

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY
ABILENE, KANSAS

HIBBS, BEN: Papers

Accessions 73-6 and 76-13

Processed by: SLJ

Date Completed: October 1975

The Papers of Ben Hibbs, editor and collaborator with Dwight D. Eisenhower on his writings for The Saturday Evening Post and The Reader's Digest, were deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in June 1972 by Mr. Hibbs. An instrument of gift for these papers was executed on June 20, 1972.

Linear feet shelf space occupied: 1.2
Approximate number of pages: 2,400
Approximate number of items: 750

Literary rights in the unpublished writings of Ben Hibbs in these papers and in other collections of papers in the Eisenhower Library were reserved to Mr. Hibbs during his lifetime and thereafter passed to the people of the United States.

By agreement with the donor the following classes of documents will be withheld from research use:

1. Papers relating to the family and private business affairs of Ben Hibbs.
2. Papers relating to the family and private business affairs of persons who have had correspondence with him.
3. Papers relating to investigations of individuals or to appointments and personnel matters.
4. Papers containing statements made by or to Ben Hibbs in confidence unless in the judgment of the Director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library the reason for the confidentiality no longer exists.
5. All other papers which contain information or statements that might be used to injure, harass, or damage any living person.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

July 23, 1901 Born, Fontana, Kansas

1923 A.B., University of Kansas

1923 News editor, Fort Morgan Times (Colorado)

1924 News editor, Pratt Tribune (Kansas)

1924-26 Professor of journalism, Hays State College (Kansas)

1926-27 Editor and manager, Goodland News-Republic (Kansas)

1927-29 Managing editor, Arkansas City Traveler (Kansas)

1929-40 Associate editor, The County Gentleman, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 3, 1930 Married Edith Kathleen Doty

1940-42 Editor, The Country Gentleman

1942-61 Editor, The Saturday Evening Post

1951-54 Member of United States Advisory Commission on Information

1962 Senior editor, The Saturday Evening Post

1963-72 Senior editor, The Reader's Digest

1975 Died

Mr. Hibbs also served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Papers of Ben Hibbs span the years 1962-1969, when he served as collaborator with Dwight D. Eisenhower on nineteen articles written for publication in The Saturday Evening Post and The Reader's Digest. The papers consist of correspondence and memoranda concerning the writing of these articles, and drafts of the articles themselves.

In 1942 Ben Hibbs began a twenty-year association with the editorial staff of The Saturday Evening Post. During the Eisenhower administration, Hibbs persuaded the President to sign a contract calling for him to write four articles a year for publication in The Post beginning after Eisenhower left the White House. During Hibbs' final year with The Post, 1962, he served as senior editor and began working directly with General Eisenhower on articles he prepared for the magazine.

Hibbs left The Post in January 1963 and joined the editorial staff of The Reader's Digest, owned by DeWitt Wallace. When Eisenhower's contract with The Post expired in 1964, Hibbs was responsible for the General's signing a new contract agreeing to write three articles a year for the Reader's Digest at a fee of \$30,000 per article. Hibbs was the editor assigned to collaborate with Eisenhower in producing these articles.

The general procedure followed in producing an Eisenhower article was begun when a topic, originated by the General, Hibbs, or Reader's Digest editors, was decided upon. Eisenhower and Hibbs then agreed to a meeting time several weeks in advance and proceeded to accumulate ideas and facts for the article. They would then meet several times at either Gettysburg or Palm Springs to discuss the article, working from an outline prepared by Hibbs. From these conversations, and the notes Hibbs compiled from them, a draft of the article was created. It was then sent to Eisenhower for his comments and editing before being submitted to the executive editor of Reader's Digest, Hobart Lewis, for final editing.

Hibbs first met Eisenhower during the last year of World War II, when the General requested that reporters from the United States be flown to Europe to document the horrors of the German concentration camps then being liberated by the U.S. Army. Hibbs and the other correspondents were shown Dachau and Buchenwald and were then introduced to Eisenhower at his SHAEF headquarters. Following the war, Hibbs attempted to purchase for The Post the magazine rights to General Eisenhower's memoirs, Crusade in Europe, but was unsuccessful when Eisenhower sold those rights to Life.

Hibbs actively promoted the candidacy of Eisenhower for the Presidency of the United States in 1952. He wrote an editorial entitled "Will the Republicans Commit Suicide in Chicago" concerning the Taft-Eisenhower battle over the seating of Republican delegates from Texas. According to Hibbs, Eisenhower thought that particular editorial did "as much as anything else that was published" to get him the Republican nomination (see the transcript of Hibbs-Wickman discussion, page 16).

Hibbs was never a part of the inner White House Group during the Eisenhower administrations. However, he did remain an acquaintance of the President and was invited to attend stag dinners

and other social functions. His close association with Eisenhower developed after the President left office and began writing articles for The Post and Reader's Digest.

