encouraged to hold open houses for the public, the press, social welfare agencies, members of local and State governments, businesses, etc.

Field offices are using their own ingenuity in planning these events. For example, in Bremerton, Wash., District Manager Alberta Canada told OASIS that they would be holding an awards banquet for couples who are celebrating their 50th anniversaries, employees with 50 years of service with the same firm and wage earners who have been contributing into the Social Security fund since the program began. Employee donations will pay for the banquet.

- Proclamations--State Governors have been asked by the Secretaries of HHS and Labor to issue proclamations recognizing the anniversary.

Field offices are contacting their mayors to ask if local proclamations can be issued. The Office of Family Assistance is sending letters to State welfare commissioners, noting the 50th anniversary of the Aid to Families With Dependent Children program.

- Exhibits--The National Archives in Washington, D.C., will have a special exhibit August through December on the history of Social Security. Several hundred thousand visitors are expected to see the exhibit, especially since the Magna Carta will be on display at the National Archives at the same time.

- Media coverage--Central office has supplied background material on Social Security to hundreds of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations. Field offices are working with local news organizations to provide coverage. Several national magazines have expressed interest in doing feature stories about Social Security.

- National organizations--Acting Commissioner McSteen has sent letters to about 50 national organizations, including the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, advising them of our plans and inviting them to get involved. AARP is planning to publish articles in its national magazine, *Modern Maturity*, and use our stamp design on its cover.



Replica of commemorative stamp the U.S. Postal Service is issuing in honor of Social Security's 50th anniversary.

- International meeting--The American Regional Conference of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) will meet in Washington, D.C., this September. Secretary Heckler will be the keynote speaker, Acting Commissioner McSteen will give the opening address, and an anniversary exhibit will be on display. Also, participants will receive from ISSA a tote bag bearing SSA's anniversary logo.

One hundred high-ranking officials from virtually all of the countries in the Western hemisphere are expected to attend. ISSA represents agencies administering social insurance programs in about 120 countries altogether.

- Logo use--Throughout the summer, there will be a wide distribution of materials printed with the anniversary logo--posters, stationery and stickers. Also, the Treasury Department has agreed to place the logo and an anniversary message on all Social Security check envelopes during August and September.

"I want to encourage all employees to participate actively in community events commemorating our first half-century of service to the American public," said Acting Commissioner McSteen. "We can all be proud of the long record of service that this anniversary represents."

Each of our 50 years has brought new challenges. But some years had such major effects on the Social Security program and the people who administer it that we've included them in our . . .

Historical Highlights

1935

Congress passes Social Security Act. On August 14, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Act into law. Federal Old-Age Benefits program provides wage-related benefits as a right to workers in industry

and commerce. Act also establishes Social Security Board; provides first Federal-State program for Aid to the Needy Aged, Aid to Dependent Children and unemployment insurance.



Ida Fuller was first recipient of monthly benefits.

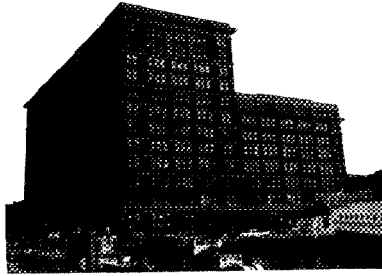


1936

First Social Security field office opens in Austin, Texas.. First Social Security numbers issued. Central recordkeeping begins in Baltimore's Candler Building.

1937

Supreme Court declares Social Security Act constitutional.



Candler Building housed recordkeeping operations.

1939

Benefits extended to survivors and dependents of insured workers.

1940

First monthly benefits paid; Ida Fuller gets first check.

1942

First area offices (now program service centers) open in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New Orleans.

1946

Social Security Board dissolved and SSA established. Arthur Altmeyer is first Commissioner. Area office opens in Kansas City.

1947

Birmingham Area Office replaces New Orleans.

1950

Major benefit increases. Coverage extended to regularly employed farm and domestic workers, most non-farm self-employed, employees of nonprofit organizations and State and local employee groups not under a retirement system. Aid to Dependent Children (later called AFDC) benefits extended to needy parents.

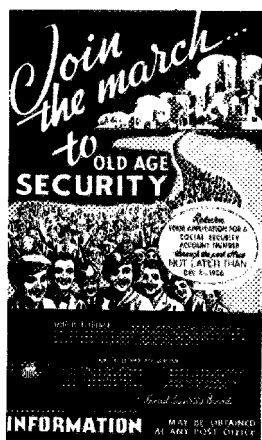
1953

Department of Health, Education and Welfare created, with Oveta Culp Hobby as first Secretary and SSA as its largest agency.

Disability benefits were added in the 1950s.



Benefits were extended to survivors and dependents in 1939.



1954

Disability freeze enacted. Coverage extended to farm and professional self-employed, clergy on an elective basis, other groups.

1955

SSA begins using computers.

1956

Coverage extended to members of armed services and rest of professional self-employed except for doctors. Monthly benefits provided for disabled workers (age 50-64) and for disabled children age 18 and older. Reduced benefits made available at age 62 for women.

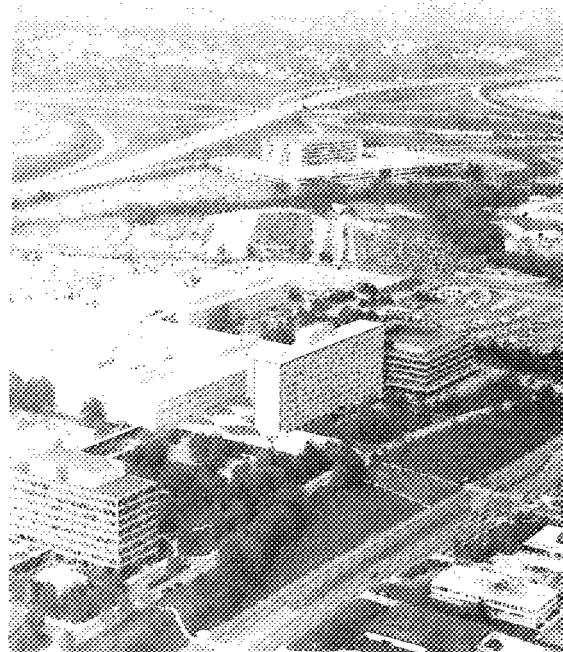
1958

Benefits payable to dependents of disabled workers.



Farmers were covered in 1954.

Headquarters complex opened in 1960.



1960

New SSA headquarters complex opened at Woodlawn, Md. First electronic data transmission system in field offices. Age limit removed on benefits to disabled workers.

1961

Reduced benefits made available at age 62 for men.

1965

Self-employed doctors covered. Benefits to students age 18 to 22. Automatic recomputation of benefits based on earnings after retirement. Medicare program enacted with hospital and medical insurance.

1969

Black Lung benefit program for miners and families enacted. First SSA teleservice center opened in Washington, D.C.

1972

Automatic cost-of-living benefit increase provision enacted. SSA selected to run new Supplemental Security Income program.

1974

SSI payments begin.

1977

AFDC program transferred to SSA. Most Medicare responsibilities transferred to Health Care Financing Administration, but SSA field offices continue to help Medicare beneficiaries. New benefit computation method based on indexing of earnings records introduced.

1980

DHEW becomes Department of Health and Human Services. SSA's central operations Metro West complex opened in downtown Baltimore.

1981

Major AFDC reforms promoting self-sufficiency of recipients through work programs; benefits targeted to those most in need. National Computer Center occupied in Woodlawn, Md.

1982

SSA begins Systems Modernization Plan.

1983

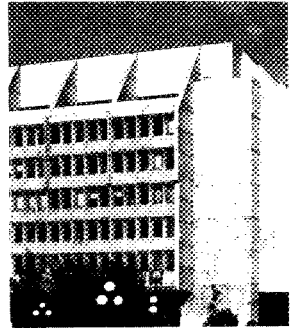
Amendments restore financial soundness of Social Security program. Major changes include coverage of new Federal civilian employees and all employees of nonprofit organizations, taxation of Social Security benefits for higher-income beneficiaries, gradual increase in retirement age in two stages to age 67 in the year 2027.

1984

SSA sets eight priority objectives to help deal with critical issues.

1985

Nation celebrates 50th anniversary of Social Security. First "live" claims taken under SSA's Claims Modernization Project/Field Office Systems Enhancement.



HEW became HHS in 1980.



New home of SSA computers.

SSA 'Pioneers' Recall the Early Days



The Candler Building on Baltimore's waterfront housed Social Security recordkeeping operations.



What was it like to work for Social Security when the program was in its infancy? To find out, the April OASIS asked "pioneers" who agreed to be interviewed for a 50th anniversary article, to contact us. Many did. The recollections of some of those who helped put Social Security into effect across the country are presented here.



TOP: Miller Wolken in the late 1930s and today.
ABOVE: Jack Futterman as a Navy lieutenant in 1945 and with Roy Wynkoop and Elwood Way, in the '70s.

