

## BAKER, JAMES A. III: FILES, 1981-1985 – REAGAN LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

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### **BAKER, JAMES A. III: FILES, 1981-1985**

Office of the Chief of Staff: Chief of Staff, 1981-1985

James Baker was born in Houston, Texas, in 1930, the son and grandson of prominent Houston attorneys. He attended the Hill School, a college preparatory boarding school in Pennsylvania which his father had attended. He continued to follow his father's path by enrolling at Princeton University. After graduating from Princeton in 1952, Baker served two years as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps, then enrolled at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin. He received his law degree in 1957, and was hired by the Houston law firm of Andrews and Kurth.

Baker's first wife, who had been active with the Republican Party in Texas, died of cancer in February 1970. A grieving Baker accepted an offer from a close friend, Congressman George Bush, to help with Bush's campaign for the US Senate that year. Although Baker had been a lifelong Democrat, he joined the Republican Party and served as Harris County campaign chairman for the Bush organization. After Bush lost the election in November 1970, Baker remained active in politics. He served as State Finance Chairman for the Republican Party of Texas in 1971, and Gulf Coast Regional Chairman for the Nixon Presidential campaign of 1972.

In mid-1975, Baker resigned from Andrews and Kurth to accept President's Ford offer to serve as Undersecretary of Commerce. It has long been assumed that Bush, who was then serving as US Ambassador to China, had a role in getting this position for Baker. Baker resigned after nine months as Undersecretary, to work in President Ford's 1976 reelection campaign. Baker helped Ford fend off Ronald Reagan's challenge for the Republican Presidential nomination, then became national chairman of Ford's general election campaign organization. In 1978 Baker made his own try at elective office, but lost in his bid to become Attorney General of Texas. The following year Bush, who had decided to run for President, made Baker the head of his campaign for the 1980 Republican Presidential nomination. Despite Baker's record of supporting Ronald Reagan's Republican opponents, Reagan recognized Baker's managerial and political skills. He made Baker a senior adviser in his own Presidential campaign after winning the 1980 Republican Presidential nomination, and named him to be his White House Chief of Staff shortly after winning election as President.

In the Reagan White House, Baker, Edwin Meese III, and Michael K. Deaver formed a senior staff triumvirate which came to be called "the Troika." Baker's responsibilities included broad supervision of management and policy execution, with ultimate oversight over the White House offices of Legislative Affairs, Presidential Personnel, Communications (including press and media relations), Counsel, Political Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Public Liaison. He also maintained contact with Vice President Bush's office. His assistant Richard Darman controlled the President's schedule, as well as the paper flow in and out of the White House.

Baker became known for his cautious and thorough approach to his job, and for his skill in devising solutions that could be sold within the executive branch, to Congress, and to the public. He helped convince Reagan to focus on tax reductions and increased defense spending early on, rather than spend political capital on social and cultural issues. Although Baker was not organizationally involved in policy formulation to the extent that Meese was, and despite some conservatives' misgivings about him, his influence grew throughout President Reagan's first term. He played a leading role in Reagan's successful 1984 re-election.

Baker left the White House for the Treasury Department in February 1985, switching positions with Treasury Secretary Donald Regan. He resigned as Treasury Secretary in August 1988 so that he could manage Bush's successful 1988 Presidential campaign. After Bush became President, Baker served as Secretary of State (1989-1992), then as White House Chief of Staff and Senior Counselor (1992-1993). He took the latter position so he could assist Bush's faltering bid for reelection, but was unable to prevent Bush's loss to Bill Clinton. In late 2000 Baker was a prominent spokesman for the George W. Bush campaign during the post-election controversy over the Florida vote count. In 2006 he co-chaired the Iraq Study group (aka the Baker-Hamilton Commission), a bipartisan group of people with long-term Government experience formed by Congress to submit recommendations on US policy in Iraq.

This collection consists only of files from Baker's time as Ronald Reagan's Chief of Staff. It is organized into five series, the first of which contains three subseries.

