Born into a Republican family in southeastern Iowa, Mary Louise Smith did not become an active party worker until the late 1940s, when Cath-lene Blue, Iowa’s former First Lady, encouraged the young housewife to join a local Republican women’s club. Over the next decades, by virtue of her talent for grassroots organizing, her celebrated speaking skills, her ability to earn the confidence of those in power, and her own conviction that she had something to offer, Smith would continue to rise through the ranks. O’Dea takes us behind the scenes as Smith and other leaders debated controversial strategies for promoting the party. For much of her career Mary Louise Smith stood alone as a woman in a world of politics run by men. After devoting over two decades of her life to politics, she eventually became the first, and only, woman chairman of the Republican National Committee. During her twenty-eight months as chairman, Smith dealt with highs and lows as she blazed not only a trail of her own but also one for the Republican Party, including assembling the team that kept the party intact following the devastation of Watergate. She was present during the party’s shift from moderate leadership, as exemplified by Ford, to the increasingly conservative leadership still seen today. Even after leaving the chairmanship, Smith remained loyal to the party from which she felt increasingly alienated. Madam Chairman: Mary Louise Smith and the Republican Revival after Watergate. Main Author: O’Dea, Suzanne, 1950 |a Intro -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- Chapter One: A Woman From Eddyville -- Chapter Two: Political Beginnings -- Chapter Three: National Committeeewoman -- Chapter Four: Opportunities and Issues -- Chapter Five: Republican National Committee Co-Chairman -- Chapter Six: Madam Chairman -- Chapter Seven: A Party with No Credibility -- Chapter Eight: Rebuilding the Party -- Chapter Nine: The Feminist -- Chapter Ten: The Convention -- Chapter Eleven: The Party Turns to the Right -- Chapter Twelve: Civil Rights and Peace -- Conclusion: One Last Convention -- Notes -- Bibliograp