SSA 'Pioneers' Recall the Early Days



Arthur Robb in 1933 and today.

Certain adjectives seem to pop out again and again in describing Social Security employees of the 1930s--idealistic, hard-working, flexible, persistent, and practical. Although working for a bureau--the Bureau of Federal Old Age Benefits--they were in no sense bureaucratic.

In the early years, the Social Security Board--of which the Bureau was a part--was headquartered in Washington, D.C. *Arthur Robb* was in the first batch of 60 trainees there destined to set up the field structure. "I reported on October 5, 1936," Art recalled. "For 4 weeks we spent most of our time studying the Social Security Act and related documents. Upon returning home to Kansas, I helped open the Topeka field office. Boxes of supplies and second-hand WPA furniture were piled high around the room. My manager, Karl Albrecht, and I ran the office by ourselves for 2 months.

"At the start of 1937, quite a few folks came to sign up for the 'old-age pension.' They thought we were running the Townsend Plan, which had been proposed in Congress to pay large monthly payments to all aged persons. They weren't too happy when we told them there were no Social Security pensions then and that small lump sums would only go to persons over 65 who had paid into the program!"

Art went on to say that Topeka was the home of Alf Landon, who opposed Social Security when he ran for President in 1936, "Local editorials at first labelled the program as just 'another New Deal gimmick' that wouldn't get off the ground. One business executive told me that the program wouldn't pay anyone a dime in benefits. Later, his business went bankrupt, and he and his wife were left with no income. In 1940 at age 65, they filed for the newly enacted monthly benefits and received a combined check of about \$60 a month. After that he became a firm friend of Social Security!" Art retired as District

Manager in Pittsburg, Kans., in 1977.

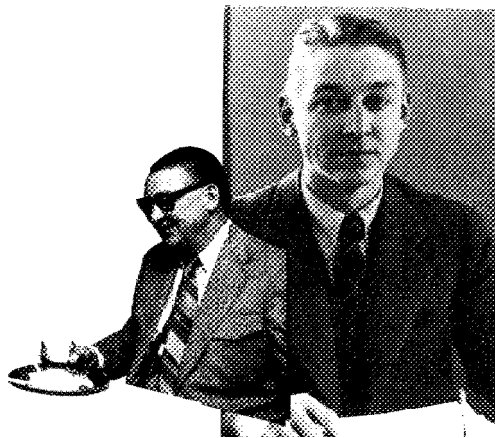
The second batch of trainees came on duty in Washington on October 17, 1936. "We were all young, idealistic college graduates," *Mel Wunsch* recalled. "I'd graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where I worked with Wilbur Cohen on the student paper, the *Daily Cardinal*. As managing editor, you might say that I was his boss back then!

"After 4 weeks' training, I went to the Minneapolis Field Office as field assistant. The staff of three included the district manager, a secretary, and me. I moved on to the Milwaukee FO on January 2, 1937. My public information duties there included making speeches on radio, explaining the program to employers, unions and other groups, and writing reports on attitudes toward Social Security." Like other pioneers, Mel told *OASIS* that he worked a lot of unpaid overtime.

"I'm still delighted to have been part of Social Security at the start. It was a crusade for many of us," Mel went on. "Most people we talked with supported the program. Because of the Great Depression, we felt we had to help each other; otherwise we'd all be in trouble." Mel retired in 1973 as Deputy Assistant Bureau Director in the Bureau of Health Insurance.

Hugh McKenna began his Social Security career in August 1936 in Washington, D.C., as technical director. Among other duties, he trained people to staff the expanding field structure of the Bureau of Federal Old Age Benefits. "We trained employees to become field assistants and district managers," Hugh stated. "I served as special assistant to Bureau Director Leroy Hodges, Executive Officer John Corson, and Chief of Field Services Benjamin Beecher. I wrote the first account number manual--it was about 30 to 40 pages. We had to be ready to enumerate at least 26 million workers in less than a year. Fortunately, the manual worked."

In September 1937, Hugh moved to New York as regional rep. "We had about 300



Hugh McKenna in 1944 and in the 1970s.

employees in 20 offices in the region," he continued. "Most of my managers were retired army colonels or majors in their 50s while I was only 30. I'll never forget how I was introduced to the managers gathered in the RO: 'If you don't like the way Hugh works out, we can always send him back to Washington.'

"One of our first jobs was to get account number records firmly established with employers reporting properly. New York City unions urged members to request Social Security wage records; many wage discrepancies arose as a result. Our own field staffs and detailees from field offices in other regions worked long and hard to resolve these discrepancies. In New York, we had more than the rest of the Nation combined. I produced a wage discrepancy manual which was used nationwide." Hugh headed Social Security's field operations from 1943 to 1967 and retired in 1975 as Director of the Bureau of Retirement and Survivors Insurance.

Baltimore has always been the center of Social Security's central recordkeeping operations. "People came to Social Security from across the country," remembered *Jack Futterman*, who started in November 1936 as a CAF-2 making \$1,440 a year in Baltimore's Candler Building. "A wonderful spirit of teamwork permeated the organization. Most of us were young and single. Several employees--of the same sex, of course--often shared living quarters to save money. Taxis were only a quarter no matter how many rode. If three shared a cab, it was cheaper than streetcars costing a dime.

"Quite a few employees with college or advanced degrees were academically over-qualified for the clerical jobs they filled. But because of constant challenges, they moved rather quickly into supervision and related jobs. We had to devise new ways to organize the work more efficiently and had confidence that we could get the job done.

"One early stumbling block was the medical exam that every employee had to pass before being put on the payroll. Public Health Service doctors interpreted regulations strictly and sometimes initially failed employees with minor ailments like ingrown toenails! Some people didn't get paid for months until they received medical clearance. This was one of the first issues that the union raised with management." Jack retired as Assistant Commissioner for Administration in 1972.

Coming on duty on April 16, 1937, in Washington, D.C., was *Mercia Kahn*. Although her title was adjudicator, she never adjudicated a claim. "I was handed the thin Social Security Act the first day," Mercia recalled, "and 30 minutes later was told there was no more time for training. My first task was to compile State laws on Descent and Distribution to decide how lump sums would be awarded to estates of deceased workers.

"I was soon named acting head of the Legal Contact Unit which helped form claims policy. My staff ranged from 6 to 35 people and were all detailees from other headquarters units. We had a marvelous personnel setup. Those who couldn't cut the mustard or weren't willing to work long hours would return to their regular positions with no questions asked. Many detailees became SSA executives, including Joe Carmody, Jim Murray and Gene Brees. We sometimes worked until 3 a.m. and then came back at 8. No one even thought of being paid for overtime.

"It was so exciting working in those early days. Everyone was young and eager to get Social Security going. We invented manuals and forms as we went along. We developed policy from real claims cases without a hint of the ivory tower approach." Mercia later managed the Mission District in San Francisco and was the first woman administrator in Region IX. She retired in 1980 as Medicare Regional Director in San Francisco.

On July 1, 1937, the huge task of enumerating American workers was



Mel Wunsch in 1936 with Lyman Brewer and in the '70s.



Mercia Kahn with other Social Security officials in 1945 and today with Congresswoman Barbara Boxer and Marin County, Calif., Commissioners on Aging.

SSA 'Pioneers' Recall the Early Days

transferred from the Post Office to the Social Security Board. That's the day *Millet Wolken* joined the St. Louis Field Office as account number clerk. As did quite a few other pioneers, Millet spoke of the heavy workload these SS-5s represented.

"About 30 of us processed many thousands of account numbers trucked in from the city's main post office," he remembered. "We worked three evenings a week and all day Saturday--at least 48 hours a week. Naturally, all the overtime was unpaid. We were all dedicated and thought Social Security was wonderful--the wave of the future.

"In 1939, I was chosen as a field assistant and sent to New York City and Baltimore for 4 months' training--mainly OJT. I tracked down lots of missing account numbers in the fur processing industry in the Bronx. After returning to St. Louis, I worked mainly on public information work. I often spoke on the radio--all live--and wrote most of my own scripts," Millet retired as District Manager in St. Louis in 1980.

Wayman Register opened the Baton Rouge, La., Field Office in August 1937. As district manager, he had four employees to help him. "One early task was to maintain close liaison with the nearby State unemployment office," he recalled. "We issued about 500 account numbers a week, mailed the SS-5s to Baltimore, and made copies for the State unemployment agency. For years, we issued duplicate cards by checking State records. That was quicker than writing back to Baltimore to search central records.

"Many employers used to file 'dummy' tax returns with no employee SSNs. They did so because of the bother and time involved in requiring employees to get numbers. When we tried to get numbers, some employers resented our efforts. One French-speaking businessman got so upset with me that he threw his hat on the ground and stamped on it. 'Do you think my workers have numbers printed on their backs?' he asked.

"Before 1940, we paid lump sums to retired workers and to families of deceased workers--there were no monthly benefits. Louisiana had complex inheritance laws. I recall how tedious it was to find 15 to 20 relatives entitled to share in small lump sums. Heirs often got only a dollar or so each." Wayman retired as Regional Commissioner in Dallas in 1975.