Compared to others on the White House staff, Baker wrote relatively few memos. Also, many documents created or utilized by Baker while he was Reagan's Chief of Staff are filed in other White House collections. In particular, researchers should check the collections of Baker's assistants James Cicconi, Richard Darman, Frank Hodsoll, and Margaret Tutwiler for additional material documenting his work as Chief of Staff.

#### SERIES I: MEMORANDUM FILE, 1981-1985 (3.8 l.ft.; Boxes 1-10)

##### Subseries A: 1980-1981 (Baker/Hodsoll File) (0.9 l.ft.; Boxes 1-3)

Francis (Frank) S. M. Hodsoll was James Baker's deputy from January to November 1981. During Hodsoll's tenure, Baker's records were interfiled with Hodsoll's records. Material in this subseries documents issues and personnel matters, pertaining to Cabinet departments or larger Executive Office of the President (EOP) agencies, which involved Baker and/or Hodsoll. Much of the material pertains to the initial staffing of Cabinet departments and agencies at the beginning of the Reagan Presidency. Some folders consist preponderantly of either Baker or Hodsoll material, while others contain a mixture of material from both men. The material is arranged alphabetically by office/agency.

In the course of processing, Reagan Library staff determined that a substantial portion of the material in this subseries consisted of pre-presidential documents. These documents were removed from this subseries and placed within the Transition of President-Elect Ronald Reagan collection. The pre-presidential material is not a Presidential record, and is therefore not subject to the Presidential Records Act nor the Freedom of Information Act.

Subseries B: 1982-1983 (1.1 l.ft.; Boxes 3-6)

Consists of memoranda and other materials, pertaining to White House and EOP units with which Baker had contact – mostly, the White House offices which ultimately reported to him. Arranged alphabetically by office or agency.

Subseries C: 1984-February 1985 (1.8 l.ft.; Boxes 6-10)

A new set of Baker memorandum files was established at the start of 1984. This subseries consist of the same sorts of material as are found in the previous subseries. Arranged alphabetically by office or agency.

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE FILE, (1981-) 1984-1985 (0.5 l.ft; Boxes 10-12)

Consists of outgoing memos and letters from James Baker or his secretary, along with schedules, lists of names, and boilerplate letter formats. Topics include White House administrative matters, letters referring correspondents to the President's 1984 re-election campaign, unsolicited personnel recommendations, and information on Baker's travel, schedule, and activities. Almost all documents are dated 1984 or early 1985.

The Reagan White House printed the material in this series from diskettes that were maintained in James Baker's office. The documents are arranged by diskette, then by document file name. The Reagan Library has transferred the diskettes to preservation storage.

SERIES III: CABINET/CABINET COUNCIL MEETING FILE, May 1983-September 1984.  
(0.2 l. ft.; Box 12)

Consists of Baker's copies of issue papers and Cabinet Affairs staffing memoranda, for a few meetings of the Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs, Cabinet Council on Commerce and Trade, and full Cabinet. Many documents contain Baker's handwritten notes from the meetings. More extensive files on the Cabinet and Cabinet Councils may be found in other Reagan Library collections, particularly the White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) Subject File category FG010 (Cabinet) or the staff and office files from the Office of Cabinet Affairs.

Arranged chronologically by meeting date.

SERIES IV: UNANSWERED CORRESPONDENCE FILE, Late 1984-January 1985.  
(1.2 l. ft.; Boxes 12-15)

Unanswered letters on policy issues, sent by corporations and the general public, which arrived at the White House near the end of Baker's time as President Reagan's Chief of Staff. These are primarily letters written in opposition to the Treasury Department's 1984 tax reform proposal, particularly as it affected independent oil producers and other aspects of the oil and gas industry. Many of these letters contain the same boilerplate text criticizing the tax reform proposal.

Arranged alphabetically by state and city (except for letters with no return address or attached postmark, and letters that were sent from all over the country on Parrish Oil Production Inc. letterhead).

SERIES V: REPORTS, 1981, 1984 (0.1 l.ft., Box 15)

This series consists of a report setting forth the Administration's public stance on selling AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia, and a binder pertaining to the work of the Budget Review Board.

## CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I: MEMORANDUM FILE

#### Box 1

Subseries A: 1980-1981 (Baker/Hodsoll Memorandum File).

[ACTION] Action/Peace Corps (1)-(3)

Cabinet

Cabinet Bios

Cabinet Meetings [ – Procedures]

[Central Intelligence Agency Information Kit] (1)(2)

CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] I

CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality] II (1)-(5)

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce (1)-(3)

Department of Defense

Department of Education

#### Box 2

Department of Energy [Also Synfuels Corp.] (1)(2)

[Department of Energy] Energy (1)(2)

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Interior

Department of Justice

Department of Labor [Also National Labor Relations Board]

Department of State

[Department of State] Foreign Affairs [01/30/1982 Budget Meeting]

[Department of State] Foreign Policy

[Department of State] Haig

[Department of State] Law of the Sea

Department of Transportation

Department of Treasury

OMB [Office of Management and Budget]

OSTP [Office of Science and Technology Policy]

Social Security Commission

United Nations [Also US International Communication Agency]

[US Special Trade Representative] STR

[White House] Administration (Rogers)

[White House] Chief of Staff (Baker)

[White House] Communications (Goode)

[White House] Correspondence (Higgins [Higgins])

[White House] Counsel (McPherson)

[White House] EOP [Executive Office of the President]

[White House] First Lady's Office – (McCoy)

Box 3

[White House] Intergovernmental Affairs (Williamson)

[White House] Legislative Affairs (Friedersdorf)

[White House] Military Office

[White House] National Security Affairs (Allen)

[White House] National Security Organization

[White House] NSC

[White House] Personnel Master Charts

[White House] Policy Development (Anderson)

[White House] Presidential Messages (empty)

[White House] Presidential Personnel (James)

[White House] Press Secretary (Brady)

[White House] Public Liaison

[White House] Public Liaison (Dole)

[White House] Scheduling (Newell)

[White House] Staff Secretary (Darman)

Subseries B: 1982-1983

Box 3, cont.

[Justice, Department of – School Prayer] (1)(2)

White House Staff Memoranda – Administration (1)(2)

White House Staff Memoranda – Cabinet Affairs (1)-(3)

[White House Staff Memoranda –] Communications (1)

Box 4

[White House Staff Memoranda –] Communications (2)-(4)

White House Staff Memoranda – Counsel's Office (1)-(4)

White House Staff Memoranda – Mike Deaver File

White House Staff Memoranda – Council of Economic Advisors

White House Staff Memoranda – Intergovernmental Affairs

White House Staff Memoranda – Legislative Affairs January 1983-June 1983 (1)-(4)

Box 5

White House Staff Memoranda – Legislative Affairs July 1983-December 1983  
(1)-(3)

White House Staff Memoranda – Ed Meese File

White House Staff Memoranda – Military Office

White House Staff Memoranda – Miscellaneous

White House Staff Memoranda – National Security Affairs [folder removed, 1987]

White House Staff Memoranda – Personnel (1)-(3)

White House Staff Memoranda – Policy Development

White House Staff Memoranda – Political Affairs (1)-(3)

Box 6

White House Staff Memoranda – Public Liaison (1)(2)  
White House Staff Memoranda – Vice President

Subseries C: 1984-January 1985

Box 6, cont.

Administration (1)-(3)

Advance

Cabinet Affairs

Jim Cicconi File

Communications

Box 7

Counsel's Office January 1984-June 1984 (1)-(5)

Counsel's Office July 1984-January 1985 (1)-(4)

Dick Darman's File

Mike Deaver File (1)(2)

Council of Economic Advisors (1)-(4)

Box 8

Intergovernmental Affairs (1)-(3)

Issues (1)-(4)

Legislative Affairs (1)-(7)

Military [Political] (1)-(3)

Box 9

Miscellaneous (1)-(4)

National Security Office (1)-(3)

Personnel (1)(2)

Policy Development

Political Affairs January 1984-July 1984 (1)-(5)

Box 10

Political Affairs August 1984-January 1985 (1)-(4)

Press Office (1)-(4)

Public Liaison (1)(2)

Vice President

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE FILE, (1981-) 1984-1985.

