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HOUGHTON

HOUGHTON, AMORY

(OH-298)

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PRRCQ

U.S. Ambassador to France, 1957-61.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. Personal background: acting head of Corning glass until 1941; member of the War Production Board, 1941-43; deputy chief of the Mission for Economic Affairs, 1943-44; U.S. Ambassador to France, 1957-61. Resignation from Corning glass; travel to London to become Deputy Chief of Mission for Economic Affairs; first contact with Eisenhower during a trip to France shortly after D-Day; working relationship between Americans and British during World War II; resuming work at Corning after the war; offering Eisenhower the presidency of the Boy Scouts of America following the war; Eisenhower's early political activities; qualities that Eisenhower brought to his presidency; British opinions of Eisenhower's role in World War II; assessment of Winston Churchill's importance in World War II. Invitation to become the ambassador to France; French position regarding Algiers; French anger at American arms supplies to Tunisia; assessment of French President Coty; Eisenhower's visit to France in 1957; an ambassador's role in NATO sessions; Rome treaty and the beginnings of the European Community; French financial difficulties; De Gaulle's desire to create a NATO triumvirate of France, U.K., and the United States; the French decision to create atomic weapons motivated by fear rather than desire for prestige; assessment of De Gaulle; French political chaos following World War II; encounters with Eisenhower in his post-presidential years.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #2. Chaotic state of French government prior to De Gaulle; De Gaulle's new constitution; French desire to create NATO triumvirate; De Gaulle's imperialism; De Gaulle's thoughts on the Russian threat; the U.K.'s reluctance to join the European Community; U.S. fears concerning the U.K.'s exclusion from the European Community; the embassy's lines of communication with French and American governments; French negativism towards America following World War II; withdrawal of the French fleet from NATO in 1959; De Gaulle's suspicion of the close alliance between the U.K. and the United States; assessment of Adenauer; relationship between Eisenhower and De Gaulle; Eisenhower's stays at the U.S. Embassy in Paris; general's uprising; communist attempts to win the support of the French right; U-2 incident; Soviet unwillingness to achieve real detente at Paris Summit; flaws of the United Nations; 1960 presidential campaign; pressures of diplomatic life; golfing with Eisenhower; Dulles' importance in formulating foreign policy; assessment of Dulles as Secretary of State.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interviewed by John T. Mason, 1968]