

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY
ABILENE, KANSAS

OLES, FLOYD: Papers, 1945-82

Accessions 73-36, 74-1, 74-1/1,
75-32, 76-6, 77-27, 77-27/1, 77-27/2,
78-29, 79-13, 80-2, 81-2 & 83-2

Processed by: RS, TB

Date Completed: December 2002

The papers of Floyd Oles were deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library by Mr. Oles in several shipments between 1973 and 1982.

Linear feet: 12
Approximate number of pages: 23,600
Approximate number of items: 15,000

Mr. Oles signed an instrument of gift for the papers on March 8, 1976. Literary rights in the writings of Floyd Oles in this collection and in all other collections of papers donated to the United States were retained by Mr. Oles until his death on February 19, 1996, and then passed to the public. Under terms of the instrument of gift, the following classes of items are withheld from research use:

1. Papers relating to the family and private business affairs of Mr. Oles.
2. Papers relating to the family and private business affairs of others persons who have had correspondence with Floyd Oles.
3. Papers relating to investigations of individuals or to appointments and personnel matters.
4. Papers containing statements made by or to the donor in confidence unless in the judgement 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.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Floyd Oles was born in Michigan on May 27, 1896, but moved to the state of Washington as a child and spent most of his life at Tacoma. He served in World War I with an artillery unit in France, and in World War II with a civil affairs unit assigned to the Danish government in London, England. He was a reserve officer in the U.S. Army and was active in several veteran organizations, particularly the Reserve Officers Association (ROA). Oles was also active in the Republican Party. He served as chairman of the Washington Citizens for Eisenhower organization during the 1952 campaign, and was appointed Tacoma City Manager for a brief period in 1970. Professionally, Oles worked for a number of trade associations in Washington.

From 1955 to 1972 Oles spent much of his time working for the Reserve Equalization Committee (REC). This Committee was organized to lobby for improved retirement benefits for reserve officers who had served in World War I. Military retirement benefits were governed by the Pay Readjustment Act of 1942 that gave retired officers 75% of their base pay if they had served in World War I. After World War II, when World War I veterans reached retirement age and began to apply for benefits, the Comptroller General issued a ruling which said the 1942 law only applied to Regular Army officers and Reserve officers were not eligible for the 75% rate in retirement pay. A few Reserve officers felt this violated the legislative intent of the 1942 law and sued in the U.S. Court of Claims to recover their full retirement benefits. This led to two decisions (*Berry vs US* in 1952 and *Reynolds vs US* in 1953) in which the Court of Claims rejected the suits and upheld the ruling of the Comptroller General.

Oles and several of his fellow Reserve officers decided to do something about the adverse rulings. At the 1955 annual convention of the ROA they organized a separate organization to lobby for equal retirement benefits. This organization became the REC. Oles was appointed Secretary of the REC and held the position as long as the REC remained active.

The REC decided on a two-sided approach to the matter. The first method attempted to convince Congress to pass a bill that would apply the 1942 Act to Reserve as well as Regular retired officers. Oles went to Washington, DC, where he performed most of the lobbying work himself. Despite intensive efforts over a period of fifteen years, Congress never passed the necessary legislation. This was largely due to the opposition of the Department of Defense and the Comptroller General, who claimed that the costs of the additional retirement pay would be excessive. Carl Vinson, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, also strongly opposed the legislation.

The second approach involved filing another suit in the Court of Claims, seeking to reverse the earlier decisions. The REC approached all retired Reserve officers who had served in World War I and asked for support. Over 1200 of the officers donated money and signed on as co-plaintiffs in the suit. The suit (*Abbott vs US*) was filed in 1959. In March 1961 the Court of Claims again rejected the suit and upheld the ruling of the Comptroller General. The REC appealed to the Supreme Court which refused to consider the case.

The REC then decided to try a suit in one of the U.S. District Courts. Since only the Court of Claims could hear pay cases, the REC needed to obtain legislation to allow such suits to be filed in the District Courts. This legislation was handled by the Judiciary Committees, which enabled the REC to bypass the Armed Services Committees of Congress. The needed law was passed and signed by President Johnson in August 1964. However, a law passed in 1887 limited District Court judgments to \$10,000 and the statute of limitations also prevented suits by persons who had been retired more than six years.

Before attempting another suit, the REC tried to ease these restrictions so more retired officers could participate and receive larger settlements. Congress did not pass the necessary legislation. This was largely due to renewed opposition by the Department of Defense. Additional problems were caused by Strom Thurmond, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Thurmond initially supported the legislation sought by the REC, but in August 1967 he suddenly reversed himself and thereafter fought hard to defeat the bills.

