

Guide to
MS 140
R. E. Thomason Papers

Span Dates, 1863-1978
Bulk Dates, 1915-1963

18 feet, 11 inches (linear)



Biography by Anne Allis
Processed by Laura Hollingsed
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Donated by Robert Ewing Thomason, 1967.

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Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department
University of Texas at El Paso

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Biography

Robert Ewing Thomason was a lawyer and former Mayor of El Paso. He also served in the Texas House of Representatives, the United States Congress, and as Federal Judge of the Western District of Texas. Born in Rover, Bedford County, Tennessee in 1879, Thomason moved to Era, Texas (15 miles southwest of Gainesville) with his parents when he was little over a year old. Thomason's mother, Susan Olivia (Hoover) Thomason, died in 1886 when R.E. was six years old, and his father, Benjamin Richard, wed Mary Maupin in 1887. From this marriage R.E. gained four siblings, Beth, Ben, Margaret and Milton. Thomason's father was a medical doctor by profession.

Thomason attended Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, and received a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He opened his first law practice in Gainesville, Texas, where he ran for and won the office of County and District Attorney in 1902, which he held for two terms. Thomason married Belle Davis in 1905, and entered into a law partnership with his father-in-law, W.O. Davis, in 1906.

In 1911 Thomason fell ill with malarial fever and spent some months in an El Paso sanitarium, after which he and Belle permanently relocated to El Paso for the drier climate. Their son William Ewing was born in 1913, followed by daughter Isabelle in 1916.

Thomason established a law firm in El Paso with partners Tom Lea, J.G. McGrady, and Eugene T. Edwards. He was elected to the Texas Legislature in 1917, and was voted House Speaker in 1919. In 1920 Thomason made an unsuccessful bid for Governor, and after his defeat returned to El Paso to rejoin his law firm. Thomason's wife Belle died in 1921.

In 1927 Thomason was elected Mayor of El Paso, and won a second term in 1929. Many civic improvements were undertaken during his tenure as Mayor, particularly the establishment of the El Paso Municipal Airport. He married Abbie Mann Long in 1927.

Thomason served as United States Congressman from the 16th District of Texas from 1931-1947, distinguishing himself in the Committee on Military Affairs, to which he eventually rose to Vice Chairman. While on the committee Thomason was able to affect an enormous expansion of Ft. Bliss, construction of Biggs Air Field, and the enlargement of William Beaumont General Hospital. Prior to WWII Thomason pushed hard for military preparedness and played a crucial role in the adoption of a selective service. Under his stewardship the committee secured funds for the development of the atomic bomb, and after the war Thomason was appointed ranking member on the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. In 1945 Thomason was part of an inspection team composed of members from the House and Senate and American newspapermen sent to investigate war atrocities in Nazi death camps. He also authored the bill establishing Big Bend National Park.

Thomason left Congress in 1947 when he was appointed Judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, a position he held until 1963, when he assumed senior status at the age of 84. He died in 1973.

Series Description or Arrangement

The R. E. Thomason Papers are arranged in five series:

Series I. Personal and Biographical

Arranged in five sub-series—Personal, Honors and Awards, Correspondence, Financial Material, and Other Material. The sub-series, Personal, is filed by subject or topic. Honors and Awards are in chronological order and by subject. Correspondence is arranged chronologically or by topic. Financial Material is filed by subject and then chronologically. Other Material is arranged in order by topic.

Series II. Career

Arranged in five sub-series—Legal Career, Campaign for Texas Governor, Mayor of El Paso, U. S. Congress, and Federal Judge. Material in each sub-series is arranged by topic and date.

Series III. Photographs

Arranged in six sub-series—Portraits of R. E. Thomason, El Paso and Vicinity, Individuals, Groups, Inspection Tours, and Other Military photographs. Individual portraits are filed alphabetically by the person's surname; and photographs of groups, events and activities are filed chronologically by date.

Series IV. Scrapbooks

Scrapbooks are arranged chronologically by date.

Series V. Roy Lassetter Court Reporting Papers

Arranged in three sub-series—Correspondence, Transcriptions of Court Cases, and Other Material. Correspondence is arranged chronologically by date, and Court Cases are arranged by subject.

Scope and Content Notes

The R. E. Thomason Papers, 1863-1978, consist of personal and professional correspondence, documents, records, awards, scrapbooks, photographs and newspaper clippings gathered during his long legal and political career. Elections material from his political campaigns for Governor of Texas, Mayor of El Paso, and U.S. Congress is included. Judge Thomason's correspondence of the early 1930s reflects the dire situation of El Paso and other west Texas cities and towns during the Depression years. Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings kept throughout his years in political office show his many activities as a representative of the people of El Paso, Texas, and the nation. The collection contains photographs of prominent government and military officials, especially from World War II,

along with photographs of Thomason's inspection trips to military posts and installations as a member of the House of Representatives' Committee on Military Affairs. His trip to Europe with other government officials to view the conditions of the Concentration Camps in Germany at the end of the war is documented in photographs, official reports, and newspaper clippings. In his unpublished book, *Noted Cases I Have Tried*, Thomason related some of the most famous cases he tried while serving as a Federal Judge. The papers of Roy Lassetter, Court Reporter in Federal Courts in West Texas from 1922-1925, are also part of the collection. The bulk of the material in the R. E. Thomason Papers is from his years in Congress and his activities as a member of the Committee on Military Affairs.

Series I, **Personal and Biographical**, contains personal correspondence and documents; award certificates and plaques; banking, tax and insurance material, and papers from his real estate investments. A Bible used during an early election at Magoffinsville, El Paso County, Texas, and R. E. Thomason's desk name plate are in this series.

The second series, **Career**, includes papers relating to Thomason's legal and political career. His professional correspondence, elections and Democratic Party materials, Congressional voting records, and speeches are included. The various documents and clippings related to Thomason's service on the House of Representative's Committee on Military Affairs and to his many inspection trips to military posts and installations in the United States and abroad are located in this series. The most significant papers are those related to his trip to Germany near the end of World War II to witness the atrocities found in the Concentration Camps. An unbound copy of his unpublished book, *Noted Cases I Have Tried*, is included in this series and relates his most famous cases as a Federal Judge.

R. E. Thomason's collection of **Photographs**, in Series III, consists of individual portraits of him, his colleagues in Congress and military officers. Photographs of prominent persons such as President Lyndon Baines Johnson, President Harry Truman, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Gen. John J. Pershing, and members of Congress and the Federal Courts are included. Photographs of groups and events in this series reflect his long career of public service in the Texas Legislature,

Mayor of El Paso, Member of Congress, and Federal Judge.

The twelve **Scrapbooks** in Series IV, filled with newspaper clippings, correspondence, photographs, and notes chronicle R. E. Thomason's unsuccessful campaign for Texas Governor in 1918-1919, his years in Congress from 1931-1947, and his later years as Federal District Judge in El Paso, Texas. One scrapbook includes reports and photographs of a Congressional inspection tour to Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Another scrapbook covers the Texas gubernatorial race, and five books reflect his sixteen years as a member of Congress. The last five scrapbooks cover his years as a Federal Judge. One book involves the Jencks and Matusow Communist Trials of 1954-1955.

The last series, Series V, **Roy Lassetter Court Reporting Papers**, were collected by Judge Thomason. These papers include court reporter and clerk Roy Lassetter's correspondence, billing documents, and transcripts of court cases for Texas from about 1922-1930.

Provenance Statement

R. E. Thomason donated his papers to the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department of the University of Texas at El Paso Library in 1967. The original accession number was 744.

Restrictions

No access restrictions.

Literary Rights Statement

Permission to publish material from the R. E. Thomason Papers, 1863-1978, MS 140, must be obtained from the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library. Citation should read, R. E. Thomason Papers, MS 140, C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, the University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Notes to the Researcher

Some of the R. E. Thomason Papers are fragile and brittle. Please handle with care. Photocopying of materials in poor condition might be restricted. Photographs and documents with original inscriptions and signatures by prominent persons, as well as newspaper clippings, have been removed and photocopied. Signed documents and photographs are stored separately.

Researchers should see also:

The Joseph Ray Papers, MS 148, C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Fernandez, Justo Ramon II. *Robert Ewing Thomason's Encounter with Nazi Germany: The Impact on the Life of an American Politician, 1917-1963*. Unpublished History Seminar Paper No. 310, 2000. C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Thomason, Robert Ewing. *Thomason: The Autobiography of a Federal Judge*. Edited and annotated by Joseph M. Ray. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1971.