The Ben Hibbs papers are arranged in three series. The first series consists of a twenty-four page transcript of a tape recording of a discussion between Mr. Hibbs and John E. Wickman, Director of the Eisenhower Library. The discussion dealt primarily with Hibbs' papers and his association with Eisenhower as collaborator on the General's articles. Other topics of discussion include Hibbs' meeting of Eisenhower in World War II, his support for the 1952 Eisenhower nomination and his futile effort to purchase the magazine rights to Crusade in Europe.

The second series contains drafts of seventeen articles Eisenhower and Hibbs worked on together, and the related correspondence. These articles were written from January 1963 to February 1969, and the final article, "America's Tarnished Image," was never published because Eisenhower died before it reached print. Hibbs marked the drafts, indicating which draft of the article (first, second, final) it was and who had done the editing of certain drafts. Many have hand-written corrections and deletions done by Eisenhower himself. Also included with some of the draft articles are the spiral notebooks Hibbs filled during his discussions with Eisenhower on particular topics. These notes on Eisenhower's ideas became the basis for the first draft of each article. The correspondence accompanying these drafts concerns the research and background work being done on an article, arrangements for payment, editing problems, schedules, and meetings.

The third series consists of general correspondence arranged chronologically from 1962-1969. The 1962 material includes drafts and correspondence related to two 1962 Eisenhower-Hibbs articles done for The Post. These are "Are We Headed In the Wrong Direction?", August 11-18, 1962 (the draft is entitled "My Views of the Kennedy Administration"), and "Ike Takes a Look at the GOP," April 21, 1962. Other correspondence in the series deals with ideas for future articles and with reaction to the articles by the public and the editors of Reader's Digest. Principal correspondents include Eisenhower, Hibbs, Hobart Lewis, John S. D. Eisenhower, and Robert L. Schulz.

The arrangement of this collection was devised by Mr. Hibbs before the papers were presented to the Eisenhower Library. A staff archivist has provided the series and folder titles. The Hibbs' materials were received in two separate accessions which have been combined in this collection. Accession 73-6 includes all articles, drafts, and correspondence; and accession 76-13 includes the taped discussion and typed transcripts (rough draft and final copy). The tape recording and the typed rough draft of the transcript were placed in the vault for security.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Box Nos. Series

- 1 Transcript. Twenty-four page typed transcript of a taped discussion between Ben Hibbs and John Wickman concerning the papers Hibbs was presenting to the Eisenhower Library. Although the exact date of this discussion is unknown, it probably took place sometime in 1972.

- 1-3 Article drafts with related notes and correspondence, 1962-1969. Various drafts with editing done by both Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ben Hibbs. Correspondence deals with the writing and publishing of the articles and includes meeting arrangements, schedules, changes to be made, approvals, suggestions for future articles, etc.

- 3 General Correspondence, 1962-1969. Correspondence to and from Ben Hibbs dealing with the Eisenhower articles, schedules, etc., and with the reaction of Reader's Digest editors to the articles.

CONTAINER LIST

Box No. Contents

SERIES I: TRANSCRIPT.

- 1 Transcript of Ben Hibbs-John Wickman Discussion (ca. 1972) [Taken from a taped discussion session. Deals primarily with Hibbs' relationship with Eisenhower during the writing of the articles for The Post and Reader's Digest, including how the articles were written and edited. Also some discussion of Hibbs' first meeting with General Eisenhower; Hibbs' active promotion of Eisenhower's nomination in 1952; and Hibb's attempt to purchase for The Post the magazine rights to Crusade in Europe.]

SERIES II: ARTICLE DRAFTS WITH RELATED NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE. 1962-1969.

"Dangers From Within" - The Saturday Evening Post (1/26/63) and The Reader's Digest [Correspondence includes J. S.D. Eisenhower, Ben Hibbs, Clay Blair, Jr. of The Post, and Douglas Black of Doubleday. November-December 1962]

"An Epidemic of Friendship" - The Reader's Digest (11/63) [Article deals with the People-to-People program. Correspondents include Sterling W. Fisher of Reader's Digest; Colonel Edward P. Eagen, an attorney; Robert S. Schulz; Eisenhower; Hibbs; and Hobart Lewis. June-August 1963]

"What is Leadership" - The Reader's Digest (6/65) [no correspondence included]

"America's Place in the World" - The Reader's Digest (10/65) [Early drafts were entitled "This Cold War We Are Fighting." Hibbs' notebook is included. Correspondents are Hibbs and Eisenhower. June 1965]

"Thoughts For Young Americans." - The Reader's Digest (4/66) [Article deals with reactions to the Vietnam War. Correspondents include Hibbs, Lewis, Schulz, and Eisenhower. December 1965 to January 1966]

"Our National Nominating Conventions are a Disgrace" - The Reader's Digest (7/66) [Correspondents include Hibbs, Schulz, Ray E. Stull of the Republican National Committee, and Milton S. Eisenhower. August 1964, February 1966]

"This Country Needs Universal Military Training" - The Reader's Digest (9/66) (1) [Five drafts]

"This Country Needs Universal Military Training" - The Reader's Digest (9/66) (2) [Included are an Eisenhower letter and "Aide Memoir" on the military draft,

deferments, volunteers, and training; a draft of the text of the Eisenhower commencement address at Phillips Exeter Academy. Correspondence is dated April to June, 1966]

