

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY
ABILENE, KANSAS

BROOKS, GLADYS HARDING:
Papers, 1914-1969

Accessions: A92-20, A08-2
Processed by: HP
Date Completed: November 2007

The papers of Gladys Harding Brooks, an Abilene High School friend of Dwight Eisenhower, were deposited in the Eisenhower Library in 1992 by Col. Cole Kingseed, who had purchased the papers from Brooks' son, Robert Brooks (since deceased), on June 6, 1992.

Linear feet shelf space occupied:	.3
Approximate number of pages:	100
Approximate number of items:	25

In September 2007 Col. Kingseed executed a deed of gift for these papers.

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

1. Papers and other historical materials the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy of a living person.
2. Papers and other historical materials that are specifically authorized under criteria established by statute or Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and are in fact properly classified pursuant to such statute or Executive Order.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This small collection is a unique, fascinating addition to the holdings of the Eisenhower Library. The four love letters from Dwight Eisenhower to Gladys Harding reveal a side of Dwight Eisenhower we do not see in any of his other papers. In addition, they provide rare examples of his handwriting for this period (c. 1915), as well as some insights into American culture.

Gladys Harding was an Abilene High School friend of Dwight Eisenhower with whom he remained in contact during his West Point years. He graduated from Abilene High School in 1909, and Gladys graduated in 1910. Ike entered West Point in 1911, and Gladys traveled the Chautauqua circuit with the Apollo Concert Company from 1913 to 1915. Following Dwight Eisenhower's graduation from West Point in the spring of 1915, he spent the summer in Abilene before proceeding to his first post at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. During this interlude, Eisenhower and Harding became romantically involved, and they saw each other frequently, as indicated in her diary. The letters he wrote to her reflect his views of their relationship at that time.

Following this summer romance, Eisenhower moved to Fort Sam Houston where he met Mamie Doud, and Ms. Harding resumed traveling with the Apollo Concert Company. She married Cecil H. Brooks of Enterprise on June 10, 1916. Ike and Mamie were wed on July 1, 1916.

In addition to the 1915 diary and letters, this collection has several letters from Dwight Eisenhower to Gladys Harding Brooks from 1943 to 1956. In these letters he mentions current activities and old Abilene friends.

The original copies of the diary, the letters, and notes by Ms. Brooks have been placed in our Preservation File. Four photographs have been transferred to the audiovisual collection, and one item, a leather West Point card case, has been transferred to the museum. No documents in this collection have been closed or restricted in any way.

The Gladys Harding Brooks Papers contain some interesting insights into the mind of Dwight Eisenhower as a young man. They also provide a glimpse into American culture, circa 1915, including social mores, customs, and slang expressions.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- Nov. 10, 1892 Born in Abilene, Kansas
- 1910 Graduated from Abilene High School
- 1911-1912 Attended Eleanor Miller School, Pasadena, California
- 1912 Teaching at Crescent Valley, Nevada
- 1913-1915 Performed on the Chautauqua circuit with the Apollo Concert Co.
- June 10, 1916 Married Cecil H. Brooks at Olathe, Kansas. They had one son, Robert
- July 29, 1944 Cecil Brooks died at age 58
- March 19, 1953 Appeared on TV show, "I've Got a Secret"
- November 6, 1959 Died at her home in Abilene

Container List

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	<p>Diary, 1915 (1)(2) [June 16 to August 31 entries indicate Dwight Eisenhower and Gladys Harding were together on over forty occasions; Jan. to April and Sept. to Dec. Ms. Harding was on the Chautauqua circuit with the Apollo Concert Co.]</p> <p>Diary, October 1947 [Ms. Brooks saw DDE in a parade in Manhattan, Kansas on Oct. 25, 1947; Oct. 26 Ike visited her at home in Abilene]</p> <p>Early Letters from DDE, 1914-1915 (1)-(4) [four handwritten love letters from Dwight Eisenhower to Gladys Harding]</p> <p>Letter from DDE, June 9, 1943 [Milton Eisenhower, position at K-State; old friends in Abilene; Tunisian campaign; asks that she call his mother]</p> <p>Letter from DDE, June 12, 1944</p> <p>Letter from DDE, Sept. 2, 1944 [DDE offers sympathies in death of her husband]</p> <p>Letter from DDE, Oct. 10, 1944 [comments on her tragic loss; reference to Ruby Norman Lucier; old Abilene friends; upcoming election; the war]</p> <p>Letter from DDE, Jan. 29, 1948</p> <p>Letter from Jennie Tull Bush, Nov. 6, 1952 [mentions that Gladys, Ike, and herself all lived on the “wrong side of the tracks” and that Dwight had been in love with Gladys]</p> <p>Letter from DDE, Nov. 1, 1956 [wishes her recovery from an operation]</p> <p>Card from Mamie Eisenhower, May 12, 1969 [thank you card for expression of sympathy to Robert H. Brooks, Gladys’ son]</p> <p>Memorabilia [card from DDE as a lieutenant in U.S. Army; leather West Point card case or folder, 1915]</p> <p>Notes and Newspaper Articles [notes by Gladys Harding Brooks in 1957 concerning the letters from Dwight Eisenhower; article with drawing of DDE and Gladys Harding; clipping of DDE visiting Abilene on Oct. 16, 1953 and greeting Ms. Brooks]</p> <p>Photographs, 1914-1915 [photos of Gladys and Ike, c. 1915; photos of homes Ms. Brooks lived in]</p>