Thomason, Robert Ewing papers on microfilm, MF 460, The University of Texas at El Paso Library

Container List

Series I. Personal and Biographical

Box #	Folder #	Title	Date
1	1	Personal--Biographical material	1941-1978
1	2	Personal—Certificates of Church membership for Thomason Family, First Presbyterian Church, El Paso, Texas	1915-1925
1	3	Personal--“Order for the Solemnization of Marriage”	1927
1	4	Personal--In Memoriam: Hon. Robert Ewing Thomason	1973
11	1	Personal--United States of America Passports – Robert Ewing Thomason	1924, 1931
14		Honors and Awards – City of El Paso Outstanding Citizen Award plaque	1919-1959
16	1	Honors and Awards – City of El Paso Conquistador Award certificates	1961, 1963
Vault		Honors and Awards—El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor certificate; framed	1963
Vault		Honors and Awards—City of El Paso—“For his many years of service to El Paso, especially when as mayor on September 8, 1928, he established and dedicated a municipal airport for the City of El Paso;” framed	c. early 1970s
1	5	Honors and Awards –Boy Scouts of America	1938
1	6	Honors and Awards –“Tributes to Robert Ewing Thomason by Members of U.S. House of Representatives” (2 copies)	1947
Map Drawer W8		Honors and Awards – Appointment as U.S. District Judge, framed certificate signed by President Harry Truman, with Department of Justice seal	1947
15		Honors and Awards – Veterans of Foreign Wars Citation of Merit Award plaque	1955
15		Honors and Awards – El Paso Board	1955

		of Realtors Outstanding Citizen Award plaque	
11	2	Honors and Awards – Texas Senate Resolution No. 419	1955
1	7	Honors and Awards –Various award certificates	1933-1967
1	8	Correspondence—John R. Hughes, Captain, The Old Texas Rangers	1942
1	9	Correspondence regarding Bible used at election at Magoffinsville, El Paso Co., Texas	1863, 1947
1	10	Correspondence—Various	1927-1945
1	11	Correspondence—Invitation to barbecue at Hillsboro, Texas	1936
1	12	Correspondence—Invitation to Inauguration of President Harry Truman	1949
1	13	Financial Material –State National Bank of El Paso, statements and cancelled checks	1945-1946
1	14	Financial Material–State and county tax notices, receipts, and correspondence	1933-1944
1	15	Financial Material–U. S. Tax Returns	1937-1939
11	3	Financial Material– Social Security, Employer’s Tax Return	1937-1944
1	16	Financial Material—Insurance receipts	1939-1941
1	17	Financial Material--Donations to charities, correspondence	1941-1943
1	18	Financial Material--Real estate, Isabelle Apartments, 717 North Stanton, El Paso, Texas, accounts	1941-1946
1	19	Financial Material--Real estate, Isabelle Apts.; various statements, receipts and correspondence	1940-1946
2	1	Financial Material--Real estate, Isabelle Apts., plumbing receipts, warranties, and correspondence	1936-1946
2	2	Financial Material--Real Estate – Various correspondence	1936
2	3	Other Material-- <i>Alcalde</i> , University of Texas Alumni Magazine, 3 issues	1968-1969
11	4	Other Material--“In the Early Days of	1914

		Denton and Cooke Counties,” newspaper clipping	
11	5	Other Material—Various newspaper clippings	1947-1978
13	1	Other Material— <i>Holy Bible</i> , with inscription, used at early election at Magoffinsville, El Paso County, Texas	1863
13	2	Other Material—R. E. Thomason’s desk name plate	1932-1963

Series II. Career

2	4	Legal Career – <i>Edward Dorsey vs. Lawrence Gardner</i> , 41 st Judicial District, El Paso County, Texas: Oral Answers and Depositions of R.A. Nooke and H. Eichwald	1923
2	5	Campaign for Texas Governor – Election material, newspaper clippings	1920
11	6	Campaign for Texas Governor – Election material, newspaper clippings	1920
2	6	Mayor of El Paso –Election material, newspaper clippings and other material	1927
11	7	Mayor of El Paso – Election material, newspaper clippings	1927
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2	7	Mayor of El Paso –“Bon Voyage: The American Mayors’ Visit to France, 1931”	1936
2	8	U.S. Congress –Incoming General Correspondence	1932-1936
2	9	U.S. Congress –Incoming General Correspondence	1936-1947
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2	12	U.S. Congress—Correspondence from Pres. Harry Truman	1948

2	13	U.S. Congress –Correspondence from Tom Lea, Sr.	1942
2	14	U.S. Congress –Incoming correspondence from R.E. Sherman, Mayor of El Paso	1932-1945
2	15	U.S. Congress –Outgoing correspondence to R.E. Sherman, Mayor of El Paso	1932-1945
2	16	U.S. Congress –Agriculture, correspondence	1933-1936
2	17	U.S. Congress –Big Bend National Park, correspondence and clippings	1946
2	18	U.S. Congress –Highways and roads, correspondence	1933-1936
2	19	U.S. Congress –Immigration Inspectors, correspondence	1933
3	1	U.S. Congress –International Boundary Commission, correspondence	1933-1936
3	2	U.S. Congress –Midland Geological Society, correspondence	1933
3	3	U.S. Congress –Pink Boll Worm, correspondence	1933
3	4	U.S. Congress –Postmaster Appointments to various Texas Post Offices, correspondence	1933
3	5	U.S. Congress –El Paso Postmaster Appointment, R. Del Richey, correspondence	1932-1933
3	6	U.S. Congress –El Paso Postmaster Appointment, Mrs. A.F. Quisenberry, correspondence	1933
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3	9	U.S. Congress –Public Works Construction Programs at Ft. Bliss, El Paso Federal Court House, and Rio Grande Rectification Projects	1933
3	10	U.S. Congress –Red Bluff Dam	1933

		Project, Pecos River, incoming correspondence	
3	11	U.S. Congress –Red Bluff Dam Project, Pecos River, outgoing correspondence	1933
3	12	U.S. Congress –Selective Service System, correspondence	1943
3	13	U.S. Congress –Texas Cattle Relief, correspondence	1933-1936
3	14	U.S. Congress –Veterans, correspondence	1933-1944
3	15	U.S. Congress –U.S. Military, correspondence and recommendations for commissions and other actions	1933-1943
3	16	U.S. Congress –Contractor Projects, correspondence and recommendations	1933-1936
3	17	U.S. Congress –Requests for jobs and assistance, incoming correspondence	1933-1947
3	18	U.S. Congress –Requests for jobs and assistance, outgoing correspondence	1933
3	19	U.S. Congress –Job recommendations and correspondence	1933-1936
3	20	U.S. Congress –Loan recommendations and correspondence	1933
3	21	U.S. Congress—Sample of R. E. Thomason's stationery, House of Representatives	1932-1947
3	22	U.S. Congress—Notebook of lists of political supporters (?) from Texas Counties	1932-1947
4	1	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Congressional campaign against Dan Jackson, correspondence	1932
4	2	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, correspondence and newspaper clippings	1936-1946
4	3	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, newspaper clippings	1942
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		Democratic Party, newspaper clippings	
4	4	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, newspaper clippings	1944
11	9	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, newspaper clippings	1944
4	5	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, return receipts for applications for Democratic Primary	1944
4	6	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, correspondence and clippings	1946
11	10	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, newspaper clippings	1946
11	11	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, campaign advertisements and newspaper clippings	1946
16	2	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, newspaper clippings of campaign advertisements and election results	1942-1946
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11	12	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, various election material	1945-1946
11	13	U.S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Certificates of Election, State of Texas	1944, 1946
4	7	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, campaign expenses, cancelled checks	1946
11	14	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Thomason Re-Election Club	1932-1946
4	8	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Political Calendar for Texas Democratic Primary and General Election	1946
11	15	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Texas Democratic	1933

		National Committee, correspondence	
4	9	U. S. Congress—Elections and Democratic Party, Democratic National Committee for Texas, correspondence	1933-1945
4	10	U.S. Congress –Elections and Democratic Party, Democratic National Committee, correspondence	1933-1945
4	11	U.S. Congress –Elections and Democratic Party, <i>The Democratic Congressional Register</i> (2 copies)	1937
4	12	U.S. Congress –Elections and Democratic Party, <i>The Democratic Digest</i> , eulogies to Franklin Delano Roosevelt	June 1945
4	13	U.S. Congress –Elections and Democratic Party, “Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of Nov. 7 1944,” pamphlet	1944
4	14	U.S. Congress –Elections and Democratic Party, clippings concerning Congressional race to succeed R.E. Thomason	May 1947
11	16	U.S. Congress – Elections and Democratic Party, Rep. J. T. Rutherford, various material	1954-1963
16	2	U.S. Congress – Elections and Democratic Party, Rep. J. T. Rutherford, newsletter	1955
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5	8	U.S. Congress –Speeches, “Assistance to Veterans and Their Dependents,” by R.E. Thomason	9-21-1944
5	9	U.S. Congress –Speeches, notes for speech by R.E. Thomason, at El Paso	1932-1947
5	10	U.S. Congress –Speeches, loose clippings from <i>Congressional Record</i>	1941-1943
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5	12	U.S. Congress –Speeches, various addresses by others	1943-1945
5	13	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Investigation of the National Defense Program,” Special Committee on Real Estate and Construction, Committee on Military Affairs	1940-1945
5	14	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Union Practices and Fees,” H. Ralph Burton, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs	1942
5	15	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Continuing Commodity Credit Corp. as an Agency of the U.S.,” House of Representatives, Conference Report	1943
5	16	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Army History and Production Data”	1943
5	17	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Size of Armed Forces”	1943
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12	3	U.S. Congress—Reports, “United Nations War Crimes Commission Progress Report”	1944

