

PAPERS OF JOHN BOETTIGER

1900-1950

Accession Number: 78-21

The papers were presented to the Library by John R. Boettiger, son of John and Anna Roosevelt Boettiger. Material in this collection is subject to the Copyright Law. Title 17 U.S.Code

Quantity: 14 linear feet

Restrictions: Material which might be used to embarrass, harass or injure living persons has been closed.

Related Materials: President's Secretary's File: Boettiger, John and Anna; President's Personal File 7 - Anna Boettiger; Anna Roosevelt Halsted Collection; Eleanor Roosevelt Papers; Roosevelt Family Papers Held by the Children; Harry L. Hopkins Collection (General Correspondence, 1933-1940).

The Boettiger papers contain family, business and personal correspondence arranged alphabetically by subject or surname of correspondent. The bulk of the collection is for the 1932 to 1950 time period and covers Boettiger's association with the Chicago Tribune, Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the United States Army and the Arizona Times, Inc. Business dealings for 1945-1948 both in Seattle and in Phoenix have been filed under Arizona Times, Inc. since the corporation handled the legal and financial affairs for both operations.

John R. Boettiger, while researching the book he has written about his parents, obtained additional materials from his father's family, friends and colleagues, from his mother and from his father's third wife, Virginia. These items include correspondence and clippings dealing mainly with John Boettiger's death and the life of his family after his death. Some of this material has been added to the Boettiger papers which accounts for the fact that there are items dated after 1950.

The papers have been arranged in one continuous series which is comprised of thirty-two containers. The content of each container is indicated in the shelf list which follows.

[Clarence] John Boettiger was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 25, 1900 and spent most of his early life in that city. His secondary education was interrupted when he enlisted in the United States Navy during World War I. He returned to Englewood High School in 1919 and was graduated in January 1921.

Shortly after graduation, Boettiger began working as a reporter for the City News Bureau. In August 1922 he started a brief stint with the Chicago Evening American and the following year moved to the Chicago Tribune where he stayed for nearly twelve years. Boettiger attained considerable success as a Tribune reporter. By 1926, front page articles were published under his byline. He covered a wide range of topics, particularly in the fields of politics and crime. Jake Lingle, a fellow Tribune reporter, was killed in a gangland murder around 1930. Boettiger was assigned by the Tribune to cover the story. He was actively involved in the investigation of the case and was on the scene when the killer was apprehended. The case furnished material for a book, Jake Lingle, written by John Boettiger and published by E. P. Dutton in 1931.

Boettiger's work on the Lingle case and his reputation as an able reporter resulted in a new assignment which had a great effect on his career. After the Democratic Convention in 1932, he was sent to cover the presidential campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Early in the campaign he met Anna Roosevelt Dall, the candidate's only daughter. Their friendship deepened rapidly in the months which followed. Boettiger went to Washington in March 1933 as assistant chief of the Tribune's Washington Bureau and soon became a frequent guest at White House affairs. At the same time, he was writing anti-New Deal articles for the Tribune. In order to resolve a potentially embarrassing situation before he and Anna were married, Boettiger resigned from the Tribune in December 1934. Col. Robert McCormick, owner of the Chicago Tribune, suggested he might remain with the paper in a less sensitive position but, instead, he accepted a job with Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. as assistant to Will H. Hays. The organization was attempting to upgrade the film industry and impose some censorship rules. Boettiger's duties seem to have been in the areas of publicity and research.

John Boettiger and Anna Roosevelt were married on January 18, 1935 at the Roosevelt home in New York City. The ceremony was a quiet affair attended only by a few members of the Roosevelt family. The press was not informed until after the fact. The Boettigers lived in New York City until December 1936 when John resigned from Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., to become the publisher of the Seattle (Washington) Post-Intelligencer. The Hearst-owned paper had been shut down for three months by a Newspaper Guild

strike and was also in financial difficulty. Boettiger was given much more authority in matters of editorial, news and business policy than was customary for a Hearst publisher. Anna was appointed assistant editor with special responsibility for the women's page. Although John Boettiger had very little experience in the management of a newspaper and Anna had none, the Post-Intelligencer did make substantial increases in circulation and advertising under their leadership.

John Boettiger was nearly 42 years old when the United States entered World War II. His papers reveal the struggle between his desire to play an active role in the war effort and his reluctance to leave his family and the newspaper. There is also evidence of some pressure from the President to have him join the four Roosevelt sons who were already in uniform. In April 1943, he took a leave of absence from the Post-Intelligencer and enlisted in the United States Army. After a brief training period at the School of Military Government in Charlottesville, Virginia, he was sent to North Africa. He landed with the combat troops in Sicily and Salerno and helped to set up the Military Government in Italy. During the Teheran Conference he served as an aide to President Roosevelt. He helped to handle the physical arrangements for dinners and meetings, drafted the Teheran Statement to be issued at the close of the Conference and served as the President's personal representative to escort General Ismet Inonu of Turkey to meet with Roosevelt and Churchill. Soon after the Teheran Conference, he was reassigned to the War Department in Washington, D.C. Except for a brief tour of duty in Europe at the end of 1944, he remained in Washington until his discharge in the summer of 1945.

When John Boettiger enlisted, Anna remained with the Post-Intelligencer for a time but changes in leadership and philosophy made her position quite difficult. Long before John left the Army they had decided he could not return to his former position. The family returned to the west coast in September 1945 with the intention of investing in a small newspaper or shopping news which could be expanded. They also hoped to obtain a controlling interest in a local radio station. They were part owners of the Seattle Home News for a time but sold their holdings in 1946 to devote all their time and capital to another project. By this time, they had moved to Phoenix, Arizona and purchased the Phoenix Shopping News, a free weekly publication, which they gradually expanded into a paid daily paper, the Arizona Times. The radio station was never acquired. Growth of the paper was handicapped by a shortage of newsprint and need for additional capital. In February 1948, Boettiger officially turned the management of the paper over to his wife who ran the operation for approximately six months before the paper was sold.

John Boettiger travelled through Europe gathering material for articles on post-war achievements and problems. After he returned to the United States, he served as a consultant to the publisher of a small newspaper in Lake Charles, Louisiana for a short time before joining a public relations firm, Theodor Swanson and Co., in July 1949. He was still with that agency at the time of his death on October 31, 1950.

PAPERS OF JOHN BOETTIGER
1900-1950

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