

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY
ABILENE, KANSAS

PHILLIPS, ELIZABETH MARGARET: Papers, 1918-55

Accessions 73-47, 75-20, 78-7 and 88-5

Processed by: SLJ, TB

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The papers of Elizabeth M. Phillips, who was largely responsible for the sending of relief parcels to hundreds of World War II British and American prisoners of war, were deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in June 1973 by Miss Phillips. Accretions to the papers were received in January 1975, October 1977 and April 1987.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 5.2
Approximate number of pages: 10,000
Approximate number of items: 3,400

An instrument of gift for these papers was executed by Miss Phillips in September 1973. Literary rights in the unpublished writings of Miss Phillips in these papers and in other collections of papers in the Eisenhower Library are reserved to Miss Phillips during her lifetime and thereafter 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 Elizabeth M. Phillips.
2. Papers relating to the family and private business affairs of persons who have had correspondence with her.
3. Papers relating to investigations of individuals or to appointments and personnel matters.
4. Papers containing statements made by or to Miss Phillips in confidence unless the reason for the confidentiality no longer exists.
5. All other papers which contain information or statements which might be used to injure, harass or damage any living person.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Papers of Elizabeth Margaret Phillips span the years 1917 through 1955. However, the bulk of the papers, consisting of correspondence, record books and newsletter publications, pertains to Miss Phillips' efforts during World War II to organize the sending of relief parcels from America to British prisoners of war in Europe.

Miss Phillips' war work began in Inverness, California in September 1940. The first prisoner of war parcel was sent to a British Second Lieutenant captured at Dunkirk who was a nephew of Miss Phillips' neighbor. As the names and camps of other prisoners became available, Miss Phillips began a project resembling the Mairaine system used in World War I which provided soldiers with "godmothers" and "godfathers" who volunteered to assist in the sending of letters and parcels. The program Miss Phillips originated was affiliated with the Women's Overseas Service League and sponsored by the American Red Cross.

The first problem arising with the project was interesting enough people in becoming a godparent, as a volunteer was asked to send at least one parcel and as many letters as possible per month to the adopted soldier. By July 1942, Miss Phillips reported having over 300 names of prisoners hoping to receive the American relief parcels. Because of the food shortage in Great Britain, the relatives of British prisoners were allowed to send only clothing and small amounts of chocolate every three months. When Miss Phillips' efforts were reported in the two official British prisoners of war newsletters, many relatives wrote to her requesting that godparents be found for their prisoner son or husband. Also, as word of the relief parcels became known around the camps, the prisoners themselves requested that godparents be located to "adopt" them.

A second problem surrounding the godparent project concerned the actual sending of parcels. Miss Phillips, as originator of the project, was constantly called upon to supply information to other godparents about what to send, how best to send it, the packaging of items, etc. As the war progressed, it became increasingly difficult to get the parcels mailed. First of all, there were a series of U.S. Post Office forms and regulations, such as the exact size and weight a parcel could be, that had to be complied with. Then in 1942, the Board of Economic Warfare in Washington required that a license had to be obtained for sending each parcel, and the red tape involved in this activity proved discouraging to many participants in Miss Phillips' project. Late in 1942, parcels could no longer be sent from the U.S. to an individual prisoner in Europe and it was allowable only to designate a particular prison camp. For a time, even the Red Cross was unable to send food packages abroad. Then, in 1943, the licenses could not be obtained for food parcels except by those persons who were determined to be "next of kin" to a prisoner. With this obstacle, the work of Miss Phillips and her godparents of sending food to their adopted soldiers ended. Even the U.S. censors discontinued the pen-pal type of communications the group had been conducting. All that was finally allowed at the close of 1943 was the sending of books to the various camps.