12	4	U.S. Congress—Reports, “United Nations War Crimes Commission Second Progress Report”	1945
11	23	U.S. Congress –Reports, “Military Obligations That Will Be Assumed by the United States as a Participant in the United Nations Organization”	1945
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11	24	U.S. Congress – Military Affairs, newspaper clippings	1935-1946
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11	25	U.S. Congress – Committee on Military Affairs, promotion of General Mark Clark	1946
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6	5	U.S. Congress –Inspection Trip to Europe, “Itinerary for Congressional Group,” Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army	1945
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6	6	U.S. Congress –Inspection Trip to Europe, Europe Road Map Series, “France,” Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army	1944
6	7	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, “Review of U.S. Army	1942-1945

		Operations in Europe from 1942," booklet prepared by Control Division and Historical Section, Headquarters Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations	
6	8	U.S. Congress –Inspection Trip to Europe, War Crimes Commission, various material	1945
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12	9	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, "Annex No. 3 to Reconnaissance Report of the 21 st of April 1945: Report of Visit to Stalag IX-C, a Prisoner of War Camp at Bad Sulza"	1945
12	10	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, "Annex No. 4 to Reconnaissance Report of the 21 st of April 1945: Report of Visit to Transient Camp at the Village of Oberfeld for Displaced Persons and Prisoners of War"	1945
12	11	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, "Annex No. 5 to Reconnaissance Report of 21 st of April 1945: Report on Interviews Held With Liberated American and British Prisoners of War at Hotel Europa, Altenburg, Germany (25 miles South of Leipzig)"	1945
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12	13	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, “Inspection of German Concentration Camp for Political Prisoners Located at Buchenwald on the North Edge of Weimar” (4 pages, no photographs)	1945
12	14	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, “Inspection of German Concentration Camp for Political Prisoners Located at Buchenwald on the North Edge of Weimar” (10 pages, includes photographs)	1945
12	15	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, “Visit of Delegation to Buchenwald Concentration Camp in Germany,” United Nations War Crimes Commission	1945
12	16	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, “Places Visited or Seen From the Air”	1945
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12	17	U.S. Congress—Inspection Trip to Europe, newspaper clippings on German Atrocities	1945
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6	12	U.S. Congress –Armed Services and Naval Appropriations Committees Cruise, <i>U.S.S. Randolph</i>	1947
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6	21	U.S. Congress –Other Material, “The Constitution of the United States of America,” and “Virginia Bill of Rights,” pamphlets	1946
6	22	U.S Congress –Other Material, maps and guide books to Washington, D.C., and vicinity	1940-1946
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6	24	U.S. Congress –Other Material, “Army Talks for the Eighth Air Force: Stars Over the Reich,” European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army (pamphlet)	1945
16	4	U.S. Congress –Other Material, “Dinner in Honor of General George C. Marshall, Secretary of State,” program with signatures of various government and military officials	1947
6	25	U.S. Congress –Other Material, “To all Timberwolves” by Gen. Terry Allen	1945
16	4	U.S. Congress – Other Material, various magazine and newspaper clippings regarding World War II, Memorial Day, and Fourth of July	1943-1945
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Map Drawer W9	5	U.S. Congress – Other Material, <i>St. Louis Post-Dispatch</i> , articles on World War II and current events	May 22, 1945
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Series IV. Scrapbooks

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19		"Years 1938-1941"	1938-1941
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25		"Judge, Western District of Texas, 1948-1957"	1948-1957
26		"Jencks and Matusow Communists Trials 1954-1955"	1954-1955
27		"1961-1965"	1961-1965

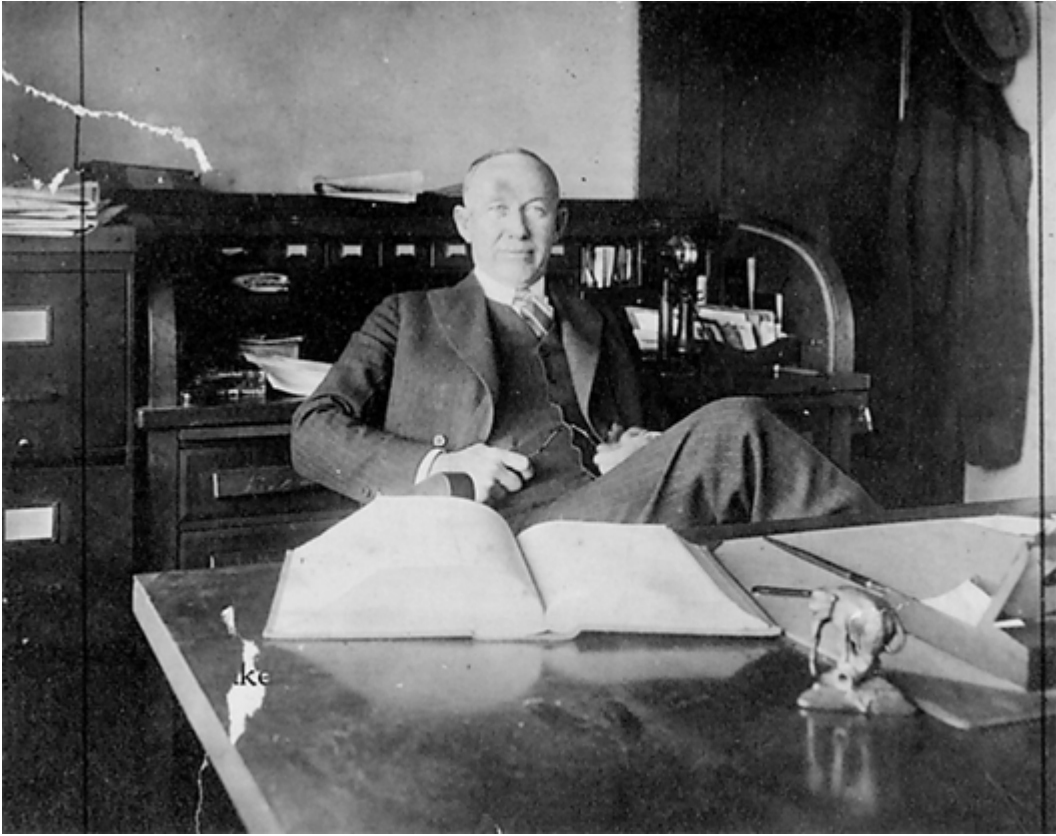
Series V. Roy Lassetter Court Reporting Papers

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10	11	Transcriptions of Court Cases, various cases and other material	1923-1924
12	22	Transcriptions of Court Cases, various cases and other materials	1918-1928
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Thomason and Friends at UT Law School, 1900



Thomason at El Paso law office, 1920



Thomason as House Speaker, Texas Legislature, 1920



Campaign for Texas Governor, 1920

VOL. 36, NO. 80

HOUSTON POST 6-22-1920 HOUSTON:

"MORE BUSINESS, LESS POLITICS," IS THOMASON'S PLEA

Candidate For Governor De-
clares Education Is State's
Great Problem

OPPOSES NEFF ON LAND TAX

Declares Thrift of People
Must Not Be Penalized
By Laws

Declaring that he is neither a radical nor a retrogressive but is willing to be known as a progressive, "keeping step with the onward march of humanity," Robert E. Thomason spoke Monday night regarding his candidacy for governor to a crowd that filled the Main street auditorium to capacity.

Ben Campbell presided and Federal Judge J. C. Hutchason introduced Mr. Thomason stating that they had been friends in the university for many years and that Thomason had always shown himself to be a "regular fellow," and one not "too good for the best of us nor too bad for the rest of us." "He is not a man," said Judge Hutchason, "who has never caught a fish nor fired a gun, but a man who is good without being too good, and able without being afflicted with egotism."

Opposed to Land Tax.

"I am opposed to a graduated land tax," declared Mr. Thomason, following his introductory remarks, "because I have never believed in any law that has for its purpose the putting of restraints and restrictions on the thrift and industry of the people. My honorable opponent, Mr. Neff, has said that he would make it unprofitable for a man to own over a certain amount of land. I say that following that same principle you could prevent a man from owning more than one store or more than one cow. I believe that we should put a premium on the thrift and industry of the people and not punish these qualities. The graduated land tax is not intended to raise revenue but has for its purpose merely the preventing of certain men from owning more property than others believe they should own."