When the REC found that the legislation would not pass Congress it decided to proceed with the suit. After some consideration, the REC decided to try the suit in the U.S. District Court in Colorado. This particular court had a low caseload so the suit would receive fairly rapid consideration. Colorado was also the home of former senator Edwin C. Johnson who had written the 1942 bill. Although in frail health, Johnson was able to testify that Congress had definitely intended to include Reserve officers in the 1942 bill. The suit (Perry vs US) was filed in 1968. In January 1970 the District Court issued a decision denying the case of the REC. The REC appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals. In May 1971 the Appeals Court upheld the lower court decision and denied the appeal of the REC.

After these setbacks in court the REC decided to dissolve. There were several reasons for this decision. The REC lawyers advised that the REC had exhausted their judicial options, and Congress had shown no inclination to pass favorable legislation. In addition, the youngest World War I veterans were by this time in their mid-seventies. Attrition had greatly reduced the number of those who could afford to support the REC and who would benefit from its work. A last appeal for funds in November 1971 brought in enough donations to pay the lawyers, with a little money left over. The REC dissolved in early 1972. Floyd Oles continued to maintain the mailing list for a few years and produced an occasional newsletter describing legislation that favored veterans.

The papers of Floyd Oles have been divided into three series. The first series, comprising the bulk of the collection, pertains to his work with the REC. This has been divided into four subseries. After the REC dissolved in 1972 Oles disposed of most of his administrative files. When he agreed to deposit his papers at the Eisenhower Library, however, Oles attempted to reconstruct the entire history of the REC. He dictated his recollections of the history of the REC in eleven tapes that were transcribed by the Eisenhower Library staff. To accompany the tapes, Oles selected from his files a number of documents that he termed "exhibits" which ranged anywhere from a single document to an entire file folder of correspondence. The exhibits related to the subjects discussed in the tapes and usually consisted of background information on legislation and court cases sponsored by the REC. Oles also compiled detailed lists of the exhibits in which he described the documents and explained their significance. Oles numbered the exhibits sequentially, of which 130 exhibits accompanying the taped narrative.

After completing the narrative, Oles donated some additional files that became exhibits 131-188. These consisted of material similar to the earlier exhibits, but also contained extensive correspondence relating to the work of the REC. This included most of Oles' surviving correspondence with REC legal counsel George Foster (exhibit 177), REC treasurer Edwin Frank (187 & 188), attorney Robert Klepinger (182), and senators Chan Gurney (185) and Edwin C. Johnson (186). The transcribed narrative and the exhibits form the first subseries of the Oles papers.

The second subseries consists of index cards listing all the World War I veterans contacted by the REC. The cards are annotated to show whether the veterans donated money to the REC and whether they had served as co-plaintiffs in the various REC lawsuits. The cards are arranged by the state in which the veteran lived, and then alphabetically. The index cards served as the basis for the mailing list of the REC.

The third subseries consists of correspondence between Floyd Oles and various World War I veterans regarding the work of the REC. The correspondence is arranged by the state in which the veteran lived, and then chronologically. Oles was a prolific writer. In response to inquiries he would prepare long detailed letters, sometimes running to two or three single spaced typewritten pages, describing the work of the REC. Oles also prepared all the REC newsletters and extensive reports on his lobbying activities for the other REC officers.

The fourth subseries consists of miscellaneous files on the REC. This includes a set of the bulletins and reports compiled by Oles on the work of the REC. There are also two notebooks titled "Nice Letters" which were compiled by Floyd's wife Helga Oles. These are letters from retired officers complimenting Oles on his work. Mrs. Oles had removed the letters from the geographical correspondence files in subseries three because they were routine letters that did not require a response. The subseries also contains research notes by Oles on the cost of retirement benefits, and a report by Oles on the administrative records that he had destroyed. The destroyed files included most of his correspondence with members of Congress, and his correspondence with co-plaintiffs in the 1959 Court of Claims suit.

The second series concerns the 1952 Republican campaign in Washington. Oles served as chairman of the Washington Citizens for Eisenhower organization. Most of his duties involved fundraising and planning campaign activities. He also represented Pierce County (Tacoma) at the Washington State Republican Convention. His files on the 1952 campaign consist mostly of his correspondence on fundraising activities, and information he collected on the Republican conventions. The series also contains abstracts from Oles's personal diaries regarding his 1952 campaign activities. The original diaries, as well as files on other phases of his career, were donated to the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma. An oral history with Oles in which he described his work during the 1952 campaign is in the Eisenhower Library oral history collection (OH 249).

The third series contains miscellaneous material compiled by Floyd Oles. This includes copies of political letters he wrote to the editors of various Washington newspapers, and the newsletter of the Washington Coast Artillery Association, a World War I veterans organization in which Oles was active. The series also contains a few photographs of Oles with a group of Danish Boy Scouts in 1945. Oles donated most of his files on his World War II work with Denmark to the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Box Nos. Series

- 1-28 Series I: Reserve Equalization Committee (REC) Files. 28 boxes.