Arriving in the New Bedford, Mass., Field Office a few days before it opened on July 1, 1937, was *Ethel Eliopoulos*. "I hadn't been told when we'd open," Ethel recalled. "District Manager James McGuinn and I held down the fort when big sacks of SS-5s began arriving on July 1. They came from the mills--the major employers in the area. I reviewed so many SS-5s that I developed eyestrain.

"Later another clerk arrived to help, but we still had lots of work. Mr. McGuinn said, 'If you girls work until 6 p.m. every day, you won't have to come back after supper.' We also worked all day Saturday. I studied the small claims manual and took some claims, although there weren't very many then.

"In January 1938, I transferred to the Boston Regional Office, where all seven of us bureau employees worked in the same room. Our regional rep was John Campbell. At that time, all claims were sent from the field to the RO. After I looked them over, they went to the regional attorney for legal review. I also worked on travel, equipment and personnel actions for the field.

"After WW II began, I received a War Service Appointment as district manager in Lowell, Mass. That meant serving until the previous incumbent returned from military service. Nearly all the younger men had gone to war. I worked in five or six offices in eastern Massachusetts in several jobs from 1937 to 1948. I didn't have a car but always commuted up to 30 miles using the excellent public transportation we had then." Ethel retired in 1983 after many years as District Manager in Lowell.

Joining the Social Security Board in December 1936 was *Eugene Riegler* from



Wayman Register with fellow SSAers in 1951 and in the '70s.

Ethel Eliopoulos in 1963 with BOASDI Director Victor Christgau.



Little Rock. "Our guiding philosophy from the start was to bring Social Security to the people," Gene noted. "Arthur Altmeyer and the other founders decided it was vital that a claimant didn't need to run to an attorney to get action on a claim. That approach typified SSA even after we got bigger."

Gene coded SS-5s (using the Soundex code) and machine processed earnings records in Baltimore for 2 years. In 1939, he returned to Arkansas as a field assistant in Jonesboro. "We covered 30 counties and set up itinerant service in many towns. Most of these later became regular contact stations. I did a great deal of driving in those early days." Gene retired as Assistant Regional Commissioner for Field Operations in Dallas in 1980.

Nearly all Social Security workers started out at \$1,290 or \$1,440 annually in the early years, and few had money to spare. Frances French recalls one young woman who had been offered a job in Baltimore and had scraped up only enough money for the train trip. "She arrived nearly penniless," Frances said. "Several taxi drivers in the city's Penn Station learned of her plight and took up a collection for her. As soon as she got her first paycheck, she hurried back to the station to repay the generous cabbies."

Frances, who had passed a civil service exam in 1934 in Ohio, started working in the Candler Building in November 1936. "Jobs were very scarce then, no matter how well educated you were," she remembered. "For example, I taught school for 2 years in Lost Creek, Ky., before coming to Social Security. My salary was room, board and \$10 cash a year! In Baltimore, we tried to save money from our small salaries because dismissal was a real possibility. We were told during our 6-month probationary period that Social Security wouldn't need as many workers

later. There were about 500 of us at the time!

"When the Supreme Court ruled that the Social Security Act was constitutional in May 1937, we all breathed a sign of relief. Right after that, the Social Security Board let us know that we would all still be needed indefinitely to do the work. That was the time the Depression ended for us." Frances retired in 1971 as a research analyst in the Office of Program, Evaluation and Planning.

Carl Dey joined Social Security in early 1936 as an assistant messenger in the Cleveland Regional Office. "My job at first was to run the mimeograph machine," Carl recalled. "I progressed as a junior and senior typist and junior and senior steno, and then went to Baltimore for field assistant training in 1939. After a week, I went for on-the-job training to New York's crowded garment district to find employees reported without numbers."

Later, Carl went to the Youngstown, Ohio, Field Office. "My manager and I spoke before any group that would listen," he went on. "At first, folks were dubious about the program. But after word got around in 1940 that people were getting monthly Social Security checks, the public mood became positive. We always gave people a high level of service. We interviewed them as if they were our brothers or sisters. That's how SSA gained the reputation of being the most friendly agency in government." Carl retired as a field rep in Parma Heights, Ohio, in 1977.

Our pioneers got the Social Security message across to a sometimes skeptical public. They overcame the tremendous problems involved in setting up a large nationwide program. Remember that in those days there were no computers, and long-distance phone calls were only made in emergencies. Above all else, the pioneers made Social Security work.



Carl Dey in the Army in 1944 and with wife Esther today.



Eugene Riegler recently and in 1941.

Other Pioneers

Our story on pioneer recollections only scratched the surface of Social Security's wealth of reminiscences of the early days of the program. Some of the other persons who wrote to us as a result of our invitation in the April *OASIS* are James T. Ball, Jr., Sylvia Bernstein, Ralph Brasher, Evelyn C. Callison, John R. Chatfield, Muriel Colburn, Josephine W. DeHart,

Harding B. Eklund, Donald Fry, George J. Habernig, Jr., Dean Haley, Orner Haugen, Bosworth Hulcher, Carlos Hunsinger, Ed Kramer, Angelyn Mitchell, Raymond J. Pedersen, Carrie Reed, Karl Saenger, Eugene H. Skinner and Isabel St. Germain.

Our hearty thanks to all concerned.

Social Security Roll Call

More than 115 million people have received monthly Social Security benefits since they began in January 1940. Included in this large figure are the beneficiary groups shown below.

nearly
46 million



about
12 1/2 million

nearly
10 million

over
5 million

about
2 1/2 million

Retired workers

Disabled workers

**Wives and
husbands of
retired workers**

**Wives and
husbands of
disabled workers**

**Children of
retired workers**

These figures should be qualified. For example, when a disabled worker beneficiary turns 65, the benefits are automatically converted to retirement benefits. Many people getting spouse's or survivor's benefits also are entitled to benefits on their own work records. So although the number of awards exceeds 115 million, the number of people is less.

The number of people on the current rolls is expected to reach 37 million shortly after our 50th birthday. The annual number awarded benefits has ranged from a

low of 255,000 in 1940 to a high of 4,722,000 in 1966. In the latter year, many people 65 and over who were still working filed for Social Security to become eligible for Medicare. In 1984, 3.7 million people were added to the beneficiary rolls.

Nearly one out of seven Americans draws benefits right now. About 95 percent of the people reaching age 65 are eligible for monthly cash benefits. Similarly, 95 percent of children under age 18 would be paid monthly benefits if a family worker dies.



about
15 million

about
8 million

3.8 million

nearly
1 1/2 million

1.3 million

**Children of
deceased workers**

**Children of
disabled workers**

**Widowed mothers
and fathers**

**Widows and
widowers**

**Special Age 72
beneficiaries
(Prouty)**

Our Anniversary: One of Many

Social Security shares its August 14 anniversary with at least two other noteworthy events--

- The signing of the Atlantic Charter in 1941 by President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill--an 8-point agreement on certain common principles on which they based their "hopes for a better future of the world" and
- V-J (Victory in Japan) Day when, in 1945, President Harry Truman announced to the Nation that Japan had surrendered to the Allies.

A number of other anniversaries are marked this month, including:

- August 1, 1789--Creation of U.S. Customs Service
- August 1, 1799--Birth of Francis Scott Key, author of the U.S. National Anthem
- August 4, 1790--U.S. Coast Guard founded
- August 5, 1861--President Abraham Lincoln signs into the law the first Federal income tax
- August 17, 1978--Three Americans make the first balloon crossing of the Atlantic Ocean
- August 18, 1587--Birth of Virginia Dare, the first child of English parents to be born in the New World
- August 19, 1871--Birth of Orville Wright; celebrated as National Aviation Day since 1939
- August 21, 1959--Hawaii becomes the 50th State
- August 26, 1920--Women win right to vote; celebrated as Women's Equality Day since 1974

One of the most important events in the history of our country also occurred on August 2, 1776--the signing of the Declaration of Independence. "Contrary to widespread misconception, the 56 signers did not sign as a group on July 4, 1776. The official event occurred on August 2, 1776, when 50 men probably took part. Later that year, five more apparently signed separately and one added his name in a subsequent year." (From "Signers of the Declaration . . ." Department of the Interior, 1975.) July 4 is the date the Declaration was adopted by the Second Continental Congress.



