

Papers of  
CLAUDE R. WICKARD

c. 1903-1967

Accession Number: MS 76-33

The papers of Claude R. Wickard were donated to the Roosevelt Library by his daughters, Betty Wickard Bryant and Ann Wickard Pickart in September, 1976. Mr. Wickard's copyright interest in these papers has been donated to the United States Government.

Quantity: 40 linear feet (approximately 80,000 pages)

Restrictions: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with Executive Order 11652. Material which might be used to embarrass, harass or injure living persons has been closed. Permission of the Wickard Family is necessary to cite or quote for publication any material from the Columbia University Oral History transcripts.

Related Material: Material relating to Wickard's governmental career can be found in the papers of President Roosevelt under Department of Agriculture (PSF: Agriculture and OF 1), Democratic National Committee (OF 300), and Farm Matters (OF 227).

CLAUDE R. WICKARD, 1893-1967

Biographical Sketch

Claude R. Wickard was born on February 23, 1893 on the family farm in Carroll County, Indiana. In 1915 he began his long career as an agriculturist upon graduation from Purdue with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Husbandry. With the completion of these studies, Wickard took over the management of the family farm. He distinguished himself by initiating improved farming methods and feeding policies thus winning numerous medals and awards which led to his selection as a "Master Farmer of Indiana" in 1927.

Before his appointment to the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in 1933, Wickard was active in a number of farm organizations and served one term (1932-1933) in the Indiana legislature as State Senator from the largely agricultural counties of Carroll, White and Clinton.

In Washington, Wickard began work as an assistant chief of the AAA corn-hog section and in 1935 he was made chief. When the AAA inaugurated its agricultural conservation program in 1936, Wickard was named assistant director of the North Central Division and in a short time was made director.

Wickard's advancement through the Department of Agriculture coincided with the return of better times to the nation's farmers. In February 1940, he was appointed Under-Secretary of Agriculture. Six months later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt named Claude Wickard to the cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture.

As a wartime Secretary, Wickard developed and administered programs which enabled the American farmer to produce enough food to feed the country, its armed forces and most of its allies. By 1945 America's level of food production was high enough to make the difference between life and death for many people in the war-torn countries of Europe.

After serving as Secretary of Agriculture for three months in the cabinet of President Truman, Wickard resigned in July 1945 to become administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration. During his tenure, REA made great strides in the production of electricity which substantially lightened the workload of the farmer and brought modern living to rural America. Claude Wickard resigned from the REA in March 1953 and soon after returned to active farming on "Fairacre Farms" near Camden, Indiana.

He continued to serve as Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture for the Democratic National Committee, as a trustee of Purdue University and one of the directors of Meridian Mutual Insurance Company.

Wickard was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Agriculture by Purdue in 1941 and received several other honorary degrees from various institutions of higher learning.

In 1956, he ran for United States Senator from Indiana on the Democratic ticket but was unable to defeat the incumbent Homer E. Capehart.

Mr. Wickard was killed in an automobile accident in 1967.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

CONTAINER

SERIES

1 - 4

Family, Business and Personal Files. c. 1903-1966  
4 Containers

This series contains Wickard's miscellaneous school notes and memorabilia (1903-1915), correspondence concerning family financial matters (1931-1945), memberships, awards, souvenirs (1919-1966), correspondence, depositions and notes relating to a law suit over publication of the book, Roosevelt's Farmer (1956-1961) and page proofs for this book. The arrangement of this material is basically chronological.

5

Indiana State Senator File. 1932-1933  
1 Container

This general correspondence is chiefly from Wickard's constituents of Carroll, Clinton and White counties in Indiana which he represented. Arranged alphabetically by surname.

6 - 12

General and Personal Correspondence. 1933-1967  
7 Containers

The outgoing and incoming correspondence in this file represents the communications accumulated by Wickard during his public career. The bulk of the mail falls within the period 1933-1953. A large number of letters from Wickard to his wife, Louise exist for the years 1933-1934; and 1940-1942. Arranged alphabetically by subject or surname of individual.

13 - 17

Department of Agriculture Files. 1933-1945  
5 Containers

This series contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes of meetings, working papers and notes, lists and clippings related to Wickard's career in the Department of Agriculture. The files are arranged in alphabetical order by subject.

18 - 19

Rural Electrification Administration. 1945-1953  
2 Containers

These office files are rather fragmented but contain correspondence, a few subject files relating to Wickard's work as REA administrator, 1945-1953 and travel vouchers. Arranged alphabetically.

CONTAINERSERIES

- 20 - 24      Personal Diaries and Appointments Books. 1940-1953.  
                 5 Containers  
                 The diaries (14 volumes) contain an almost daily account of Wickard's activities as Secretary of Agriculture (1940-1945), Administrator of REA (1945-1953) and his thoughts and reflections on these activities. Also recorded herein are notes Wickard made on cabinet meetings, family matters and current events.  
                 The sixteen appointments books constitute a record of Wickard's visitors and engagements kept by Catherine Loose, his secretary. Also included is a two-volume log of all Wickard's appointments arranged alphabetically and chronologically for the years 1940-1945.
- 25 - 33      Subject Files. 1955-1966  
                 9 Containers  
                 The material in this series contains correspondence, drafts, memoranda, reports, speeches, and legislative materials accumulated by Wickard after he left public office. It is arranged alphabetically and thereunder in chronological order.
- 34 - 44      Senatorial Campaign. 1956  
                 11 Containers  
                 Much of the material in this series can be described as background material and was used by Wickard during his unsuccessful campaign in 1956 to unseat the incumbent United States Senator from Indiana, Homer E. Capehart. The material includes correspondence, memoranda, speeches, speech material, press releases, financial accounts, business chits, printed and processed material and clippings. Arranged as a subject file with a general correspondence subseries interfiled.
- 45 - 53      Speech and Article File. 1934-1966  
                 9 Containers  
                 With few exceptions, this file contains all the known speeches of Claude Wickard from 1934 to 1965. Also includes formal statements made by Wickard 1940-1966; his testimony before Congressional committees, 1940-1952; press conferences he gave, 1940-1943 as well as a small number of speeches given by others, i.e., Mrs. Wickard and members of the USDA staff.  
                 Material in the writings file includes articles written by and about Wickard, 1942-1953; a book review done by Wickard, 1963; and two articles written by Dean Albertson 1950, 1953. Arranged chronologically.

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Columbia University Oral History Project. 1952-1953

5 Containers

This series is made up of the transcripts of 93 interviews conducted by Dean Albertson of the Columbia University Oral History Program between November, 1952 and November, 1953. Material from these interviews formed the basis of Albertson's biography of Wickard, Roosevelt's Farmer. The interviews deal with Wickard's family background, his early years, and education, his career in the Department of Agriculture including his position as Secretary and the nine years spent as administrator of REA.

These transcripts are open to research but permission of the Wickard family is necessary to cite or quote for publication.

59 - 69

Printed Materials. 1933-1966

11 Containers

Contains brochures, magazines, pamphlets, music sheets, reports, reprints and other processed and published materials relating to: Agriculture, Congressional Hearings, the Democratic Party and Politics, Indiana, Purdue and REA. Arranged topically.

70 - 77

Clippings and Scrapbooks. 1926-1965

8 Containers

Newspaper and magazine clippings highlighting Wickard's career in the Department of Agriculture, the Rural Electrification Administration and his senatorial campaign of 1956 in Indiana are contained in this series.

PAPERS OF CLAUDE R. WICKARD

c. 1903-1967

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