1-1-2009


Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/spcol_findingaids

Part of the Information and Library Science Commons

http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/spcol_findingaids/8

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Providence College Special and Archival Collections at DigitalCommons@Providence. It has been accepted for inclusion in Special Collections Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Providence. For more information, please contact mcaprio1@providence.edu.
Guide to Edward J. Higgins papers

1935-1976
# Table of Contents

**Collection Overview** .............................................................................................................................. 1

**Biographical or Historical Information** .................................................................................................. 1

**Scope and Content Note** ...................................................................................................................... 2

**Arrangement** ........................................................................................................................................ 2

**Index Terms** ......................................................................................................................................... 2

**Administrative Information** ................................................................................................................ 2

**Inventory** .............................................................................................................................................. 4

- **Correspondence 1943-1978.** ........................................................................................................... 4

- **The Wiretapping Case 1939-1940.** ................................................................................................. 5

- **Subject Files 1935-1976.** .............................................................................................................. 6
Collection Overview

Creator: Edward J. Higgins
Title: Edward J. Higgins papers
Dates: 1935-1976
Quantity: 4 box(es) (2.0 linear feet)
Abstract: The papers of Edward J. Higgins consist of correspondence, baseball memorabilia, Democratic National Convention memorabilia, news clippings, and investigative reports concerning the 1939-1940 wire tapping case involving RI Governor William Henry Vanderbilt and Pawtucket City Mayor Thomas McCoy.
Identification: rppc_higgins
Language: The records are in English.
Repository: Phillips Memorial Library, Special and Archival Collections 1 Cunningham Square Providence, RI 02918-0001

Biographical or Historical Information

Born in 1894 the son of Irish catholic immigrants and a high school graduate of his hometown of Warren, RI, Edward J. “Rip” Higgins for years in the mid-20th century was known as the administrative assistant to U.S. Senator Theodore Francis Green and Warren’s political boss.

But his early fame came in baseball. At the age of 8 Higgins organized a team known as the North End Gang and in 1915 he served as assistant manager of the Warren Shoe team that won the Manufacturers League title. In the early 1920s, the Little World Series between Warren and Bristol was in its heyday, with both towns bringing in out-of-town stars — even major-leaguers — to buttress their chances. Rip and his cousin Jigger Higgins boosted the talent levels of Warren’s teams to win three of four series from 1920-23.

In 1925 Rip organized a Warren/Bristol team that competed against other “fast” teams in New England. And when Warren High School won championships in the 1930s, ’40s and ’50s, Rip always ensured they were properly honored — in 1946 he donated silver baseballs for the team members who won the Class C and state baseball championships. As a young man, Higgins was a volunteer fireman and served during World War II as a Navy pharmacist mate on a troop ship. It was while Rip was in the Navy his brother, Johnny Higgins, who also was in the Navy succumbed to the flu. After the war Higgins took a job at Smith’s Drug Store in Warren that was a popular meeting place for Warren democrats.

However, in 1922 Higgins went to work for the Providence News, a Democratic paper owned by RI Senator Peter G. Gerry. In the meantime Higgins became a member of the Democratic State Committee, a position he held for forty-two years.

In 1930 Higgins’ passion for and involvement in state politics brought him in contact with Theodore Francis Green who when running for governor. Higgins correctly gauged the mood of the voters and predicted Green’s loss at the ballot box. Green was so impressed by Higgins’ political savvy that he asked Higgins to be his campaign manager for the 1932 election. Green won that election by more than 30,000 votes and offered Eddie the job of executive secretary. Eddie eventually accepted the position and when Green ran for the U.S. Senate in 1936 and won, he took Higgins with him to Washington.

For the next 25 years, from 1936 until 1960 when Green retired, Eddie Higgins remained a loyal confidant, advisor, and right-hand man to Green. During this time, Higgins, while remaining in the background working tirelessly for his boss, became friends with many influential politicians such as Lyndon Johnson and John O. Pastore.
Senator Sparkman of Alabama, paying one of the highest complements possible, spoke of the relationship between Green & Higgins saying "Higgins played the ideal role. He was loyal as any Senator could ask and a good deal smarter than most of us." When Senator Green retired in 1960, Higgins returned home to Rhode Island and remained active in local Warren politics until his death in 1979.

**Scope and Content Note**

The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence, news clipping, and investigative reports concerning the the 1939-1940 wire tapping case involving RI Governor William Henry Vanderbilt and Pawtucket City Mayor Thomas McCoy. These materials detail the progression of the investigation and include hearing testimony, photographs, police reports, and copies of telephone logs of the wire taps.

The collection also contains personal correspondence, plus an assortment of campaign memorabilia Higgins collected as a Democratic Delegate at the National Conventions from 1940-1964.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into three series

**Series list**

- Correspondence, 1943-1978
- The Wiretapping Case, 1939-1940
- Subject Files, 1935-1976

**Index Terms**

Researchers wishing to find materials related to this collection should search the HELIN catalog with these index terms -- View the catalog record for this collection.

**Names**

Altieri, Alice LaFond, 1894-1976
Green, Theodore Francis, 1867-1966
Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
Pell, Claiborne, 1918-
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972

**Subjects**

Governors -- Rhode Island
Rhode Island -- Politics and government -- 1865-1950
Rhode Island -- Politics and government -- 1951-
Roberts, Dennis Joseph, 1903-1994

**Administrative Information**

**Custodial History**

The materials within this collection were acquired by Higgins during the course of his lifetime.
Preferred Citation
Edward J. Higgins papers, Providence College, Phillips Memorial Library, Special and Archival Collections

Acquisitions Information
The collection was donated to Providence College in January of 1981 by the executor of Higgins estate.