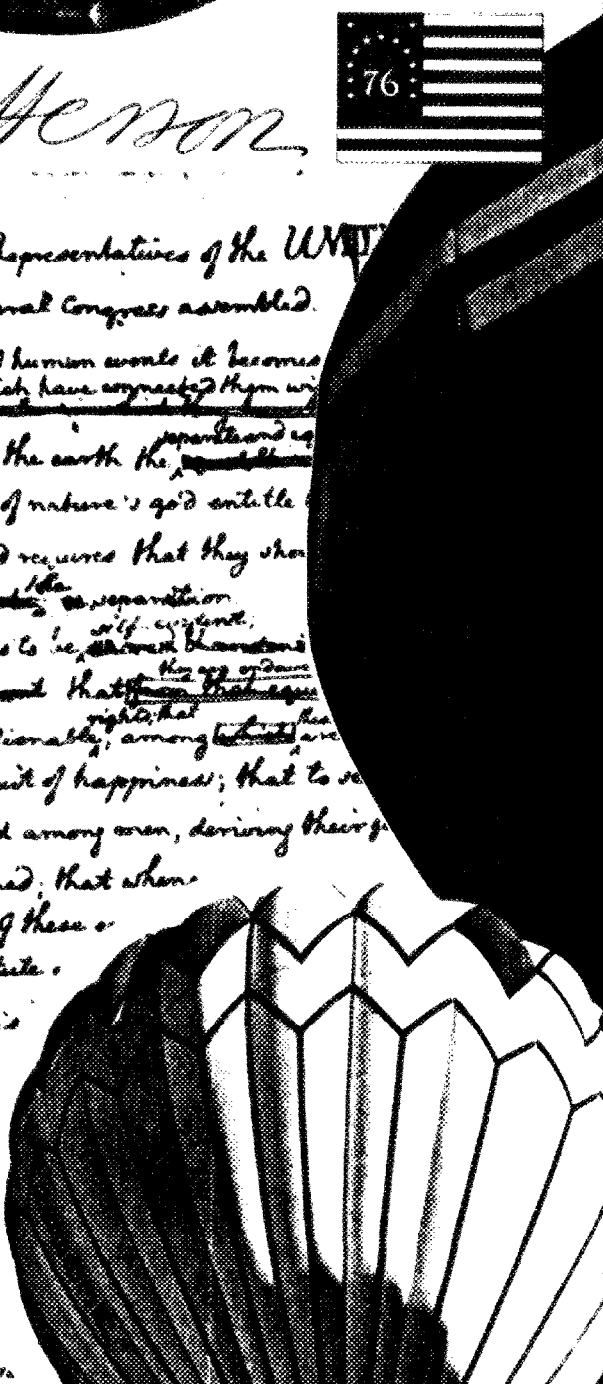
Th. Jefferson



A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a more solemn appeal to the opinions of mankind requires that they should first publish the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that when any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Accordingly, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, do hereby declare that these colonies are free, independent States, that they are entitled to all the rights and liberties of independent nations among the powers of the earth, and that they have full power to do all those acts and things which independent States may of right do.







Five employees mark 50 years of service.

As Social Security celebrates its 50th anniversary, five SSAers have another milestone to mark--their 50th year of Federal service. They are *Lillie Steinhorn, George Sturm, Martin Johnson, Luther Bolton* and *Anna Schoenfeld*.

"I have watched Social Security evolve from a retirement insurance program for workers to many programs for people of all ages," says Lillie, a social insurance specialist with the Office of Assessment.

Lillie joined the Government as a typist with the Civil Service Commission in Washington. Later, Social Security offered her a temporary job, not to exceed 6 months, in Baltimore.

"I went to work in the Candler Building on November 16, 1936, as a card punch operator," Lillie said. "Candler was more like a warehouse than an office building. It was located between a fish market and the harbor, and the odors were really foul. Also, there were few restrooms, and for some reason, they were constantly switching the signs on the men's room and the women's room. We had to be very careful not to barge into the wrong room."

The 5/50 Group

Lillie told *OASIS* that her temporary job "turned into 50 wonderful years of Federal service. I love the people I work with, and it gives me a good feeling to know that I play a small part in helping serve the public. I intend to go on working as long as I continue to enjoy good health, and can do a successful job."

George Sturm's Federal career began with the Department of Justice. He says he "remembers the signing of the Social Security Act well. As a messenger for Attorney General Homer Cummings, I carried the bill to the White House."

His introduction to the Social Security Board came in April 1940, when he started as a claims authorizer in Washington, D.C. "We worked in an apartment building commandeered for Government use," George explained. "They took out the stoves and sinks, but left the pipes."

Today, George is District Manager, Redding, Calif. "My position makes me one of the key people in a small community," George said. "I like to get out into the community and explain the Social Security programs."

Of his Federal service, George said: "I would do it all again! My one hope today is that the public continues to appreciate the value of Social Security."

Martin Johnson, District Manager in Mobile, Ala., for 38 years, says he "never dreamed I would one day celebrate 50 years of Federal service." He began his career as a typist for the Civil Service Commission in Washington, D.C., and his first Social Security job was in the Birmingham, Ala., DO.



From left are Lillie Steinhorn, George Sturm, Martin Johnson, Luther Bolton, and Anna Schoenfeld.

"I hope I can remain as active as a beneficiary I had the pleasure of meeting over 30 years ago," Martin reminisced. "The beneficiary had reached his 100th birthday, and it was my job to present him with a congratulatory letter from the Commissioner. The man lived in a rural section of our service area. When I arrived at his house, there was no one home. Then someone galloped towards me on a horse, and I asked him if he knew where I could find the centenarian who lived there. 'That's me,' the horseman replied. 'I've just been rounding up my cows.'"

Martin became a district manager in 1937, when he opened the first Social Security office in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Luther Bolton started Federal service with the Farm Credit Administration, transferring to Social Security's accounting operation in Baltimore in December 1936. He later moved to the field as a clerk in the Nashville, Tenn., DO. He's now District Manager, Greenwood, Miss.

"Our tour of duty in the early days was 45 hours a week, ending at 1 p.m. each Saturday," says Luther. "The most difficult part of my job then was trying to sell the program to employers and employees.

"I recall my first field contact. It was with a bank president to file a lump-sum claim for \$21.50. This was before monthly benefits were paid. The smallest claim I can remember was one for 17 cents. When monthly benefits became effective, we had the huge task of recontacting each claimant who had received a lump-sum payment to explain the change in the law. My first claim for monthly benefits was one for \$27.50."

Luther was honored for his 50 years of service at a ceremony in Greenwood that was attended by Rep Webb Franklin and Mayor Lanier Harper. The mayor proclaimed the date of the ceremony as

Luther Bolton Day, and Luther received a letter of congratulations from President Reagan, a Gold Social Security card from Nelson Sabatini, Acting Deputy Commissioner for Management and Assessment, and a brass serving tray from employees in the Greenwood district.

"I always like to say the minute the Act was signed, they sent for me," says Anna Schoenfeld. "Fifty years later, I'm still enjoying my work."

Anna began her Federal career with the Veterans' Administration as a steno-typist in Washington, D.C., and shortly thereafter she joined the Social Security Board. As soon as the agency began staffing its field offices, she transferred to New York. The big job then was the issuance of Social Security numbers. She later became a claims supervisor and after 15 years decided to accept the challenge of outside contact work as a field representative. She recalls with pride the many compliments that our agency always receives for outstanding public service. "It gives me great satisfaction to see how well Social Security continues to carry out its main function--service to the public," concluded Anna, who works in the Brooklyn (Bushwick), DO.

Lillie, George, Martin, Luther and Anna will have a chance to compare notes on their careers. All are being invited to Social Security's 50th anniversary celebration at headquarters.

The Mayor proclaimed Luther Bolton Day in Greenwood.

Who's Who And Why Were They There



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Social Security Act, August 14, 1935. With him (from l) are Rep. Robert Doughton, Rep. Frank Buck, Sen. Robert Wagner, Sen. Alben Barkley, WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins, Sen. Robert LaFollette, Sen. Augustine Lonergan, Labor Secretary Frances Perkins, Sen. Pat Harrison, Rep. David Lewis, Rep. John Boehne and Sen. Joseph Guffey.

This is the first photo in SSA's family album. These people were present at the birth of the Social Security Act on August 14, 1935. All dead now, they were influential--some more than others--in the creation of the program. Here's how:

Reps. Robert Doughton and David Lewis were both on the House Ways and Means Committee. Doughton was chairman. And it was Lewis, a former coal miner and self-taught lawyer, who introduced the Social Security bill into the House on January 17, 1935. However, Doughton made a copy of Lewis' bill and submitted it himself. Then, according to a 1940 *Atlantic Monthly* article, he "persuaded the (House) clerk to give him a lower number than Lewis' copy. Newspapers began calling the measure the Wagner-Doughton bill."

According to the article, when Lewis found out, "he sputtered and swore, then went to work to understand every sentence

and master the arguments in favor of it." And when David Lewis walked down the aisle of the House to debate on the bill's behalf, he received a standing ovation.

Frances Perkins was appointed Secretary of Labor in 1933, making her the first woman to hold a cabinet-level position. Like FDR, she was a child of privilege, but became a strong advocate for the poor and working class. She began her career in New York City as a social worker and held several responsible State government jobs. She served as head of Roosevelt's Committee on Economic Security, set up in 1934. The Social Security legislation sprang from this committee.

Sen. Robert Wagner was born in Germany, immigrated to New York City, attended law school and was elected to the Senate in 1926. He served four terms. He was a close associate of Frances Perkins and helped draft several early New Deal measures. According to Webster's American Biographies, "he was the moving force behind the 1935 Social Security Act." Wagner introduced the bill into the Senate. His son, Robert F. Wagner, was mayor of New York City for 16 years.