Box 10, cont.

[Diskette Transfer Papers]

[Diskette 1984: Index (Campaign-Related Correspondence and Referrals)]

[Diskette 1984: Printouts (Campaign-Related Correspondence and Referrals)] (1)(2)

Box 11

[Diskette 1984: Printouts (Campaign-Related Correspondence and Referrals)] (3)

[Diskette JAB: Index (Correspondence and Memos 1981-1984)]

[Diskette JAB: Printouts (Correspondence and Memos 1981-1984)] (1)-(6)  
[Diskette KC I: Index (Correspondence and Memos 1981-1985)]  
[Diskette KC I: Printouts (Correspondence and Memos 1981-1985)] (1)-(5)  
[Diskette KC II: Index (Correspondence and Memos 1984)]  
[Diskette KC II: Printouts (Correspondence and Memos 1984)] (1)-(5)

Box 12

[Diskette KC II: Printouts (Correspondence and Memos 1984)] (6)(7)

SERIES III: CABINET/CABINET COUNCIL MEETING FILE, May 1983-  
September 1984

Box 12, cont.

[Cabinet Time 05/24/1983]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 06/07/1983]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 09/20/1983]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 12/20/1983]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 01/12/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 01/17/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 01/26/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 02/10/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 02/14/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 03/29/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 05/03/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Economic Affairs 06/14/1984]  
[Cabinet Meeting 06/26/1984]  
[Cabinet Council on Commerce and Trade 09/14/1984]

SERIES IV: UNANSWERED CORRESPONDENCE FILE, Late 1984-January  
1985

Box 12, cont.

[Alabama]  
[Alaska]  
[Arizona]  
[Arkansas]  
[California A-BEK]  
[California – Belmont – A-Johnson]  
[California – Belmont – Johnson-Z]  
[California BEM-LOP]  
[California LOQ-M]  
[California N-R]  
[California S – Santa Ana]  
[California Santa Barbara – Z]  
[Colorado]  
[Connecticut]

Box 13

[Connecticut – Inflation Consultants]  
[Delaware] (empty)  
[District of Columbia]  
[Florida A-C]  
[Florida D-Z]  
[Georgia]  
[Hawaii] (empty)  
[Idaho]  
[Illinois A-CH]  
[Illinois – Chicago]  
[Illinois CI – Mt. C]  
[Illinois Mt. D – Olney (J)]  
[Illinois Olney (K) – Z]  
[Indiana]  
[Iowa]  
[Kansas]  
Kentucky]  
[Louisiana]  
[Maine]  
[Maryland]  
[Massachusetts]  
[Michigan]  
[Minnesota] (empty)  
[Mississippi]  
[Missouri]  
[Montana]  
[Nebraska]  
[Nevada]  
[New Hampshire] (empty)  
[New Jersey]  
[New Mexico]  
[New York A-M]  
[New York N-Z]  
[North Carolina]  
[North Dakota]  
[Ohio]  
[Oklahoma A-OKL]

Box 14

[Oklahoma-Oklahoma City A-C]  
[Oklahoma – Oklahoma City D-P]  
[Oklahoma – Oklahoma City Q-Z]  
[Oklahoma OKM-Z]  
[Oregon]  
[Parrish Oil Production, Inc.] (1)-(4)  
[Pennsylvania]

[Rhode Island]  
[South Carolina]  
[South Dakota]  
[Tennessee]  
[Texas – Abilene A-P]  
[Texas – Abilene R – DAK]  
[Texas – Dallas]  
[Texas DAM – K]  
[Texas L-R]  
[Texas S-Z]  
[Utah]

Box 15

[Vermont] (empty)  
[Virginia]  
[Washington]  
[West Virginia] (empty)  
[Wisconsin A – NDII J]  
[Wisconsin NDII K – Z]  
[Wyoming] (empty)  
[Origin Unknown]

SERIES V: REPORTS, 1981-1983

Box 15, cont.

[AWACS Background Material] (1)-(3)  
Budget Review Board Meetings (binder) (1)-(4)