R. E. Thomason, Caught As He Told Houstonians His Views on Government



Campaign for El Paso mayor, 1927

For A Clean, Economical Progressive Administration



R. E. THOMASON

**Former Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives
Candidate for Mayor of El Paso on a Platform of Clean Politics
and Efficient Government**

Thomason as El Paso Mayor, 1931



Thomason and Charles Lindbergh, 1927



Thomason and Charles Lindbergh, 1927



Dedication of El Paso Airport, 1928



Thomason and family, 1952



Campaign for Congress, 1930

**FOR CONGRESS
R. E. THOMASON
OF EL PASO**



**R. E. THOMASON, of El Paso
Candidate for Congress, 16th District**

Subject to the action of the Democratic Primaries, July 26, 1930



Roosevelt All-Party Rally, c. 1937

For Soap book

Let's All Attend The
**ROOSEVELT ALL-PARTY
RALLY**
at City Hall
McINTOSH, MINN.

THURS., OCT. 22
at 8:00 P.M.

HON. EWING THOMASON
Congressman From Texas
will be the principal speaker

EVERYBODY WELCOME!
Come and hear a Progressive
discuss national politics.

Texas Delegation to Congress, 1938



VOTE FOR A FRIEND AND RETURN

*January
Project Co*

R. E. Thomason

MR. THOMASON HAS NOT BEEN
ABLE TO SEE MANY OF YOU.
HE HAS BEEN SWELTERING
AWAY IN WASHINGTON, DOING
THE JOB YOU SENT HIM THERE
TO DO—AND FOR WHICH YOU
PAY HIM.

TO THE CONGRESS WHERE HE HAS SERVED YOU
SO ABLY AND FAITHFULLY, IN WAR AND PEACE



R. E. THOMASON
HAS THE PROVEN
ABILITY—
THE EXPERIENCE—
SENIORITY NO NEWCOMER
COULD POSSIBLY HAVE



JUST A FEW

... of the legion of acts for the 16th District accomplished by R. E. Thomason since he took his seat in the House on March 4, 1931. These are from the Record:
He was immediately assigned to the Military Affairs Committee, an assignment of highest importance to the district. He is now the ranking member of that committee. During his incumbency:
Midland-Odessa, Pecos, Puyte, Maria-Alpine, Fort Stockton air fields were established. Fort Bliss was greatly enlarged.
Fort D. A. Russell retained and enlarged.
Caballo and Red Bluff Dams constructed. Land reclaimed for farming; waterpower developed.
Balcones Irrigation Project made a federal project
Has worked consistently for flood-prevention dams on the Rio Grande above Presidio.
Fostered flood control on Rio Grande and Pecos rivers.
He has been a friend to labor, but opposed to strikes against the public interest.
Fostered flood control on Rio Grande and Pecos rivers.
Worked for just legislation for federal employes.
Worked for needed highways and public buildings.
Always alert to needs of cattle, sheep and goat raisers.
Authored bill creating Big Bend National Park.
Authored "Thomason Act," whereby certain number of reserve officers are commissioned annually into regular army.
Throughout emergency, before, during and since the war consistently favored strong national defence. Still working on such legislation, as well as that designed to promote an enduring peace.
Consistently worked for the veterans of both wars.

Cast your vote on July 27
for R. E. Thomason - Continue the
Able, Vigorous, Impartial Representation
the 16th District has had in Congress

(Political Advertisement Paid For By Reeves County Friends)

Pecos Enterprise July 25 1946

Flowers for the Living—

Congressman Thomason Wins Respect in Capital With Ability and Leadership

By MARSHALL M'NEIL

Herald-Post Washington Correspondent
WASHINGTON, June 4.—The title of this piece might well be, "Flowers For the Living."

* * *

I don't know what kind of a judge the Federal District Bench in El Paso will get, but I do know that when Ewing Thomason leaves Washington, Congress will lose one of its outstanding and most respected members. One of its most effective, too.

Being a Congressman affects different men different ways. Some become stuffed shirts—or maybe they were that before they were elected. Some are lazy. Some get themselves so tangled up in detail, keep themselves so busy being messenger boy for constituents, businessmen, Chambers of Commerce and the like back home, that they forget they're national legislators sent here to decide national issues. Some yield easily to the pressures of lobbyists or campaign contributors.

Thomason has run a middle course that has stamped him as a No. 1 Congressman. He has done the chores for his constituency in a workman like manner. But at the same time he has devoted time and serious attention to national issues.

He got a two-star general to become commandant of Ft. Bliss, and he has gone to bat for veterans there. And, at the same time, he helped save from extinction—which meant military control—the atomic control law last session.

He would have found it easy to vote for the Republicans' labor control bill recently. But, after much soul-searching, he voted against it. He didn't take the easy way, and vote for the bill on the evasive basis that by so doing he'd help send to conference the House and Senate measures, so there'd be a



R. E. Thomason

compromise. He wants some sort of labor law, but not one that he fears will penalize the laboring man.

* * *

Over the years, he has won and maintained a high place in the House of Representatives, although he has never held a committee chairmanship.

During the war years, for example, it was to Thomason that War Department, Administration and Democratic leaders in the House turned for sound help in the House Military Affairs Committee.

As a member of that committee, Thomason helped save the extension of the draft, when this counted so vitally in our effort to win the war. He helped put through the terminal leave bill, after the war; he helped push to enactment the bill creating the Wacs.

Before the war, his worth was recognized by the House leadership

when he was appointed a member of the Joint Congressional Committee that investigated the Tennessee Valley Authority and found it clean.

* * *

While he has sought, and got, relief and building funds for the El Paso district, Army Post and airfield improvements, he has also succeeded in getting enacted the bill which set up the Big Bend National Park. Over the years he has tried his best to convince the White House and the State Department that the Chamizal Zone title question must be settled as concrete proof of our Good Neighbor policy.

While other Texans voted against it, Thomason has supported anti-poll tax legislation, and the FEPC.

So far as this reporter knows, the out-going El Paso Congressman has never pulled his punches.

* * *

But perhaps the outstanding characteristics of Representative Thomason are his sense of humor, his ability to recognize a fraud or a two-timer when he sees one, and to act accordingly. It's an awfully good Congressman who has those attributes.

He has another that's terribly important to reporters who are trying to give El Paso Herald-Post readers, the news of Washington. Thomason is a man who does not evade a question. Thomason recognizes news, because he knows people and what they are interested in. A reporter knows Thomason is telling him the truth.

* * *

I suppose it's anybody's guess who is going to be elected as Thomason's successor.

I only hope, for the sake of the El Paso district, that he's built on the Thomason pattern.

Thomason Winner Of High Honor For Work In TVA Investigation

Committee to Make Report on Power Board Activity

By MARSHALL McNEIL
Herald-Post Washington Correspondent
WASHINGTON, April 1.—The Joint Congressional Committee that has been investigating the Tennessee Valley Authority for nearly a year will soon make its report on the operations of this vast flood control and power project—the agency may regard as the outstanding one in the New Deal.

The report is expected to give the Authority a clean bill of health.

One of the signers of the report will be Representative Thomason of El Paso, who, because of his work on this committee, and on the House Military Affairs Committee, deserves the designation of "Southwesterner of the Week."

Gets Things Done

Congressman Thomason is one of that large group of men who turned from the law to politics, except that in his case it was a turn from a successful law practice to a successful career in politics. But he learned his politics the hard way. He served as a member of the Texas Legislature, was Speaker of that body in the turbulent days when Jim Ferguson was being impeached, he was Mayor of his home town, and then came to Congress.

Out of the experience he gathered in his years of practical work in the political vineyards, he learned, first, how to get things done under the sometimes cumbersome processes of our kind of government, and he acquired a philosophy about our kind of government that qualifies him not only as a good, but as a top-flight legislator.

The El Paso Congressman has the amiable, hearty disposition you have come to expect from persons



E. E. Thomason

from the wide open spaces. But, strangely enough, he isn't a West Texan. In fact, by birth, he isn't a Texan at all. He was born in Tennessee, grew up in Central Texas, and from there went to El Paso.

His friendly characteristics, therefore, are inborn. And they have won for him innumerable friends in the House, where each year he is taking on increased importance; and they have won him respect, as well.

No Empty Honor

Appointment to the TVA investigating committee was no empty honor. About a year ago, it may be remembered, TVA was under vigorous attack. All sorts of charges

El Paso's Congressman Gets Things Done In Capital

were being made. Congress decided to investigate these charges. The leadership knew it could not be a white-wash; that the inquiry would have to be made without pulling punches; and that the investigators had to be men in whom Congress would have faith.

Congressman Thomason had long been a friend of the policies TVA was created to put into effect. But when the charges began to flow across the front pages, he was the very first man in Congress to say, in effect: "Yes, I'm for the principles of TVA. But if there's anything going on there that isn't right, I want it investigated. I want a Congressional investigation now."