“Let’s Make Government Work Better” - The Reader’s Digest (1/67)
[Correspondents include Lewis, Hibbs, Eisenhower, and Ray A. Herbert of Reader’s Digest. October 1966]

- 2 “We Should Be Ashamed” - The Reader’s Digest (8/67) [Early drafts were entitled “Where Is Our Respect for Law and Order?” Also included are Hibbs’ notes on crime. Correspondents include Lewis, Hibbs, and Eisenhower. January to May 1967]

“The Ticklish Problem of Political Fund-Raising--and Spending” - The Reader’s Digest (1/68) [Early drafts were entitled “The Problem of the Flexible Conscience.” Correspondents include members of Reader’s Digest staff. October, November 1967]

“Let’s Close Ranks on the Home Front” - The Reader’s Digest (4/68) [Early drafts were entitled “Let’s Quit Quarreling Over the Vietnam War.” Correspondents include Eisenhower, Hibbs, Lewis, and Reader’s Digest staff members. December 1967. Eisenhower sent Hibbs an article by Colonel J. I. Muir entitled “Why Vietnam.” Also included is Hibbs’ notebook.]

“To Insure Domestic Tranquility” - The Reader’s Digest (5/68) [Early drafts were entitled “The Bitter Problems of Our Slums Can Be Solved.” Note from Eisenhower to Hibbs, November 1967]

“Some Thoughts on the Presidency” - The Reader’s Digest (11/68) [Correspondence deals with the reprinting of this article in U.S. News and World Report, Richard Nixon’s candidacy, and Lyndon Johnson’s withdrawal from the presidential campaign. Correspondents include Eisenhower, Lewis, Schulz, and Hibbs. March to July 1968. Also included is a copy of Eisenhower’s message to a “mock political convention” at Notre Dame]

“The Day I Knew I Belonged to the Flag” - The Reader’s Digest (2/69) [Early drafts were entitled “How I Belonged to the Flag.” Correspondents include Hibbs, Lewis, Eisenhower. November 1968 to January 1969]

“A Proposal for Our Time” - The Reader’s Digest (6/68) [Correspondents include Hibbs, Eisenhower, Lewis L. Strauss and James T. Rainey of the Atomic Energy Commission. January to April 1968. Strauss comments on Senate action on the proposal of desalting water for the Middle East using nuclear power.]

“We Must Avoid the Perils of Extremism” - The Reader’s Digest (4/69) [Early drafts were entitled “The Middle Way is the Best Way,” and “The Common Sense Way.” Correspondents include Hibbs, Schulz, Lewis. November 1968 to January 1969. Also

included is a research report of quotations of “extremists” for possible use in the article.]

“America’s Tarnished Image” - Unpublished [One letter from Schulz to Hibbs, February 1969. This article was ready for publication at the time of Eisenhower’s death, but John S. D. Eisenhower elected not to have it printed]

SERIES III: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE 1962-1969

- 3 General Correspondence, 1962 [Includes drafts of articles and related correspondence, “My View of the Kennedy Administration,” and “Ike Takes a Look at the Republican Party.” Hibbs’ resignation from The Saturday Evening Post is also discussed in the letters. Correspondents include John S. D. Eisenhower, Hibbs, Jack Good, Clay Blair, Jr., Ann Whitman, and Eisenhower.]

General correspondence, 1963 [Correspondence deals with the decision by the management of Reader’s Digest not to publish Malcolm Moos’ review of Eisenhower’s White House Years and the possibility of Eisenhower writing articles for Reader’s Digest after fulfilling his contract with The Post.]

General Correspondence, 1964, [More on the possibility of Eisenhower writing for Reader’s Digest; ideas for articles include political conventions and the presidency]

General Correspondence, 1965 [Discussion of the possibility of condensing Eisenhower’s At Ease for Reader’s Digest articles; Hibbs’ birthday article on Eisenhower]

General correspondence, 1966 [Suggestion of Eisenhower writing an article on Churchill and Marshall; Hibbs’ article on the Eisenhower Library; short Eisenhower quip for Reader’s Digest entitled “Humor in Uniform”]

General Correspondence, 1967 [Correspondence concerns Eisenhower’s Vietnam and riot articles, Hibbs’ illness, Eisenhower Museum photo album, Reader’s Digest condensed version of Eisenhower’s memoirs, and Eisenhower’s comments on a book by Donald Burgett entitled Currahee. Correspondents include Eisenhower, Hibbs, and Lewis.]

General correspondence, 1968 [Correspondence deals with Eisenhower’s “middle of the road,” Middle East, Vietnam, and presidency articles; birthday messages; and Eisenhower’s illness. Correspondents include Hibbs, Eisenhower, Lewis, and Schulz.]

General correspondence, 1969 [Correspondence deals with Hibbs’ article on Eisenhower’s retirement years, Eisenhower’s last article, the flag article, and the ceasing of publication of The Saturday Evening Post.]

END OF CONTAINER LIST