Sen. Alben Barkley was a seven-term Congressman before being elected to the Senate in 1926. By 1937, he was Senate Majority Leader and a decade later, Vice President of the United States.

In 1935, he was known, according to Webster's American Biographies, "for his amiability and party loyalty." He was also an ardent New Dealer and helped shepherd the Social Security Act through the Senate. He argued for "a universal and uniform program in general." He didn't want to exempt certain private groups merely because they already had pension systems.

Sen. Robert LaFollette, Jr., was the eldest son of Robert LaFollette, a progressive Senator from Wisconsin and one-time presidential candidate. When his father died in 1925, Robert Jr., then only 30 years old, was appointed to succeed him. LaFollette served on the House-Senate conference committee that drafted the final version of the Social Security bill. He served in the Senate until 1946, when he was defeated by Joseph McCarthy. In 1953, LaFollette committed suicide in Washington, D.C.

Harry Hopkins was head of the Works Progress Administration at the time the Social Security Act was signed. A former social worker, he was a "close and trusted adviser and confidante whom Roosevelt found increasingly valuable," according to Webster's American Biographies. It was Hopkins who "sold" President Roosevelt on the Social Security recommendations of the Committee on Economic Security, of which he was a member.

Sen. Augustine Lonergan was a native of Connecticut and a graduate of Yale

University. Although he was a four-term Congressman, he served only one term in the Senate. During the discussions on the Social Security bill, Lonergan gave information about various private insurance annuities to show how they compared to the social insurance program that was being proposed.

Sen. Pat Harrison of Mississippi was a Congressman for 8 years before being elected to the Senate in 1918. In *The Development of the Social Security Act* by Edwin Witte, Harrison is given credit for his "adroit" handling of the Social Security bill in the Senate Finance Committee. According to Witte, title II would not have been approved by the Committee without Sen. Harrison's help. Harrison went on to serve in the Senate for the rest of his life and was elected President pro tempore 6 months before his death in June 1941.

Rep. John Boehne, Jr., succeeded his father as a representative from Indiana. He was first swept into office in the 1932 elections with President Roosevelt and strongly supported FDR's programs. At first, he was against the Social Security bill and wanted to exempt industrial employers with their own pension systems.

Sen. Joseph Guffey was 65 years old at the time the Social Security Act was passed, although he was only a first-term Senator. From Pennsylvania, he served two terms before being defeated in 1946. His vote on the Social Security bill was in doubt until the final roll call.

Rep. Frank Buck was a second generation industrialist and fruit grower from California. He graduated from Harvard Law School and served five terms in Congress, from 1933 until his death in 1942.

All were influential in the creation of the Social Security program.

This is how the *New York Times* headlined its front page article. Excerpts from the article follow:

The Ne

And that's the way it was August 14, 1935

Millions of people first heard the news about the signing of the Social Security bill on their radios that Wednesday night, August 14, 1935. But it was not until the arrival of Thursday morning's newspapers that the average American had the opportunity to get detailed information on this historic event.



NEW

Social Security Bill Is Signed; Gives Pensions to Aged, Jobless

*Roosevelt Approves Measure Intended to Benefit 30,000,000
Persons When States Adopt Cooperating Laws--He Calls
the Measure 'Cornerstone' of His Economic Program.*

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Mr. Roosevelt called the measure "the cornerstone in a structure which is being built but is by no means complete." He was referring to his program for economic rehabilitation.

He added that the present session of Congress would have become historic had it done nothing beyond completion of this law.

The signing took place in the Cabinet Room of the White House offices, where motion picture and still photographers had been invited to record the event as a result of the President's desire to obtain the widest possible publicity for the measure, which he said had not received due publicity because of the press of other news.

The Times also printed the entire 6-paragraph statement Roosevelt issued at the signing ceremony. It appears at right.

New York Times

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NEW YORK THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 1935.

What FDR Said

The President's statement, passed among reporters after the signing of the Social Security Act, read as follows:

"Today a hope of many years' standing is in large part fulfilled. The civilization of the past hundred years, with its startling industrial changes, has tended more and more to make life insecure. Young people have come to wonder what would be their lot when they came to old age. The man with a job has wondered how long the job would last.

"This Social Security measure gives at least some protection to 30,000,000 of our citizens who will reap direct benefits through unemployment compensation, through old-age pensions and through increased services for the protection of children and the prevention of ill health.

"We can never insure 100 percent of the population against 100 percent of the hazards and vicissitudes of life, but we have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family against the loss of

a job and against poverty-ridden old age.

"This law, too, represents a cornerstone in a structure which is being built but is by no means complete. A structure intended to lessen the force of possible future depressions, to act as a protection to future administrations of the government against the necessity of going deeply into debt to furnish relief to the needy, a law to flatten out the peaks and valleys of deflation and of inflation--in other words, a law that will take care of human needs and at the same time provide for the United States an economic structure of vastly greater soundness.

"I congratulate all of you ladies and gentlemen, all of you in the Congress, in the executive departments and all of you who come from private life, and I thank you for your splendid efforts in behalf of this sound, needed and patriotic legislation.

"If the Senate and the House of Representatives in their long and arduous session had done nothing more than pass this bill, the session would be regarded as historic for all time."

The Baltimore *Sun* carried the story in the same front-page spot as the *Times*. Under the following headline, the *Sun's* story read, in part:

THE SUN

BALTIMORE, THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 1935

Security Bill Becomes Law, Called Heart Of New Deal

**President Affixes Signature At Elaborate Ceremony.
Hails It As Fulfillment Of Hope Of Years, And
Cornerstone Of Growing Economic Structure**

By J. J. Egan

The act of Congress setting up the first system of national social security in the country and in itself more nearly the heart of the Roosevelt New Deal than any other measure, went into effect shortly before 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The President, surrounded by legislators, executive officials, "pen-snatchers" and a multitude of photographers, clerks and bystanders, affixed his signature to the bill, then turned with a smile of manifest satisfaction to address the group.

No other enactment of this Congress, or of the two which preceded it, was given executive approval with so much ceremony. Most of the members of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Committee on Ways and Means were on hand.

For ten minutes before the President put his name to the document, the signing was rehearsed.

The next move in giving effect to the social security system is the appointment by the President of the three members of the social security board to carry out the provisions of the law. They are to be paid \$10,000 each . . .

All journalistic accounts of the signing were secondhand, as was noted by *Time* magazine:



At a press conference, the President announced he wanted his newshawks to give maximum publicity to his signature to the Social Security bill. That afternoon--seated in the Cabinet Room, he signed--but correspondents were not admitted to see the ceremony. That privilege was reserved for cameramen, newsreelmen and some 30 honored guests.

Today, we probably would have seen the Social Security Act's signing on the cover of our weekly news magazines. But when people picked up their August 19 *Time* magazine, they saw screenstar Jean Harlow on the cover and had to turn to page 18 of the 56-page issue to read the 3-paragraph report on the Social Security Bill.

The 100,000 people who paid 10 cents for their copy of the August 17, 1935, issue of *Newsweek* learned a lot more about what Social Security would mean to them than did *Time* readers. Social Security didn't make the cover on *Newsweek* either, but there was a full 2-page spread, starting with the magazine's "Front Page," or page 1.

NEWS-WEEK

Franklin Delano Roosevelt sleeps soundly. But his repeated promise to give the U.S. a more abundant life has kept legislators awake. Last week Congress ended one of its many long wrangles. To Mr. Roosevelt, it dished up for signature the Wagner-Lewis Social Security Bill.

Newsweek used three hypothetical cases to explain the significance of Social Security:

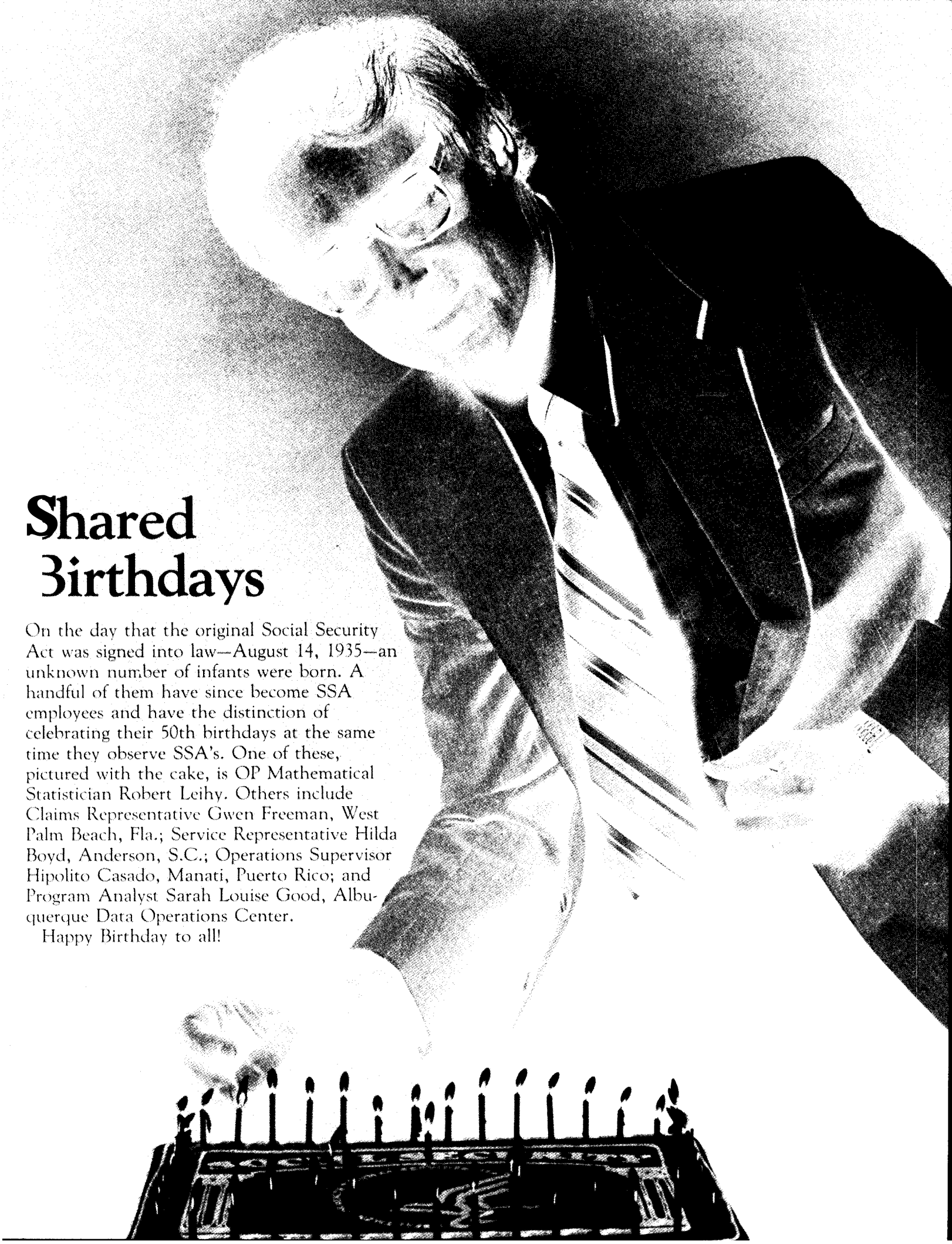
Case A. Last month Mary Blank celebrated her 64th birthday by drawing her \$2 from New York's Relief Bureau. This pittance merely supplements the few dollars her daughter Alice sends her every month from California, where the girl has held a job since 1930. That year, Mrs. Blank, aging and alone, lost her job as a seamstress. She hasn't worked since.

This time next year, she won't need her daughter's help. Under the new law, New York State will give her \$15, and the Federal Government a like amount drawn from a subsidy of some \$50,000,000 for old age pensions. Old people like Mrs. Blank will get varying amounts, depending on the States they reside in and the measure of help they need to live "in decency and health."

Case B. Daughter Alice is 23. Unlike her mother, she will be able to protect against a penniless old age. Her Los Angeles employer pays her \$25 a week. In 1937, she will begin giving her employer \$1 a month. This he will turn over to the U.S. Treasurer with \$1 of his own. Alice's payments and her employer's will graduate up to \$3 a month each in 1949 and remain level thereafter. In 1977, Alice should be able to mark her 65th birthday by retiring with a \$51.25 a month pension.

Case C. Less fortunate is Alice's uncle Henry, age 58, because he is too old to profit by years of insurance premiums and is too young not to work. He has the same salary as Alice and will pay \$1 a month until 1940; then \$1.50 a month until 1942, when he will be 65. If he retires, his pension will be \$17.50--an irksome drop from his \$25 a week salary.

So, Americans learned about the signing of the Social Security bill in various ways. And had Walter Cronkite already embarked on his career as a news commentator (he was not quite 19 at the time of the signing), citizens might have heard him end his broadcast by saying, "And that's the way it is, August 14, 1935."

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit and glasses leaning over a birthday cake with lit candles. The man is looking down at the cake with a slight smile. The cake is in the foreground, and the man is in the background, leaning over it. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

Shared Birthdays

On the day that the original Social Security Act was signed into law—August 14, 1935—an unknown number of infants were born. A handful of them have since become SSA employees and have the distinction of celebrating their 50th birthdays at the same time they observe SSA's. One of these, pictured with the cake, is OP Mathematical Statistician Robert Leihy. Others include Claims Representative Gwen Freeman, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Service Representative Hilda Boyd, Anderson, S.C.; Operations Supervisor Hipolito Casado, Manati, Puerto Rico; and Program Analyst Sarah Louise Good, Albuquerque Data Operations Center.

Happy Birthday to all!

Take A Step Into History

When a building was demolished in Falls Church, Va., a “shingle” from the roof was sent to the SSA History Room at central office.

“The shingle actually was a tin mimeograph plate that contained a 1938 memo from the Social Security Board director to Social Security officials nationwide,” explained *Sid Leibovitz*, SSA Historian. “Copies of the memo were made from the plate.

“After it served its purpose, the plate was obviously discarded and ended up on a porch roof. Despite having a number of nail holes, it’s in fairly decent condition.

“Most items have reached our collection in a more orthodox way,” added Sid, referring to the photographs, documents, equipment and other items on display in the History Room. Designed to preserve Social Security’s past, the room was established in 1969 under the direction of Abe Bortz, who retired as SSA Historian earlier this year.



SSA retirees Ollie Green (l.) and Milt Freedman discuss the 1930s montage.

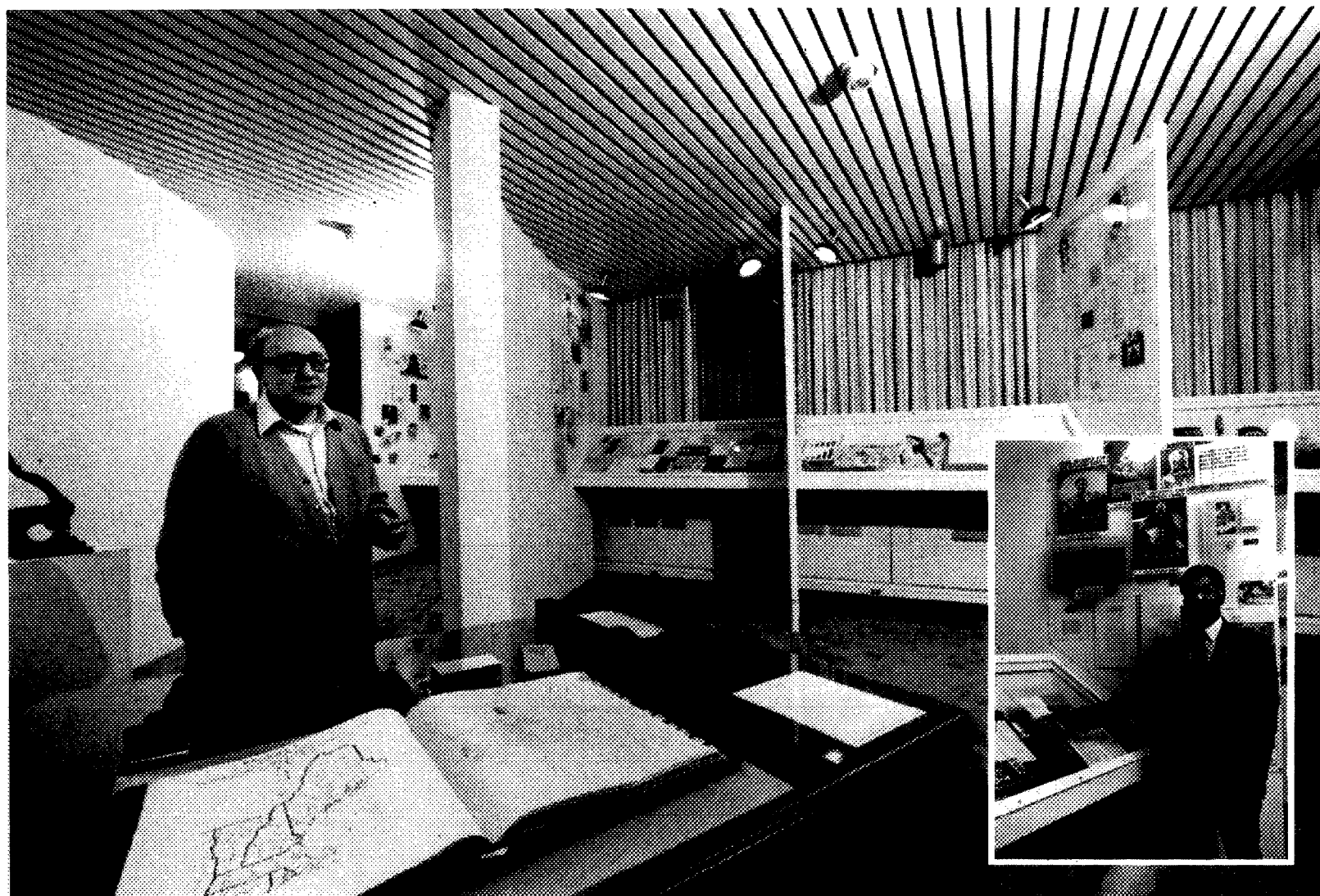
Some of the memorabilia in the SSA History Room relating to social insurance programs in general date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. For example, there are copies of a pamphlet by Thomas Paine in 1795 advocating old-age pensions, and a letter concerning Kaiser Wilhelm I’s speech to the Reichstag in 1881, when he formally proposed a pioneer program of social legislation.