He Got It

Well, he got it, and it was because of his standing in the House and his frank, above-board outlook on TVA that he was appointed a member of the investigating committee.

Because a large army post—Fort Bliss—is in his district, Representative Thomason got on the House Military Affairs Committee when he came here. By the slow force of seniority, he is now the ranking Democratic member of that committee. It was because of this rank that he was one of those selected to iron out the final controversy over the recent big national defense bill.

In a Congress that's dead set on seeing that this country of ours is well armed, Representative Thomason's position is one of importance and influence.

Like some other Texas members of Congress—Representative Sam Rayburn for instance—Representative Thomason has qualities of frankness and courage—a winning daily double in anybody's race.

Inspection Trip, c. 1940s



Inspection Trip, c. 1940s



Thomason at Ft. Bliss, c. 1940s



National Defense Speech, 1941

HON. R. E. THOMASON

National Defense

Address by

Hon. R. E. Thomason

of Texas

At the Annual Convention of the
West Texas Chamber of Commerce at Mineral Wells, Tex.,
on the Evening of May 16, 1941

Printed in the Congressional Record
of May 26, 1941

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National Defense Speech, 1941

ADDRESS

BY

HON. R. E. THOMASON

Mr. THOMASON. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks, I include an address delivered by me at the annual convention of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce at Mineral Wells, Tex., on the evening of May 16, 1941:

Mr. Chairman, members of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, and distinguished guests, you have paid me high honor, which I gratefully acknowledge, in inviting me to address you at your annual meeting. It has been my pleasure and privilege to work closely with you before and since I became a Member of the House.

Your chamber is ever awake to the needs of our people and has done incalculable good in bringing to the attention of the State and national legislatures measures designed to benefit not only our section but the country as a whole.

Your letterhead bears the slogan: "West Texas—Raw Materials Capital of the World." This section produces meat, hides, horses, cotton, wool, mohair, oil, grain, potash, quicksilver. One of the first essentials toward national defense is the assembling of stocks of raw materials and strategic minerals. The value of our products cannot be overestimated at any time, and more especially in a period of stress and emergency. I have taken occasion often recently to urge the Federal Government to obtain information on the location of all possible minerals that are needed for defense and to acquire stocks of these materials in quantity.

From year to year you have grown in membership, in influence, in achievement. I predict for you a future of greater attainment in all that is best and highest for the welfare of this Nation.

One of the projects on which we have been working together for the past 6 years is the creation of the Big Bend National Park. In 1935 I introduced a bill in the House authorizing the establishment of this park, which bill was passed the same year.

The Secretary of the Interior and the heads of the National Park Service have been enthusiastic from the first with reference to our getting this area designated as a national park and have rendered willing and valuable cooperation to that end.

For these intervening years we have been trying to raise sufficient funds through private subscription, or the passage of a bill in our Texas Legislature, to purchase the necessary land and have title thereto vested in the United States Government, as the Government has a policy against buying any land for park purposes and could not be prevailed

on to deviate from this policy, much as the Interior officials were interested in having the park established.

The passage in the Texas Legislature within the past few days of a bill appropriating \$1,500,000 to acquire the land assures, on the signature of the bill by the Governor, the creation of this park as soon as the area is turned over with clear title to the Federal Government. Thereafter the park will be administered by the National Park Service and all necessary improvements made.

I shall ask Congress for necessary funds for this purpose just as soon as title is vested in the Government.

Geologically, as well as botanically, this area offers most unusual interest, and in portions of the park the scenery is outstanding, as the region of the Santa Helena Canyon. I am sure it will bring thousands of tourists to our State every year.

Much credit is due the Big Bend Park Association for its diligence in this cause and the successful outcome.

It is with a feeling of inadequacy to my assignment that I stand here this evening in the place of that great and sincere man who had been asked to make the principal address at this meeting. Morris Sheppard's sudden and untimely death has taken from us a beloved and trusted friend, and from his State and his country a leader who can ill be spared at a time when we face a greater crisis than in 1917. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, he piloted important national-defense legislation upon which this country is depending today to lead us safely through the present emergency and to preserve to us those liberties for which our forefathers fought and died.

Senator Sheppard was the dean of Congress, having been elected to the House in 1902. During those nearly 40 years he worked with unflagging industry for all that he conceived to be for the best interests of our people. He was absent from sessions of Congress so seldom during his entire incumbency that we may say his attendance on the Senate floor was 100 percent.

Throughout his long and valuable service, I wonder if anyone can guess how many people he helped individually. No one was too poor or obscure to claim his consideration, and none who came to his door for aid was ever turned aside. While giving himself, his thought, and his time to these activities, which, after all, are more or less incidental to a Senator's legislative work, he gave a full measure of study to the great issues before this country, and cast his vote without fear or favor, in accordance with his most profound convictions.

The memory of his blameless life and lofty ideals will be inspiration to us he left behind to lead lives of nobler purpose.

In the words of Shakespeare, whom he studied in all his spare time:

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"His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'this was a man.'"

The question today of most vital concern to us is adequate and speedy national defense, with aid to Britain as our first line of defense. We must have an Army, Navy, and Air Corps second to none and able to meet any aggressor anywhere. We do not at this time have the largest Army in the world, but I hope and believe we will soon have the best.

Let it be understood at the outset that I favor not only leasing and lending but, if necessary, giving to England all the munitions and supplies we can spare her that would not weaken our own defense. She is fighting our fight tonight—and what a brave fight she is making.

Under the direction of that very able officer, Gen. George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, the War Department is working early and late to meet the emergency. I feel you may be interested in having some of the figures on production and the number of men under arms, and I give these data briefly.

The strength of the Army today is 1,290,400 officers and men, the largest roster we have ever carried in a time of peace. Of these 485,900 are in the Regular Army, 290,500 are in the National Guard, and 469,000 are Selective Service trainees. Some 45,000 Reserve officers are on active duty, distributed among the troops.

The total strength of the Army—men in uniform, equipped and housed—on July 1 will be 1,418,000. That is 5 times the size of the Army we had 1 year ago. When Hitler attacked western Europe we had a bare 213,000 men and 14,000 officers.

The big increase has been in the last few months. In September of last year we had only 380,000 men, but that number jumped to over 1,000,000 in 6 months; and 25,000 new men are coming in every week. The 485,900 of these men in the Regular Army are all volunteer 3-year enlistments.

Texas stands at the very top of the roster of the States in the number of volunteers who have enlisted in the Regular Army during the present emergency. From July 1, 1940, through February 1941, 24,248 Texans have joined the colors, as against 18,432 from Pennsylvania and 17,705 from New York, which States are second and third on the list, both having much greater population than Texas.

Texans in the land and naval forces on April 4, 1941: Army, 60,237; Navy, 12,221; National Guard, 13,708; Marines, 2,761; Coast Guard, 89.

In the selective service Texas has 827,201 registered; number of volunteers in class 1-A, after physical examination, plus volunteers already inducted, 12,832; and number inducted to March 31, 29,936.

More than one-tenth of our great Army is now in our State. By July 1 we will have nearly 200,000 men in Texas. Most of these men are in west and southwest Texas.

Time will not permit a break-down by posts, cantonments, and fields, of which

there are 22 in our State. The following figures are given as the approximate number that will be stationed at the camps throughout west Texas on July 1: San Antonio, 30,000; El Paso, 28,000; Mineral Wells, 8,600; Abilene, 19,000; Brownwood, 29,000; San Angelo, 1,100; Marfa, 1,000; and Wichita Falls, 3,000.

Early this month the United States Navy comprised 227,089 enlisted men and 21,644 officers, including Regulars and Reserve officers on active duty. The United States Marine Corps, officers and men, was 51,165 strong. That makes a grand total of 299,898.

I do not believe I should be indulging in excessive exaggeration if I gave it to you as my considered opinion that the Navy and Marine Corps are today 300,000 strong. That figure represents, of course, far and away the largest naval personnel that has ever served the colors in time of peace.

We are building an adequate two-ocean navy. It is second largest of the world's navies and none of us can guess as to how great it will have to become to insure full protection of American rights and interests throughout the world.

We have at Corpus Christi a great and expanding naval air station costing \$28,500,000. Destroyers, landing boats, mine sweepers, and wooden and steel submarine chasers are being constructed in Texas shipyards, one order alone, that for destroyers, totaling in excess of \$109,000,000.

Defense funds allocated to Texas are as follows:

Estimated value of contracts for matériel awarded to firms having plants in Texas, between July 1, 1940, and February 28, 1941, \$133,609,661.

Estimated cost of construction projects to be built in Texas, including equipment of tulul plant, seven camps and one plant make up the total of \$126,015,370.

Chief among these are one ordnance plant, 2 aircraft assembly plants, 11 camps or comparable troop-housing developments, 1 harbor-defense project, 2 storage depots, and 7 airfields.

Not included is the amount of money to be spent for food and subsistence by the troops stationed in the State.