Processing Information
The collection was processed in 2010.

Restrictions
Open for research.
Terms governing use and reproduction: Photocopying and scanning of materials is a fee based service available in the repository and is allowed at the discretion of the Librarian of Special and Archival Collections when in compliance to the College's policy on copyright and publication.

Related Material

There are no known separated materials.
Inventory

Series: Correspondence  
Dates: 1943-1978  
Extent: (18 folders)  
Material types:  
letters (correspondence)

Scope and Content Note
This series is comprised of general correspondence, such as thank you notes, from a variety of persons whom Higgins had cause to come in contact with during the course of his career in Washington, D. C.

Arrangement
The series is arranged alphabetically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Altieri, Alice L.</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Clinton, John B.</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Denfield, Admiral Louis Emil</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Furcolo, Foster</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Humphrey, Hubert H.</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Johnson, Lyndon B.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Keeney, Barnaby</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kennedy, John F.</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jenkins, Walter</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mantos, Mike</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Morell, Admiral Ben</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pell, Claiborne</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Slavin, Rev. Robert J.</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sorensen, Theodore C.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Truman, Harry</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Valenti, Jack</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Vanderbuilt, William H.</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Woods, Rose Mary</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series: The Wiretapping Case
Dates: 1939-1940
Extent: (26 folders)
Material types:
- clippings
- letters (correspondence)
- official reports
- photographs

Scope and Content Note
This series is comprised of materials that were generated during the course of the investigation of the 1939-1940 wire tapping case involving then R.I. Governor William H. Vanderbuilt and Pawtucket Mayor Thomas P. McCoy.

Arrangement
The series is arranged according to topic.

Box 1  Folder 19  Theodore F. Green correspondence  1940
Box 1  Folder 20  J. Edgar Hoover correspondence  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 21  Louis V. Jackvony correspondence  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 22  J. Howard McGrath correspondence  1940
Box 1  Folder 23  General correspondence  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 24  General correspondence and reports  1940
Box 1  Folder 25  Hearing testimony  1940
Box 1  Folder 26  Photographs  1940
Box 1  Folder 27  Petitions  1940
Box 1  Folder 28  Senatorial statements  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 29  News clippings  Jan 1940
Box 1  Folder 30  News clippings  Feb 1940
Box 1  Folder 31  News clippings  Mar 1940
Box 1  Folder 32  News clippings  Apr 1940
Box 1  Folder 33  News clippings  May 1940
Box 1  Folder 34  News clippings  Jun 1940
Box 1  Folder 35  News clippings  Jul-Nov 1940
Box 1  Folder 36  News clippings  1940
Box 1  Folder 37  Memorandums re: W.H. Vanderbilt  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 38  Grand Jury investigation  1939
Box 1  Folder 39  Telephone transactions  1939-1940
Box 1  Folder 40  Pawtucket Police reports  1939
Box 1  Folder 41  City of Pawtucket resolution  1940 Apr 10
Box 1  Folder 42  Duplicate news clippings  1940
Box 1  Folder 43  Duplicate news clippings  1940
Box 1  Folder 44  Duplicate news clippings  1940
Box 1  Folder 45  Duplicate news clippings  1940
Series: Subject Files
Dates: 1935-1976
Extent: 3.5 box(es)
Material types:
  - audiotapes
  - passes (tickets)
  - resolutions (administrative records)
  - souvenir programs

Scope and Content Note
This series contains campaign artifacts, baseball memorabilia, copies of Senate resolutions and House bills, along with memorabilia not classified elsewhere.

Arrangement
This series is arranged by topic.

Box 1  Folder 46  S. Res. 224/H.R. 2266/H.R. 3099  1940-1941
Box 1  Folder 47  S. Res. 224  1941
Box 1  Folder 48  Congressional Record  1941
Box 1  Folder 49  Radio Laws of the U.S.  1938
Box 1  Folder 50  Biographical information - Cornelius Vanderbilt  undated
Box 1  Folder 51  "He lost by 63 votes: that's it."  1956
Box 1  Folder 52  Quonest Point  1939, 1973
Box 1  Folder 53  Jefferson Day Dinner program  1945 Apr 15
Box 1  Folder 54  Testimonial Banquet - Edward J. Higgins  1976
Box 1  Folder 55  The Mounted Cavalry Band - A Cavalryman's Soliloquy  undated
Box 1  Folder 56  Campaign flyers  1974
Box 1  Folder 57  American League Baseball passes  1948-1978
Box 1  Folder 59  DNC Delegate passes  1932, 1940, 1948
Box 1  Folder 60  The News Tribune  1935 Jan 2
Box 1  Folder 61  The Evening Bulletin  1935 Jan 2
Box 2  Folder 1  One 3 1/5 inch reel-to-reel tape, "Senator Green commentary"  1959 Jan 30
Box 2  Folder 2-3  Two unidentified 3 1/5 inch reel-to-reel tapes  undated
Box 2  Folder 4-5  Two unidentified 7 1/5 inch reel-to-reel tapes  undated
Box 2  Folder  One unused appointment book  undated
Box 2  Folder  One unused address/telephone book  undated
Box 3  Folder  Resolution for Senator Theodore F. Green  1957
Box 3  Folder  Resolution for Edward J. Higgins  1979
Box 3  Folder  One unidentified phonograph album  undated
Box 4  Folder  One Denny Roberts Campaign Pennant  ca. 1950
Box 4  Folder  Campaign and baseball memorabilia  undated
Box 5  Folder  Campaign and DNC Delegate memorabilia  undated