Files on the work of the REC, arranged in 4 subseries.
- 1-6 Subseries 1: Narrative History. 6 boxes.

Transcripts of a dictated history of the REC prepared by Floyd Oles, with accompanying documents bearing on the matters discussed in the narrative. Arranged in the order established by Oles.
- 7-14 Subseries 2: Geographical Files - Card Index. 8 boxes.

Index cards listing World War I veterans contacted by the REC. Arranged geographically by the state in which they lived, and then alphabetically.
- 15-27 Subseries 3: Geographical Files - Correspondence. 12 3/4 boxes.

Correspondence with World War I veterans describing the work of the REC. Arranged geographically by the state in which they lived, and then chronologically.
- 27-28 Subseries 4: Miscellaneous REC Papers. 1 1/4 boxes.

Lists of destroyed REC files, complimentary letters, copies of REC bulletins and newsletters, and research data on the cost of retirement benefits. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
- 29 Series II: 1952 Campaign Files. 1 box.

Correspondence, reports and financial papers on Oles' work during the 1952 presidential campaign in Washington state. Arranged by subject.
- 30 Series III: Miscellaneous Papers. 1/2 box.

Letters to newspaper editors, literature from World War I veterans organizations, and information on a meeting between Oles and a group of Danish Boy Scouts. Arranged by subject.

CONTAINER LIST

Box No. Contents

1 Series I: Reserve Equalization Committee Files

 Subseries 1: Narrative History

Tape #1 [Oles military service; 1942 & 1948 laws re reserve retirement benefits; Court of Claims cases of Albert Berry (1952) and Frank Reynolds (1953); 1955 ROA convention; creation of REC; 1956 ROA convention; General Melvin J. Maas; 1957 ROA convention; lobbying for ROA president; election of deLesseps Morrison; Col. John T. Carlton as ROA executive director; attitude of Retired Officers Association; REC legislative program; REC lobbyist Henry Doyle; search for successor to Doyle, 1956; Charles Finucane; list of exhibits 1-18]

Exhibits 1-14

Exhibit 15

Exhibits 16-18

Tape #2 [interpretation of 1942 law by military & Court of Claims; case of Frank Reynolds (1953); REC legislative program, 1955-57; efforts to raise money & support for REC; comments on various military officers, ROA officials, members of Congress; Oles' reports to REC members; support from John Sparkman and Edwin C. Johnson; problems with Carl Vinson, House Armed Services Committee, ROA; comments re former members of Congress who wrote 1942 legislation; Oles' 1957 research on cost of increased benefits; General Ed Smith; lobbying the Department of the Army; conference at Pentagon, May 21, 1957; list of exhibits 19-37]

Exhibits 19-22

Exhibits 23-24

Exhibits 25-31

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Tape #3 [results of Pentagon conference of May 21, 1957; Major Turrou; George Foster of Court of Claims; 1957 ROA convention; John Carlton of ROA; General Mel Maas; REC legislative program; role of Bureau of the Budget; Edwin C. Johnson; rulings on nature of military retirement; decision to renew suit in Court of Claims; 1958 military pay bill; Oles reports to REC on his 1958 activities; Defense Department concern over costs; preparation for Abbott case; opening office in Washington, DC; 1959 legislative proposals; list of exhibits 38-47]

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(cont.) Exhibits 38-47

Tape #4 [opening office in Washington, DC; research on retirement issues; Retired Officers Association; John Russell Blandford and the House Armed Services Committee; preparation of Congressional speeches; retirement of George Fisher from Court of Claims, Feb 1958; meetings with Pentagon officials; tax exempt status for ROA; July 11, 1958, meeting with Robert Dechert, DOD general counsel, and Dechert's later reversal; search for lawyer to handle Court of Claims suit; hiring George Foster, July 1958; preparation of case for Court of Claims; list of exhibits 48-64]

Exhibits 48-64

2 Tape #5 [Jan 1959 ROA meeting; new Congress; military retirement procedures; role of Comptroller General; Edwin C. Johnson; new legislation; filing Court of Claims suit June 1959 (Abbott vs US); Defense Department opposition to legislation; interpretation of 1942 pay act; comments on members of Congress who provided support; dislike of George Foster by Claims Court Judge Jones; hiring Mr. Rugg to be new lawyer; tax exempt status of ROA]

Tape #6 [Bureau of the Budget & General Accounting Office; research on costs of retirement legislation; problems with Mr. Dechert & Col. Turrou; importance of testimony by sponsors of legislation; election of George Byers as REC president, June 1959; support from other veterans organizations; replacement of George Foster by Charles Rugg as counsel; delays in Court of Claims case; Paris Houston & Justice Department research on case; list of exhibits 65-72]