Not included is the amount of money to be spent by troops stationed in Texas from their pay and allowances.

Recently I was a guest at the official opening of the new powder plant at Radford, Va. It was ready for operation 3 months ahead of schedule. This plant has a capacity of producing 300,000 pounds of smokeless powder in a single day. This plant will produce in 3 days as much as Hercules Powder Co., one of the largest in the country, produces in a year.

The Charlestown, Ind., plant has begun production and will have a capacity of 400,000 pounds per day.

You have been hearing little but bad news, but I want to tell you something good about the progress of the program.

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The War Department is now making a survey to establish an eligible list of 28 more cantonments if and when needed. In making the awards, I feel sure Texas will be given just and fair consideration.

No phase of our defense preparations interests the people more intensely than airplane production. Mr. Knudsen, Chairman of the Office of Production Management, stated recently before my Committee on Military Affairs that 1,214 planes and 3,900 motors were produced in March, and predicted that this figure would be doubled by next year.

The April figures are: Planes manufactured, 1,427; 1,000 machine tools and 10 tanks being produced daily.

There have been awarded 15,000 Army contracts and 100,000 subcontracts.

There are in service at this time in the Army and Navy approximately 9,000 first-line planes of various types.

The production figures for April are 80 percent above those of last December.

I would say that second in public interest are tanks. The light tanks, weighing 13 tons, are being built at the rate of more than 100 per month. The medium tank, which is a very powerful weapon weighing 26 tons, has been redesigned following lessons of war in Flanders and France.

The need for ever larger tanks has been shown by the German campaign in Greece, where 40-ton tanks were used in both mountainous and flat areas. This country is building a supertank of 60 tons. What the limit may be no one can tell, but one thing is sure, no country will excel us in the size, efficiency, or the maneuverability of tanks, which have played such a vital part both in offense and defense in this World War.

We have a relatively small standing army in this country, officered by Regular Army personnel. We have in emergencies always pinned our faith on our great civilian army composed of the National Guard and the Officers' Reserve Corps. I favor amending the National Defense Act so that the National Guard and Reserve officers shall receive the treatment to which they are entitled and also afforded incentive and opportunity for promotions.

The Thomason Act should be amended so that more young Reserve officers would be given opportunity to obtain permanent commissions in the Regular Army. I undertake to say that the great majority of the young officers under this law are equally as fine and capable as those who graduate from West Point.

More than 8,000 young Reserve officers from our senior R. O. T. C. schools will be called to duty on July 1, and I predict that Texas A. and M. College will head the list.

Since the world is rapidly becoming an armed camp, there is no choice but for us to train our boys as soldiers, and it is best to begin early. And since interest in military training is present in almost every high school boy, and each year more schools throughout the country make applications

for R. O. T. C. units, I believe we should make arrangements for a material enlargement of our R. O. T. C. program, which would thus become one of the foundation stones of our military strength.

The program right now, instead of being expanded, has been curtailed, for the reason that the Regular Army officers needed to head these units are given other assignments considered more vital to national defense.

There are 529 applications for junior and senior R. O. T. C. units now on file with the War Department, and I have for a long time been urging their approval. Every high school, college, and university in the country that can meet the requirements should have an R. O. T. C. unit, and I shall urge appropriations to that end.

One of the problems now before my committee concerns amendments to the selective-service law. There is a great deal of sentiment throughout the country in favor of reducing the ages from the present limits between 21 and 35 years to a lower entrance limit of 18 years and upper of 28 years, giving the selectee the right to choose the year he will serve.

Perhaps we are not quite ready for this change, and the present law should be given a thorough trial. There have been many inequalities and some injustice in the administration of this act. Draft boards have made different rulings on the same state of facts, and there should be more uniformity.

Since we are to have compulsory military training for 5 years, and probably permanently, so far as we can see at this time, I feel friendly to the suggestion of reducing the age limits. Younger men are more susceptible to discipline and training and make better soldiers. They could get their year's training immediately on leaving school or college and before getting established in a job. Industry would also experience less disturbance.

I am also convinced that medical and dental students should be permitted to finish their school work before being called into service. Skilled workers in munitions plants should be deferred.

I have felt from its inception that the C. C. C. has been one of the most worthy and useful agencies created under this administration. It has built men as well as many enduring works. From the nature of the employment offered, the enrollees were taken into the open country and given out-of-door work. This was especially beneficial to the young men from crowded city areas, many of whom were underweight and came from homes of the underprivileged.

One-sixth of the men now in the C. C. C. are within the draft-age limits. How the draft applies to these men has not as yet been settled but from the best information I can obtain most of these enrollees are given exemption until they have served their allotted term in the C. C. C.

Now that a grave emergency is upon us and our security depends on speediest possible defense, I believe these boys should be im-

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mediately put into training that will fit them to take their places in defense industries. On the output of our factories depends the fate of democratic government in the world, and nothing should be left undone to see that maximum production is reached—and reached soon.

Those C. C. C. boys of draft age should not be deferred, but all should be inducted into the service.

The matter of strikes is causing gravest concern among our people, and I have received numerous telegrams and letters advising that the sternest measures be employed to end them.

Well, you and I believe that no individual interest whatsoever should be permitted to slow or hamper this program on which we have embarked, and to the success of which we have dedicated our means and our toil.

It is fitting that mediation and conciliation should be called into the picture and given a fair chance to settle the controversy. This has been done with very satisfactory results quite recently, as with the Allis-Chalmers and the soft-coal miners. There are 400,000 soft-coal miners in the United States. One can then appreciate the magnitude of the accomplishment in realizing what an army has been put back to work in these key industries.

One hesitates to mention legislation to compel a body of workmen to follow a certain procedure or to desist from certain action. The old school maxim that "he who governs himself is governed best" makes strong appeal to all right-thinking people. But where the gravity of the situation confronting this country places speed in production as the price of survival of liberty and democracy, then both labor and capital must settle their differences without stopping that work on which our lives and our safety depend. No personal benefit can be put above our country's welfare.

I feel hopeful, however, that these disputes will lessen. I know that the great rank and file of labor is behind this program, and the labor of Texas has not been encumbered with that reprehensible leadership that has, in many instances, caused righteous resentment among our people, and has cast reflection at times on great bodies of labor in other sections.

The great body of labor is patriotic. They are sending their sons to the service, as well as their employers are. Some of the recent trouble has been provoked by Communist leaders, and they ought to be locked up, and all aliens illegally in this country should be deported, including Harry Bridges and all his ilk. I hope and believe that mediation will solve the problem; but if not, then I favor appropriate legislation along the lines of the railway mediation law, which has worked so successfully. National defense must be paramount to every other consideration, whether it be labor, capital, or agriculture.

Making the tools with which to do the job is the first essential in modern warfare, and

it is becoming increasingly apparent that men must be trained in this work by the thousands, to the end that our output of machines, arms, and munitions may reach the point where this Nation leads all nations of the world in production of armament.

I hope and believe it will not be necessary to send an expeditionary force to Europe in this conflict. This war will be won by Britain with the help of American factories, American machines, American labor, American ideas and ideals—provided there is delivery.

One of our businessmen recently declared this a Nation on wheels. A Berlin editor came back with: "But wheels can't cross the ocean." This brings us to the subject of convoys, which is being discussed throughout the length and breadth of the land and in Congress. The question brings bitter divisions among our people, and every day I receive letters and telegrams on both sides of the proposal.

So far Congress has not given the matter consideration, nor has the President made a statement as to whether he deems it necessary that our Navy be used to guard the supplies which we promised Britain to aid her in winning this war. It is possible that patrols the President has ordered to duty may prove sufficiently effective to get these supplies into English hands, and that this plan will be given time to show what results can be accomplished.

The American people have already taxed themselves in the prodigious sum of \$7,000,000,000 to help Britain against the dictators, who seek not only destruction of the British Empire but democracy wherever it exists—and that means us, and don't you forget it.

Tremendous as our national debt has become, and heavy as our taxes are at this time, more taxes must be levied and vastly greater hardships endured than have been known in our lifetime. Sacrifice, toil, and unity of purpose can alone achieve the results to which we have set our faces.

I favor material reduction in all non-defense appropriations and a gradual working of such activities into the defense program, so far as it is possible to do so.

The American people will never consent that their sacrifices shall be made in vain and that the ships bearing our supplies shall go to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, instead of the shores of that island which bleeds from wounds inflicted by the archcriminal Nazis, but which is resolved to conquer or die.

The matter of convoys then must be left to future determination, and I am frank to say I do not know whether or not the President will recommend this action, or whether Congress will act favorably should he do so.

But the issue is clear—England loses without our help—and not token help, but more and ever more help—and if she is to win, she absolutely must have those things we can

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send her across the Atlantic. To see that they get there then is our problem, and it must be solved, or our efforts are vain, our money wasted, and we are left with the prospect of facing alone those powers that speak only the language of bombs in dealing with the nations of the world.

