

**Vermont State Archives
Secretary of State James A. Guest
1977-1981
7 microfilm reels**

BIOGRAPHY

James A. Guest, a Democrat, was born in Montclair, N.J. on December 25, 1940. He is married to the former Priscilla Frances Beach and they have two children. Guest is a lawyer who served as Commissioner of Banking and Insurance for three years before he became Secretary of State in January of 1977.

James Guest unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. Senate in 1982 and the U.S. House in 1988.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

These records document James Guest's two terms as Secretary of State, from 1977-1981. Unlike other Secretary of State records at the Archives, the records of the Deputy Secretary of State Jean Baldwin were kept separate as a subseries to the Guest records. Within the Guest and Baldwin records, the original order was retained; the files are organized alphabetically by subject. The records are evenly distributed throughout Guest's administration.

Only samples were kept of letters of enclosure and requests for publications.

The Guest files and the Baldwin files are similar in content and type of material. Both contain correspondence and memos between Guest and Baldwin and office staff, other state government officials, members of the General Assembly, Municipal Clerks, and the general public. There is quite a bit of correspondence on elections and election law reform, on the administration of the Licensing and Registration Division, and on proposed rules and the Administrative Procedures Act. There is considerable material on the writing and distribution of Secretary of State publications. Many memos show how the office functioned and the relationships among the different divisions. The inner workings of the Secretary of State's Office are well documented.

**SERIES: SECRETARY OF STATE
JAMES A. GUEST
1977-1981
6 microfilm reels**

Included are correspondence on various election laws, on voter registration drives, and a report on the "Effect of Registration Laws on Voter Turnout." There is material on a campaign finance law (Act. 269, 1978) and a bill relating to lobbyist disclosure regulations (S.20, 1977) as well as numerous other election laws and bills. Also included is correspondence on the Liberty Union and the Libertarian Party organizations, and on the 1976 Lieutenant Governor's race recount. In addition, there is considerable material on the Sunset Law, which required

periodic reviews of professional and occupational licensing boards.

Other correspondence touches on issues such as business regulation, administrative rules, state budget problems in 1980 and the interpretation of the Public Records law by the Attorney General's Office. There is also some material on the initial automation of the Secretary of State's Office. There is correspondence on Guest's Readable Writing Workshop and his essay on "How to Write in Plain English." Of particular interest is the material on the controversy sparked by the rumored closure of Vital Records.

**SUBSERIES: DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE
JEAN BALDWIN
1977-1981
2 microfilm reels**

Included are correspondence and memos on proposed administrative rules as well as Baldwin's APA logbook. There is material concerning the Deputy Secretary of State's interpretation of various state laws, office policy when trade names were deceptively similar, and the Governor's Cost Control Council. In addition, there is correspondence on various municipal charter changes, miscellaneous correspondence with municipal clerks, and town meeting surveys for 1978 and 1979. Other letters concern various election laws, local election problems, voting by institutionalized persons, and voting machines. There is also material on the administration of the Licensing and Registration Division, memos between division heads and weekly reports from Baldwin to Guest concerning staff projects.