Exhibits 65-72

Tape #7 [Court of Claims suit (Abbott vs US) 1960; Chief Judge Marvin Jones and his dislike of REC counsel George Foster; search for new lawyer; Charles Rugg & Leonard Calhoun; Justice Department emphasis on marginal retirement cases; subsequent reform of Court of Claims procedures; preparation of Abbott case; adverse decision, March 1961; appeal to Supreme Court; decision to continue seeking legislation; possibility of attempting suit in US District Court; description of documents re Abbott case; analysis by General Ed Smith; list of exhibits 73-98]

Exhibit 73 (1)(2)

Exhibits 74-79

Exhibit 80

Exhibit 81

Exhibits 82-84

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3	Exhibit 98 (1)-(4) Tape #8 [1963 legislation: military pay bill, computation of retirement pay, lobbying for another equalization bill; 1964 legislation: bill to allow US District Courts to hear pay cases; importance of using District Courts rather than Court of Claims; Cong. Bob Sikes; Sen. Strom Thurmond; list of exhibits 99-105] Exhibits 99-101 Exhibit 102 (1)(2) Exhibits 103-105 Tape #9 [Lawrence Woodworth; lobbying Congress; specialization of House members; importance of personal contacts; support from veteran's organizations; problems with Retired Officers Association; special committees to study retirement pay; 1964-65 legislative objectives; problems with William R. Foley of House Judiciary committee; Edwin C. Johnson; comments on various senators & representatives; bill to allow US District Courts to hear pay cases; list of exhibits 106-111] Exhibits 106-111 Tape #10 [lobbying Congress, 1965-66; ROA; problems with House Judiciary Committee; comments on successful 1966 legislation; laws to protect retirement benefits, to prevent reimbursement of erroneous overpayments; 1967 legislation; bill to enlarge jurisdiction of US District Courts; problems with Strom Thurmond; test case in US District Court in Colorado; search for lawyer & plaintiff; Col. William Perry; filing of briefs; list of exhibits 112-130] Exhibits 112-119 Exhibits 120-130

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- 4 Tape #11 [1968 Perry case in Denver; meetings with lawyers; disqualification of judge; adverse decision Jan 1969; appeal to Court of Appeals; adverse decision May 1971; legislative program after 1970; bills to protect retirement pay; research by Oles on bills; reluctance of Congress to listen to detailed arguments; general summary of REC accomplishments]

Lists of Miscellaneous Exhibits 131-188

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6	Exhibit 182 (1)(2) [Robert Klepinger]
	Exhibit 183 (1)-(4) [Robert Klepinger]
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	Exhibit 185 [Chan Gurney]
	Exhibit 186 (1)-(3) [Edwin C. Johnson]
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Connecticut VC - Col. William J. Walsh

Connecticut from 1962 (1)(2)

Maine Co-Vice-Chairman - Maj. Harry B. Formhals

Maine - Maj. Gen. Frank E. Lowe

Maine (1)(2)

Massachusetts - Col. Charles L. Bullock

Massachusetts from 1962 (1)-(4)

New Hampshire VC - Col. Albert S. Baker

New Hampshire

New Jersey - Col. A.A. "Tee" Broccoletti

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	South Carolina (1)(2)	
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	Fourth Army State List	
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Oklahoma Dep. VC - Col. Joseph D. Garrison		
Oklahoma VC - Col. Owen J. Watts		
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29	<p>Series II: 1952 Campaign Files</p> <p>Bulletins 1951-1952 (1)(2) [newsletter of the headquarters of Eisenhower for President Washington State Committee]</p> <p>Citizens for Ike Receipts (1)(2) [Charles Willis]</p> <p>Diary Excerpts 1951-1952 [excerpts from Oles's diary re his campaign activities]</p> <p>Eisenhower Campaign Expenses (1)-(3)</p> <p>Eisenhower National Committee Finance Division - Hampson [Herbert Brownell]</p> <p>List of Delegates to Republican National Convention June 1952</p> <p>Pre-Convention Campaign Worksheets (1)-(4) [lists of Republican leaders in Washington counties; meeting of Pierce County organization]</p> <p>Republican State Convention 1952 (1)-(4) [publicity; platform; rules; lists of Delegates; anti-Eisenhower smear material]</p> <p>Washington State Delegates to 1952 Republican National Convention</p>
30	<p>Series III: Miscellaneous Papers</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1953-1964</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1965-1968</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1969-1970</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1971</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1972</p> <p>Letters to Editor 1973-1974</p> <p>Miscellaneous Papers [Oles biography; literature from organizations]</p>

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