Another problem throughout the life of the project was verification that the parcels were being received by the prisoners. Because of the slowness of the mail, the time which passed between the sending of a parcel and the receiving of an acknowledgment from the prisoner was generally

several months. Many godparents were distressed at the thought of their parcels going to the Germans, and as a result refused to continue sending them. Eventually, cards were received from the prisoners acknowledging the parcels and describing their prison lives. During some periods, no mail could be sent from Germany to the U.S., so many prisoners wrote their families in Britain requesting that they acknowledge receipt of the food packages from their American godparents. Miss Phillips prepared a collection of these correspondences and circulated it widely among her group of godparents to encourage them and to entice others to join the project. Miss Phillips' correspondence continued with some of the British relatives and she supplied some of them with goods, such as certain items of clothing, that were not available in England. In return, they kept her informed of the work of the British Prisoners of War Relative Association and of how the war was affecting England. In this regard, there are a few interesting references to the bombing of London.

After the U.S. became a participant in the war and its soldiers became prisoners, Miss Phillips was flooded with requests for information from Americans on how parcels could be sent and what they should contain. Her godparent organization adopted some Americans, but continued to concentrate on the British prisoners while food parcels were still permitted. Many of the books sent from the San Francisco area went to American prisoners.

On June 1, 1945 Miss Phillips prepared the "Final Report on Work for Prisoners of War." Her records listed 545 prisoners, "men of all ranks from doughboys and Tommies to Generals and one Air Marshal...Yanks, Aussies, Tommies, Scots, French, one Pole, one Belgian, and two Hindus." The total number of food parcels sent exceeded 3,200 boxes and the number of books sent was more than 2,400.

The papers of Elizabeth M. Phillips were unarranged when received by the Eisenhower Library. Therefore, the present arrangement of the collection and the folder titles assigned to it was provided by the archival staff of the Library. The arrangement of Miss Phillips' correspondence is chronological, beginning with 1933. Following the correspondence are the records kept by Miss Phillips regarding her prisoner of war work. The last of the World War II materials consists of prisoner of war newsletters; newspaper clippings on the war, the prisoners and on Miss Phillips; and a few maps and books. In a separate series at the end of the collection are materials relating to World War I. These include documents on Miss Phillips' work as a nurse in France, and diaries kept by her cousin Mary Martin who was also a nurse in France. Thirty-one photographs were removed and turned over to the audio-visual collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born in New Jersey, June 1884. Trained as a registered nurse at the New York Presbyterian Hospital. Before World War I she did medical social work at Bellevue Hospital.

May 1917 to March 1919 she was a member of No. 1 U.S.A. Presbyterian General Hospital of the American Expeditionary Force attached to the British Expeditionary Force at Etretat, France. She was at the front with a surgical team at Corby near Amiens on the Semme from April 26th to May 7th 1918. She spent six weeks in Paris as companion to the first American nurse to be wounded in World War I.

After World War I she successfully lobbied in Washington with 500 other nurses for the rank of Lieutenant.

Before 1938 she spent ten years on a dude ranch in Wyoming, and moved to California.

1938 she left California for Columbia University on a Le Verne Noyes Scholarship. She did public health work there.

September 1940 she started the Godparent Project, from Inverness, California.

1941 she took a voluntary job in disaster relief in San Francisco.

July 1942 she moved to Oakland, California, becoming the public health nurse of the Visiting Nurses Association of Alameda Red Cross serving families of servicemen.

Currently living in San Francisco.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

| <u>Box No.</u> | <u>Contents</u> |
|----------------|--|
| 1-4 | Correspondence, 1933-1955. 4 containers. Bulk is during war years, with requests to Miss Phillips for information about the POW project, Miss Phillips' replies, cards and letters from POWs and their relatives acknowledging receipt of parcels. Arranged chronologically. |
| 5-6 | Godparent project records, 1940-1945. 2 containers. Miss Phillips' records on POWs and their assigned godparents; number and date of parcels and letters sent, determined in part of a post card survey conducted in March 1942; donations received; mailing lists; fact sheets for parcel specifications; and two reports made on the project, July 20, 1942 and June 1, 1943. |
| 7 | Photographs and newspaper clippings, ca. 1940-1945. 1 container. Articles on World War II, Elizabeth M. Phillips, and the POWs. |
| 8-11 | Published materials, ca. 1940-1945. 4 containers. The bulk are periodicals distributed by various groups involved with the work of helping POWs, including the British Prisoners of War Relative Association, American Red Cross for the Relatives of American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees, Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross, and YMCA War Prisoners Aid. Several books and pamphlets concerning the POW situation and seven maps are included in this series. |
| 12-13 | Correspondence and miscellaneous World War I materials, 1917-1922. 2 containers. Correspondence, diaries and memorabilia concerned with the experiences of Miss Phillips and her cousin Mary Martin as nurses in France. Two books and a series of periodicals entitled <u>The Dooins</u> are included. |