If it develops that there is no way to get supplies and munitions to Britain, who is also making our fight, except to convoy, then I say convoy. Regardless of what it costs, it is the best insurance policy we can buy.

If Hitler should win this war—and I disregard Mussolini, for he is but a corpse held up by Hitler's hands—he would be undisputed master of Europe, a large part of Asia, and Africa. His policy of "divide and conquer," which he has applied in every instance to this time when he has attacked a nation, would be directed to this hemisphere, and his propaganda machine—already working overtime here—would go to every length to foment internal strife among the people of the United States, as well as our neighbors to the South.

If we value our way of life, our freedom of speech, freedom of the press, our heritage of liberty which has come down to us from the revered founders of this Government, we will awake from our dream of security and the comfortable idea that isolation is still possible, and prepare to meet the most unscrupulous, the most inhuman, the most deadly enemy that has ever arisen to threaten the safety, if not the life, of every man who dwells under a free government.

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We must prepare to meet him and to aid in destroying his power ere it be used to destroy us. For, believe me, he would crush us if he could, as he has crushed under his iron heel of despotism the free peoples of Europe. His puppets have but lately declared that the United States is a 100-percent enemy, and with Herr Hitler this would call for 100-percent extinction.

If England goes down under the merciless blows he rains daily on her women and children, as well as her docks and factories, then we are next, and none of us need turn aside from the prospect, as a chicken that puts his head under his wing in face of danger and believes he is safe.

Aside from our natural and altruistic wish to hold up the hands of all democracies who have defied the totalitarian juggernaut, the necessity of self-preservation demands that we insure final victory for Britain and the brave men of conquered countries who have escaped to fight at her side. If she loses this fight, we shall find ourselves encircled with enemies that know no law but the law of the jungle. We will unite as one man to meet this threat to our lives and our sacred institutions. We will give of our work and our treasure, and if need be, our lives to the end that our Nation may live to fulfill her great destiny among the peoples of the world and that democracy shall not perish. Though now it lies prone in many lands under the lash of the most powerful and ruthless dictator this world has ever known, it shall, with our help and encouragement, live again.

U.S. Army Letter of Appreciation, 1953

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

The Secretary of the Army takes pride in presenting the Certificate
of Appreciation to

Robert Ewing Thomason

for service set forth in the following

CITATION:

ROBERT EWING THOMASON, for outstanding patriotic civilian service to the Department of the Army. Over a period of many years, his constant friendship for the Army and his sympathetic understanding of its problems contributed toward the development of the present well-being of the military establishment. While serving as a member of Congress, Judge Thomason initiated the action which resulted in the enactment during 1935 of Public Law 408 of the 74th Congress, commonly referred to as "The Thomason Act". The act provided a means for strengthening the Officer Corps at a time of great need and became an important factor in the subsequent expansion of the Army prior to World War II. As a member of the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, his keen sense of appreciation of critical world affairs prompted his energetic prosecution of numerous legislative measures which contributed materially to the National Defense in the crucial period preceding the entry of the United States into World War II. More recently, as U. S. District Judge and as a member of the Army Advisory Committee at El Paso, Texas, his active interest and participation in Army affairs have been of great assistance in furthering the wholesome relationship which exists between the Army and the American public. His long service in the national interest has been of great benefit to the Army and merits the recognition of his fellow Americans and this expression of the thanks and appreciation of the Department of the Army.

Robert T. Stevens

Robert T. Stevens
Secretary of the Army



Selective Service Bill, 1940



Briefing by Eisenhower, 1945



Joint Congressional Group, Germany, 1945



German Atrocities Speech, 1945

German Atrocities

Official Report
of the
Congressional Investigating Committee
Presented to the
House of Representatives
May 15, 1945
by
Hon. R. E. Thomason
of Texas

*Not printed
at Government
expense*

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German Atrocities Speech, 1945

OFFICIAL REPORT
BY
HON. R. E. THOMASON

Mr. THOMASON. Mr. Speaker, the committee appointed by you to serve with a like committee from the Senate to investigate the war atrocity camps in Germany herewith submits its report. The report is unanimous and signed by all members of the joint committee. Our special mission was to ascertain the facts and the report is therefore confined to that field. Later in the day, or within the next day or two, when the members of the committee can obtain the floor we will make other observations regarding our interesting trip and also yield for questions. I know there are many things about which you feel deep concern. You will want to know about the attitude of the German people, the treatment accorded American prisoners, the punishment of war criminals and the procedure to be employed. We were in Europe at an exciting and historic time. We visited France, Germany, Belgium, and England. We were there when the Germans surrendered, although the official proclamation was not issued until the night we left Paris for home. We visited General Eisenhower and also most of our high commanders at their respective headquarters at or near the front. We talked with hundreds of G. I.'s, saw many of our boys who had been prisoners and visited our sick and wounded in several hospitals. We were proud of all our men and women in the armed forces, and rejoiced that we are American citizens. Many of the details of our trip we hope to give you at an early date. I request, however, that I not be asked to yield during the reading of the report.

REPORT TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE REPRESENTING THE TWO HOUSES NAMED TO INVESTIGATE ATROCITIES AND OTHER CONDITIONS IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY, AS REQUESTED BY GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER THROUGH THE CHIEF OF STAFF, GEN. GEORGE C. MARSHALL

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

Before relating the conditions found by the joint committee which recently visited Germany to investigate atrocities

in concentration camps in that country, the committee desires to inform the Senate and House of Representatives the basis upon which the investigation was undertaken and the procedure by which members representing the two Houses were designated.

The trip to Europe was wholly unexpected on the part of all those who made it. It was a mission undertaken with a view to the possible performance of a service to the Congress, to the American people, and to the cause of peace.

On April 20, at about noon, two representatives from the Office of the Chief of Staff called upon the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the majority leader of the Senate, and laid before them a cablegram received by Gen. George C. Marshall from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander in Chief of the Allied forces in the European theater of the war, which cablegram was as follows:

From: General Eisenhower.

To: General Marshall.

We are constantly finding German camps in which they have placed political prisoners where unspeakable conditions exist. From my own personal observation I can state unequivocally that all written statements up to now do not paint the full horrors.

In view of these facts you may think it advisable to invite about 12 congressional leaders and 12 leading editors to see three camps. If so I shall be glad to take these groups to one of these camps. Such a visit will show them without any trace of doubt the full evidence of the cruelty practiced by the Nazis in such places as normal procedure.

A similar invitation is being sent to similar representative British groups.

General Marshall requested these representatives to contact both Houses, in the manner above mentioned, for the purpose of arranging the designation of their respective Members to make this investigation with all the promptness possible.

In order that they might arrive at the scene of the atrocities, which General Eisenhower desired the committee to view in person as soon as possible, it was stated that the group would be expected to leave Washington on Sunday morning, April 22.

These concentration camps had been uncovered by the advancing Allied armies and the conditions were such as to make it compulsory that they be

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cleaned up as rapidly as possible, and, therefore, such committee as might be designated would of necessity have to arrive on the scene and make such personal investigation as they might think proper while the conditions were as fresh and unchanged as possible following the occupation of these areas by our armed forces.

As will be seen from the cablegram, General Eisenhower also suggested the appointment of a similar committee from among the newspapers and other publishers of the country, in order that they might have a similar opportunity to investigate these conditions which prompted General Eisenhower's request. During our interview with him at his headquarters in Europe, he advised us that when he visited one of these concentration camps, which will be referred to later, he was so horrified at what he found that he felt it incumbent upon him to request that the committee mentioned should come at once and see conditions as they were.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the majority leader of the Senate at once set about to consult with the minority leaders of the two respective Houses, with a view of designating a representative committee to respond to General Eisenhower's request with all promptitude. The minority leaders of the House and Senate, respectively, were immediately conferred with, with a view to their cooperation in the selection of such a joint committee.

It was agreed that six Members from each House would be designated, to be equally divided between the majority and minority parties in both Houses. While the Senate was in session for a short period on Friday the 20th, the matter had been brought to the attention of the two Houses so unexpectedly that it was impossible to do more on that day than discuss the matter informally because of the contemplated week end recess of both Houses, and because, if the committee were to depart on Sunday the 22d as desired, it would be impossible to wait until the following week, either for the purpose of taking formal action in the two Houses of Congress, or to consult more leisurely with respect to the personnel of the joint committee.

Under these circumstances, it was agreed that the membership representing both Houses should be immediately named, in order that the mission might

go forward without delay. In appointing the Members of the House of Representatives, the Speaker indicated his desire to have representation from three of the House committees, namely, Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, and Naval Affairs. But this suggestion was informal, and there was no definite agreement as between the two groups as to what committees should be represented. On the whole, however, this arrangement was followed.