The bulk of the collection starts in the 1930s and tells the story of the people who administered our Social Security program through the years, the needs they were seeking to satisfy, the resulting legislation and organization—and the changes in both as the program evolved.

A montage shows the Nation’s mood during the early years of the Great Depression, with pictures of the unemployed, the bonus marchers, victims of the drought, squatters’ shacks and soup lines. Dr. Francis Townsend’s plan to provide a flat monthly payment (\$200) to all older citizens is on display, as is a copy of President Franklin Roosevelt’s executive order that established the Committee on Economic Security. This group’s report became the basis for the Social Security Act of 1935.

President Roosevelt’s actions and words at the time he signed the Act are preserved on film. So are the comments of Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Harry Truman at the signing of the Medicare legislation and President Ronald Reagan at the signing of the 1983 Social Security amendments. All can be viewed during a 7-minute movie.

The desk used by Social Security Commissioners, from Arthur Altmeyer to Robert Ball, looks as it did in Commissioner Altmeyer’s day. On it are his letter opener, a silver cigarette box he used for paper clips, in- and out-baskets with actual documents from the era and a ’30s telephone. Nearby is the machine that embossed the Social Security seal on official documents.



Administering the Act was originally the responsibility of the Social Security Board, and there is a picture of the building in Washington, D.C., that housed the Board from 1937 until 1942. The metal plaque used to identify the building is below the picture.

The Board used posters and leaflets to explain Social Security to the public, and History Room visitors can see a copy of the first poster--urging people to get Social Security cards. Pictures pertinent to the early operations of the program are displayed, including the Candler Building and the first district office (Austin, Tex.).

Pictures of prominent people are noticeable all over the room, including:

- the original members of the Social Security Board;
- heads of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance;
- Presidents since the birth of Social Security;
- Secretaries of Health, Education, and Welfare (and Health and Human Services); and,
- Commissioners of Social Security.

There is a photo of Ida Fuller, the first person to receive monthly benefits, along with a copy of her first check. Other photos are of "milestone" beneficiaries, such as the the 10- and 15-millionth.

Copies of our first forms, such as the original application for a Social Security number, are on display, as is a section of the old flexoline file. The file consisted of separate, paper-covered bamboo strips inserted in double-faced steel panels. The strips included people's names, dates of birth and Social Security numbers. Yards and yards of these panels were hung in special racks, like the pages of a book.

SSA retired this form of filing in 1958, and since that time, electronic data processing has become a way of life. A model of SSA's first computer system (the IBM 705 I), acquired in 1956, sits among other computer-related memorabilia.

Dozens of other artifacts, pictures and papers are also on exhibit in SSA's History Room, which will have expanded hours during the month of August. One item, probably the last a visitor will see, is the guest book, waiting for your signature when you visit.

TOP: SSA Historian Sid Leibovitz stands behind the desk used by former Commissioners. INSERT: Najib Amin, a section chief in OMBP, shows off the case displaying an old typewriter and part of the flexoline file.

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21235

Official Business
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CAROLYN MATHIS • DIANE ERVING • BERNADETTE STOCH • EVELYN MARTINEZ • VIRGINIA BITNER • JUDITH DOYLE • ROBERT WETZEL
KATHERINE ZANKO • ALICE ORTIZ • MILDRED LAWRENCE • LEO MCCORMICK • SUSAN LICARE • WILLIAM BOUYEA • DONALD BURNS
THERESA BOYD • PHILLIP TENER • VANDA MOORE • DOUGLAS JENDRO • DEBRA ROBINSON • LEE EVERS • LINDA GREENING
VIRGIL CROSS • CAROLYN SLAUGHTER • ELOIS JOHNSON • FRANK SALAS • ELLEN BLYTHE • LIBBIE YOAKUM • RITA COOPER
SANDRA TONEY • JOAN BILBERRY • JUDITH MEYER • STEPHEN GOLAY • JANE STEADMAN • KRISTI FERGUSON • MARY VETO

RICHARD FLEDDERMANN • BENITA GONZALES • LINDA HARRIS • RAYMOND ROSAS • LARRY DEWITT • LORNA CALL • IRMA OAYACA
MICHAEL LIEDKIE • DARLENE GURULE • COLLEEN ROBERTSON • FRANCES IVERSON • ARLENE ROARK • JOHN ERWIN • ALICE WOODS
ROSIE ROBERTSON • NAOMI YOSHIDA • REGINA ANDERSON • KAYE COVENEY • REBECCA BURGESS • RITA SANDOVAL
CHRISTINA STEVENS • NANETTE WOO • FRANCES AMADOR • DESIREE VILLANUEVA • JOYCE GIRTMAN • ROBERT COLE
TERESA BARNES • SANDRA BRYANT • SHARON CHRISTIANSEN • FLORENCE CHOW • VICKY PHILLIPS • ARCELL ALVARO

JEANNE SPENCE • DONNA LOSADA • GLORIA GABEL • SHARON WEAVER • EDWARD GARCIA • ALEXIS KUIHL • RICHARD HUGHES
DAVID ALVAREZ • ROBERT BLISS • JULIA RUCKER • DEBORAH THOMPSON • MONICA BICKLEY • AUDREY DAVIS • JUDITH STEPHENS
KAY KENFIELD • JOYCE SIMPSON • SANDRA FRYMAN • BONNIE NEUGRAUER • MICHAEL ECKLES • MARTHA SANTANA
DONNA LORTON • EVELYN CARRADINE • LINDA SAMPLES • ROSITA ARREGUY • NANCY HUDSON • YUKINO ISOBE • FREDERICK MERKLE
CARLITA BUTLER • NANCY ROBINSON • ROBIN JONES • YVONNE PARKER • IGNACIO FLORES • EUDOSIA CRUZ • AIDA ESTEVA

MARIA GONZALEZ • EDNA RODRIGUEZ • NANCY ANDERSON • MARGIE CRESPIN • PATRICIA ROBINSON • ANGELIKI MARKS
MARY WALKER • BARBARA BREAZEALE • DONNA MATTERN • AURORA CORONA • ROSIE OLIVAS • ROYCE BRADSHAW • GARY BEASLEY
LINDA MARKETTI • JOHN WILCOX • JOYCE ANDREWS • GREGORY MORGAN • ARDETH BOLIN • MICHAEL AMARO • KAY WADE
DARYL REDD • GILDA BROWN • NORMA GUERRERO • MARK MOORE • ALEX VARGAS • INEZ LEBER • SANDRA DENNIS
ANTHONY LAMMERSEN • PEARL FOX • VICTORIA KLEIN • CONSTANCE DANNEMILLER • FELING WRIGHT • ANGEL PEDROZA

CHARLES COOMER • THOMAS WATT • CARLA MONTFORT • JOSEPH ADAMIS • ANNA ANDERSON • THERESA DUFFY • BEVERLY BOWMAN
ROSA VITO • JOSE ARROYO • ESPERANZA LOPEZ • VERDEJO RIVERA • ANTHONY FRANCO • CARMEN ORTIZ • ROBERT MARTIN
SUSAN GRANGER • MANUELA CAMPBELL • RITA WILSON • LUANNE KEY • SAENA ORTIZ • CHERIE BEST • MILDRED PACKWOOD
SHERILYN PONCE • JUANITA MIKO • CHRISTINA FELKER • NORMA ANDERSON • CARMEN HERNANDEZ • PHILIP WIGGINS • LINDA SHEA
HELEN SCHWARTZ DUKE • ROSE ALARCON • BESSIE SUE • PAULA WHITWORTH • DIANE COMPTON • BETTY SANTOS

CLAUDIA ANDERSON • CLAUDE RHOADS • VIRGINIA BODY • SHIRLEY BATES • LARRY BOLAND • SHEILA BROWN • MARILYN MCGRAW
ANTONIA BERLUMEN • JUDY RODRIGUEZ • NOREENE MORRIS • STEPHANIE NOMI • DORA PEYTON • EMILY RUBIO • FRANCINE CLARK
DOROTHY GREEN • MICHELL TOWNSEND • ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ • NESTOR SANCHEZ • CLAUDIO RIVERA • VILMA TORRES

EXTRA OASIS

August 21, 1985

On another Wednesday 50 years ago President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law. On Wednesday, August 14, 1985, dignitaries, old friends, SSA officials and employees gathered at central office to commemorate that event.