CONTAINER LIST

Box No. Contents

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1933-1955

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1933-1934 Correspondence |
| | 1940 Correspondence |
| | 1941 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (1) [January-July] |
| | 1941 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (2) [August-September] |
| | 1941 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (3) [October-December] |
| | 1941 Correspondence From Elizabeth M. Phillips |
| | 1941 Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips with Reply on Reverse |
| 2 | 1941 Correspondence From British POWs and Their Relatives to Elizabeth M. Phillips and Other Godparents |
| | 1941 General Correspondence To and From Other Godparents |
| | 1942 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (1) [January-June] |
| | 1942 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (2) [July-December] |
| | 1942 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips (3) [Cards] |
| 3 | 1942 Correspondence From Elizabeth M. Phillips |
| | 1942 Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips with Reply on Reverse |
| | 1942 Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives and the Relatives of American POWs (1) [January-April] |
| | 1942 Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives and the Relatives of American POWs (2) [May-August] |
| | 1942 Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives and the Relatives of American POWs (3) [September-December] |

1942 General Correspondence To and From Other Godparents

1943 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips

1943 Correspondence From Elizabeth M. Phillips

1943 Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives and the Relatives of American POWs

1943 General Correspondence To and From Other Godparents

4 1944 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips

1944 Correspondence From Elizabeth M. Phillips

1944 Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives and the Relatives of American POWs

1945 General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips

1945 Correspondence From British POWs and Their Relatives to Elizabeth M. Phillips and Other Godparents

1946 General Correspondence

1947 General Correspondence

1948 General Correspondence

1949-1955 General Correspondence

Undated General Correspondence to Elizabeth M. Phillips

Undated Correspondence From Elizabeth M. Phillips

Undated Correspondence From British POWs and Relatives

Undated General Correspondence To and From Other Godparents

SERIES II: GODPARENT PROJECT RECORDS, 1940-1945

5 Elizabeth M. Phillips' Gray Ledger Book, "Records donations & POW names c
GMs-- also odds & ends"

Elizabeth M. Phillips' POW Alphabetical Card Index

Elizabeth M. Phillips' Post Card Survey of Godparents, March 1942

Elizabeth M. Phillips' Black Notebook Containing POW Information (Typed)

Elizabeth M. Phillips' Black Notebook Containing POW Information (Handwritten)

- 6 Miscellaneous Information Concerning POW Project (1) [Mailing Addresses, Name Lists, Notes, etc.]

Miscellaneous Information Concerning POW Project (2) [Order Forms, Bills and Receipts for Goods to be Sent]

Miscellaneous Information Concerning POW Project (3) [Regulations and Form Letters on Parcels From Red Cross, Post Office, and Board of Economic Warfare]

Miscellaneous Information Concerning POW Project (4) [Written Reports and Information Sheets by Elizabeth M. Phillips]

SERIES III: PHOTOGRAPHS AND
NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, ca 1940-1945

Photographs Removed From the Collection

- 7 Newspaper Clippings re World War II

Articles and News clippings re Elizabeth M. Phillips

Articles and News clippings re POWs

SERIES IV: PUBLISHED MATERIALS, ca 1940-1945

- 8 Prisoner of War News (Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross) (Series incomplete) (1) [1941, 1942. October 1941 issue, page 129 has a short note on Elizabeth M. Phillips and the 35 prisoners her group adopted. October 1942 issue, pages 117-120, has an article "British Prisoners of War: How America is Helping Them," a report by Elizabeth Margaret Phillips]

