The original documents are located in Box 28, “4/5/76 - Signing of the Older Americans Proclamation” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice
The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.
SIGNING OF THE OLDER AMERICANS PROCLAMATION

APRIL 5, 1976

IT IS ESPECIALLY FITTING THIS YEAR THAT WE SET ASIDE A PERIOD OF TIME TO HONOR OUR OLDER CITIZENS. THEIR INSIGHT AND EXPERIENCE, THEIR WISDOM AND COURAGE, HAS CONTRIBUTED BEYOND MEASURE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR 200-YEAR-OLD NATION.
WE MUST MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR OLDER AMERICANS TO CONTINUE THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS WE CAN DRAW UPON THEIR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS IS IN THE JOB AND VOLUNTEER MARKET. TOO OFTEN OLDER, AND EVEN MIDDLE-AGED, AMERICANS ARE THE VICTIMS OF MYTHS AND PREJUDICES REGARDING THEIR CAPABILITIES.

AMERICANS MUST REPUDIATE THESE MYTHS AND PREJUDICES, AS WE HAVE REPUDIATED OTHERS, AND ASSURE OLDER AMERICANS THE CHANCE TO PROVE THAT TIME HAS ONLY ENHANCED THEIR DEMONSTRATED ABILITIES.
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT OUR NATION MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RECOGNIZE THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF OUR OLDER CITIZENS. TO THIS END, THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ON AGING HAS PREPARED A BICENTENNIAL CHARTER FOR OLDER AMERICANS.

THIS CHARTER SETS FORTH PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US IN EVALUATING OUR NATION'S RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS FACING OLDER PERSONS, AND IN APPRECIATING THEIR RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS NOW CONFRONTING OUR NATION.
ONE OF THESE PRINCIPLES IS THE RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING IN RETIREMENT. LET ME REAFFIRM THAT OLDER AMERICANS HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO LIVE SECURELY, COMFORTABLY AND INDEPENDENTLY. AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE, THE VALUE OF OUR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IS BEYOND QUESTION.

I WILL DO ALL I CAN TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE TRUST FUND SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF RETIREES MAY CONTINUE TO RELY ON IT.
WITH THESE THOUGHTS AND COMMITMENTS IN MIND, I AM HAPPY TODAY TO SIGN THIS ANNUAL PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING MAY AS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH.

I URGE ALL ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES TO OBSERVE THIS MONTH WITH CEREMONIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PERSONS AND I URGE THAT SUCH PROGRAMS INCLUDE PUBLIC FORUMS FOR DISCUSSION OF THE BICENTENNIAL CHARTER FOR OLDER AMERICANS.
I ask all Americans to join me in reflecting upon the achievements and the needs of our older citizens.