"Social Security began as a dream--a hope--an experiment," said Margaret Heckler, Secretary of Health and Human Services, in remarks to a capacity crowd of more than 750 people in the Altmeyer Auditorium. "But it has become family--a natural, necessary part of the American environment.

"But the significance of this day transcends the reach of a single government program, even one as large as Social Security," Secretary Heckler continued.

"The significance of this day is the continuing strength and vitality of our national commitment to ensure that every American-- of every age and circumstance and capability-- should have the right to live in dignity and security.

"We are here today to celebrate that commitment, and to renew it."

Sharing the stage with Secretary Heckler were Acting Commissioner Martha McSteen, who welcomed the audience; Under Secretary of Labor Ford B. Ford; Postmaster General Paul Carlin; and former HEW Secretary Wilbur Cohen, Social Security's first employee.

Mrs. McSteen introduced a number of dignitaries and guests in the audience, including U.S. Senator Charles McC. Mathias (R.-Md.), U.S. Representative Helen D. Bentley (R.-Md.), Social Security Trustee Susan Denbo Jaffee, Murray Latimer, who was first Director of the 1936 Federal Bureau of Old Age Benefits, Social Security Board, and J. Douglas Brown, who was chairman of the 1934 study committee on Social Security.

Other guests introduced by Mrs. McSteen were former Commissioner Robert M Ball and former top SSA



Acting Commissioner Martha McSteen (l.) and HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler.

Dignitaries, Old Friends Gather for the 50th

SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION

President Sends Message

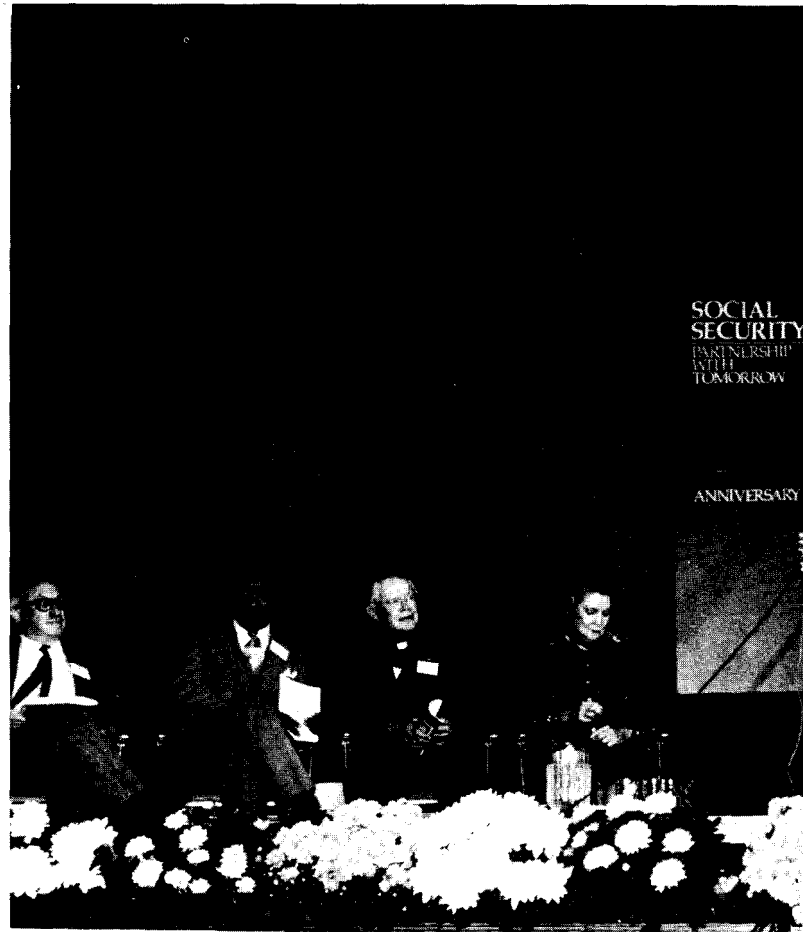
Although President Reagan could not attend the 50th anniversary ceremony, he sent a special congratulatory message, which Acting Commissioner McSteen read:

"I am pleased to have this opportunity to join Secretary Heckler and so many others in Baltimore as you celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act.

"Over the years Social Security has proven to be a vital and successful program, protecting millions of Americans in their retirement, the loss of the family provider or disability. This and future generations of our people can feel safe in knowing that they can count on Social Security to assist them and their families in the years to come.

"The act signed 50 years ago today represented a landmark occasion in the affairs of our Nation. In commemorating it, we celebrate Social Security's accomplishments and our hope for the future success of its programs which benefit so many.

"You have my best wishes for a memorable celebration of a most significant event."



Top: On stage are (from l.): Wilbur Cohen, Rev. Emmett Burns, Archbishop William Borders, Acting Commissioner McSteen, Secretary Heckler at the podium, Baltimore Postmaster Thomas Straub, Postmaster General Paul Carlin, and Under Secretary of Labor Ford B. Ford. Above: Paul Carlin (r.) talks with J. Douglas Brown (l.) and Murray Latimer.



Left: Guests read one of the many gubernatorial proclamations on display in the Altmeyer lobby. Right: Wilbur Cohen reminisces with former associates after the ceremony.



At the cake-cutting ceremony are (from l.), George Sturm, District Manager, Redding, Calif., and a 50-year Federal employee; Secretary Heckler; Rev. Emmett Burns, Pastor of the Rising Sun First Baptist Church in Baltimore; and Acting Commissioner McSteen.

officials Jack Futterman, Robert Bynum, Hugh McKenna, Alvin Pavid, Robert Myers, and Ida Merriam.

Mrs. McSteen singled out for audience recognition six SSA employees with 50 years of Federal service--Lillie Steinhorn, Simon Dubliner, George Sturm, Mart in Johnson, Charles Clapper and Anna Schoenfeld.

In his remarks, Labor Under Secretary Ford said that "the significance of the Social Security Act for all Americans cannot be overstated, but this Act has special significance for all working Americans who are at times involuntarily unemployed. Its impact has been vast in economic, social and humanistic terms and, truly, cannot be calculated." (The task of the Department of Labor is to oversee the administration of the Federal-State unemployment compensation system created by the 1935 Social Security Act.)

The commemorative celebration was planned by an SSA anniversary committee, working with the U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Labor. The SSA committee co-chairmen were Jim Brown, SSA Press Officer, and Ernest DiPalo, Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner for Governmental Affairs.

Outside the Altmeyer Auditorium was a display of proclamations signed by governors and mayors throughout the country declaring August 14 "Social Security Day." Also, an exhibit featured historical memorabilia from the SSA History Room, including a film clip of President Roosevelt's remarks after signing the Act.

The History Room was opened for special tours after the ceremony, and Mrs. McSteen hosted a reception for dignitaries and former SSA officials.

But the focus of the day was the original legislative act that has become such an integral part

of American society, and the agency that administers that program. As Secretary Heckler said:

“It is fitting today that we remember Social Security is not only a program run for people but also a program run by people: dedicated, talented, -industrious people who are the real heroes of this heroic national effort.

“I am proud to pay special tribute on this special day to the Social Security commissioners past and present, to their deputies and associates, to the regional commissioners, to the actuaries, the earnings certification specialists, the program

service center employees, the claims and service representatives in field offices throughout the Nation, the thousands of people who make Social Security work so well and for so many millions of Americans.

“They are the hearts and the hands of a program that may fairly be called the most important domestic initiative of the last 100 years.

“I congratulate you all. I thank you for what you’ve done and for what you will do and I look forward to meeting you right here to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Social Security on August 14, 2035.”

Commemorative stamp unveiled

The Social Security 50th anniversary ceremony was also the First Day Issue Ceremony for the Social Security Act Stamp, conducted under the aegis of the U.S. Postal Service.

Postmaster General Paul **Carlin** officially released the stamp for public purchase during the ceremony. He said, “The Postal Service is proud to issue this commemorative postage stamp honoring the Social Security Act of 1935. Our Nation was founded on the promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And the Social Security Act has helped make that promise a reality.”

The Postmaster General noted that 135 million copies of the Social Security stamp would be produced, and he announced that a presentation of the first album of stamps printed would be made to President Reagan. He then presented stamp albums to Secretary Heckler, Acting Commissioner MeSteen, and other guests, including J. Douglas Brown and Murray Latimer.

After the ceremony was over, a Postal Service booth located in the Altmeyer lobby sold stamps to employees’ and members of the public and made first day cancellations.

The Postal Service will also affix stamps, on request, to addressed covers sent to “Social Security Act Stamp, Postmaster, Baltimore, Md. 21233-9992” with a remittance, by personal check, of 22 cents for each cover submitted.

The Postal Service recommends that a filler of postcard thickness be inserted in each cover. All orders should be postmarked no later than September 13.



Robert Brangwyne with an enlarged version of the 22-cent commemorative stamp he designed.