Prisoner of War News (Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross) (Series incomplete) (2) [1943, 1944, 1945]

9 News Sheet (British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association) (1) [1941]

News Sheet (British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association) (2) [1942. January issue, page 5, has a short note on the POW work of Elizabeth M. Phillips. November issue, page 3, has an article "America and the British Prisoners of War: Two Years of Help From the United States," by Elizabeth Margaret Phillips]

News Sheet (British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association) (3) [1943]

News Sheet (British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association) (4) [1944]

News Sheet (British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association) (5) [1945]

Prisoners of War Bulletin (American Red Cross for the Relatives of American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees, 1943-1945) (Series Incomplete)

10 POW (Monthly Newsletter, Australian Prisoners of War Relatives' Association, 1943-1944) (Series incomplete)

Miscellaneous Periodicals and Newsletters of the YMCA, 1943-1945 (Live "Y"ers, The "Y" on World Fronts, I Speak For the Barbed Wire Legion, YMCA Army-Navy Bulletin, YMCA War Prisoners Aid News, Y-Commentator)

Miscellaneous British Periodicals, 1942-1945 (Britain Junior, The Illustrated London News, Britain, Britain Today, Aberdeen Bon-Accord, Memorandum of Information on Foreign Affairs and the World Crisis)

Miscellaneous Newsletters, 1942-1945 (Our Community Reporter, The Witness, The Outpost, News From Belgium and the Belgian Congo)

British Red Cross Society Fact Sheets and "Summary of Work"

Pamphlet - British Red Cross Society "The Heroes of St. Valerie"

Pamphlet - Treaty series no. 846, 1932 "Prisoners of War - Convention Between the United States of America and Other Powers"

Pamphlet - "The Last Best Hope of Earth" by Harry Scherman

Pamphlet - Federal Security Agency "Health, Welfare and Related Aspects of Community War Services," 1942

Pamphlet - "Correspondence Respecting the Policy of His Majesty's Government in

the United Kingdom in Connexion with the Use of Material Received Under the Lend-Lease Act,” 1941

Pamphlet - British Information Services “Battle of the Blizzards,” 1947

Pamphlet - “A Pocket Reference Guide Army-Navy-Marine Corps Insignia”

Pamphlet - Committee to Defend America “Official Statement of Policy,” 1941

National Geographic, August 1965 (Issue on the funeral of Winston Churchill)

11 Bulletin (British Prisoners of War Relatives’ Association) 1943, 1944, 1945 (Series incomplete)

Book - The 350th Fighter Group in the Mediterranean Campaign, 2 November 1942 to 2 May 1945

Book - News in Pictures from British Prisoners of War

Book - Recipes Out of Bilibid, collected by Col. Halstead C. Fowler, compiled by Dorothy Wagner. (Two items of correspondence accompany this book)

Book - Conference Report on the Contribution of Extension Methods and Techniques Toward the Rehabilitation of War-Torn Countries (United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service and Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, October 1945)

Book - The Prisoners’ Progress by L. C. Hunt

Miscellaneous Maps

SERIES V: CORRESPONDENCE AND MISCELLANEOUS
WORLD WAR I MATERIALS, 1917-1922

12 1917 Correspondence, World War I

1918, 1919 Correspondence, World War I

Undated Correspondence, World War I

Miscellaneous World War I Memorabilia

Book - The West Wittering Women’s Institute Book

Book - From the Australian Front, Xmas 1917

Newsletter - The Dooins of U.S. Reserve Base Hospital No. 2, 1917, 1918

Interview with Elizabeth Phillips

13 Mary Martin Diary Feb. 25 - May 7, 1918

Mary Martin Diary May 7 - July 28, 1918

Mary Martin Diary Aug. 1 - Nov. 14, 1918

Mary Martin Diary Nov. 15, 1918 - Apr. 1, 1919

Mary Martin Diary Jan. 1, 1921 - June 24, 1922

END OF CONTAINER LIST