During the afternoon and evening of Friday the 20th, and Saturday morning the 21st, the majority and minority leaders of the Senate frequently conferred as to the personnel of the Senate portion of the joint committee. During the morning of the 21st, the minority leader of the Senate, the Senator from Maine (Mr. WHITE) advised the majority leader he was ready to recommend, on the part of the minority, the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BACON), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. WHEAT), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. SALTONSTALL).

The majority leader of the Senate asked the Senator from Georgia (Mr. GEORGE), acting chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Senator from Utah (Mr. THOMAS), chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, to become members of the Senate group; and he sought to have the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. WALSH), chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, included as the third member of the group to represent the Senate majority. The Senator from Georgia and the Senator from Utah indicated their willingness to accept this assignment, but the Senator from Massachusetts had left the city for his home in Massachusetts and was not expected to return until the following Monday. It was, therefore, impossible to confer with him about his possible appointment as a member of the committee. He has since indicated that it would have been impossible for him to have become a member of the committee if he had been in Washington. After the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the minority leader of the Senate advised the majority leader of the Senate on Saturday morning the names of the members designated by them, respectively, a conference was called of the entire group at 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon to receive the information necessary from the War Department concerning the hour of

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departure and the requirements and needs of the various members of the group upon their arrival in Europe. During this conference the members of the group urged the majority leader of the Senate to become a member of the committee and make the trip, which he decided to do, and, therefore, he became a member of the group in lieu of the Senator from Massachusetts, chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs. This, in brief, is the basis for the appointment of the various Members and the basis for the trip itself. The committee, thus appointed, consisted of the following members:

The Senator from Kentucky, Mr. ALLEN W. BARKLEY.

The Senator from Georgia, Mr. WALTER P. GEORGE.

The Senator from Utah, Mr. ELBERT D. THOMAS.

The Senator from Illinois, Mr. C. WAYLAND BROOKS.

The Senator from Nebraska, Mr. KENNETH S. WHERRY.

The Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. LEVERETT SALTONSTALL.

Representative R. EWING THOMASON from Texas.

Representative JAMES P. RICHARDS from South Carolina.

Representative ED. V. IZAC from California.

Representative JOHN M. VOYTS from Ohio.

Representative JAMES W. MOIT from Oregon.

Representative DEWEY SHORT from Missouri.

It ought to be stated that nobody in the War Department made any suggestions, directly or indirectly, as to who should be appointed on this joint committee. When the members of the committee were appointed, in the way which has been indicated, the War Department was advised of the personnel and was represented at the conference held on Saturday afternoon to make arrangements for the trip.

The entire group departed at noon on Sunday, the 22d, by air transportation arranged by the War Department, accompanied by representatives of that Department, and arrived in Paris in the late afternoon of Monday, April 23.

Before setting forth the conditions which the committee found at the three camps which it visited, all of which will be described later, the committee feels

that it is advisable to state the general character and purpose of the camps, as well as the character of the evidence which it obtained, and upon which this report is based.

There are more than 100 concentration camps for slave laborers and political prisoners in Germany. No attempt was made to conceal them and all were built in thickly populated areas and many of them along main highways. Your committee visited three of these camps located in widely separated parts of Germany, namely, Buchenwald in Thuringen Province, Nordhausen in Saxony, and Dachau in Bavaria. These three camps are typical of all the concentration camps in the Reich and their physical characteristics, functions, management, and operation furnish an accurate cross section of the entire German political prisoner camp system and policy.

Before proceeding with detailed statements concerning the several camps visited, we believe a preliminary word as to just what these camps are and just what they are used for would be of value. In the first place, the concentration camps for political prisoners must not be confused with the prisoner-of-war camps. No prisoners of war are confined in any of these political-prisoner camps, and there is no relationship whatever between a concentration camp for political prisoners and a camp for prisoners of war.

The concentration camps for political prisoners are precisely what the name implies. They are places of incarceration, punishment, and liquidation of civilians who were opposed to or who were suspected of being opposed to the Hitler regime. A number of them were established at the beginning of that regime. At first these camps contained only German political prisoners. When the Germans overran and occupied the adjacent lands of Poland, Russia, France, Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and other countries, the camps were expanded both in size and number to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of additional political prisoners brought in from those countries.

During the past month all of these camps have been uncovered by the rapid advance of the Allied Armies. At the time of our visit the surviving prisoners were still in the camps and were being cared for by the American military forces. These liberated prisoners will

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be sent to their home countries when facilities for that purpose are available, and some, in fact, have already been sent home. When we saw the camps, however, they were filled practically to capacity with prisoners. This was especially the case at Dachau, which camp we inspected only 48 hours after the S. S. garrison in charge of it had been driven out by the American troops.

THE THREE CLASSES OF EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THIS REPORT IS BASED

We think it is important, also, to make a statement at this point regarding the character of evidence gathered on our visits to these camps, so that the basis for the detailed recital which follows may be clear and unambiguous.

Three classes or kinds of evidence were presented to us. The first was the visual inspection of the camps themselves, freshly freed by the American troops of S. S. supervision. We saw the barracks, the work places, the physical facilities for torture, degradation, and execution. We saw the victims, both dead and alive, of the atrocities practiced at these camps. We saw the process of liquidation by starvation while it was still going on. We saw the indescribable filth and smelled the nauseating stench before it was cleaned up, and we saw a number of victims of this liquidation process actually die.

The second kind of evidence we obtained was the testimony of eyewitnesses among the prisoners themselves to these atrocities. Many of the prisoners had been in the camps we visited as long as 3 and 4 years. Many others had spent long terms as prisoners in several other similar camps. While these prisoners included men from nearly all the countries of central Europe, whose speech, whose station in life and whose education and previous environment differed widely from one another, yet the testimony of all these witnesses was substantially the same. Directly and through interpreters we talked to prisoners who had seen the hangings and the beatings and who had themselves experienced the systematic process of starvation, corporal punishment, and human degradation.

The third kind of evidence was what may be called the common knowledge of the camp, that is to say, evidence of things done in the camp which were not done publicly but which, nevertheless, all

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prisoners were aware of. This is similar to certain knowledge possessed by prisoners generally in legitimate institutions like State penitentiaries. These prisoners, from custom and experience, from conversation with the guards and among themselves, and from a very plain and almost mathematical kind of circumstantial evidence, have accurate knowledge of certain things which they have not actually seen with their own eyes. The prisoners at the camps speak about these things as though they had actually seen them. It was the unanimous opinion of our committee after talking to hundreds of prisoners that this third kind of evidence was often as accurate and reliable as the two kinds of direct evidence above referred to. An example of this kind of evidence will be found in that part of our report dealing with the torture chamber at Euchenwald, where no one actually saw the strangulations perpetrated in this chamber, but where the circumstantial evidence of it was so complete and clear as to leave no doubt in the mind of anyone.

The three kinds of evidence here referred to constitute the only evidence accepted by this committee in making its report. Rumor, hearsay, and every other form of information or testimony has been carefully excluded so that those reading the report may be assured that everything therein described was either actually seen by us or reported to us by competent and reliable eyewitnesses or that it is based on circumstantial evidence which we have considered to be trustworthy.

One further preliminary observation may not be out of place here, and that is that all of the facts here recited are corroborated by the records of the investigation of the military authorities who have made a most minute, careful, and exhaustive examination of all of the prison camps. These authorities, who are specialists in their line, have taken the testimony of hundreds of eyewitnesses and have carefully authenticated and documented the same. The committee has examined some of this documented evidence but it has not used any of it in making this report. The report is based exclusively upon our own personal investigation of these camps.

PART 2. GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS, EUCHENWALD

On the morning of April 24, following its arrival in Paris on the afternoon

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of Monday, the 23d, the committee, accompanied by Brig. Gen. John M. Weir, Col. Robert H. Thompson, Col. John A. Hall, and photographers, left Paris by airplane for Weimar, which is located in the province of Thuringen, Kriese, county of Weimar, about 120 miles southwest of Berlin, and proceeded from Weimar by automobile to the outskirts of the city, where was located the German political concentration camp of Buchenwald.

This camp was founded when the Nazi Party first came into power in 1933 and has been in continuous operation since that time, although its largest population dates from the beginning of the present war. The camp was overrun by the American Army on April 12, 1945. The first appearance of the Americans at Buchenwald was made by a tank spearhead, which briefly engaged the enemy and withdrew. The garrison of SS troops at Buchenwald became so alarmed at the rapid approach of United States troops that they fled precipitately, abandoning the camp completely. On Friday, the 13th, the main body of advancing United States troops arrived with supplies and medicine and took over the camp.

The surviving population of the camp, as recorded on April 16, 1945, was about 20,000, divided into nationalities, as follows:

French.....	2,900
Polish.....	3,800
Hungarians.....	1,240
Yugoslavs.....	570
Russians.....	4,380
Dutch.....	324
Belgians.....	622
Austrians.....	550
Italians.....	242
Czechs.....	2,103
Germans.....	1,600
Dutch.....	200
Anti-Franco Spanish and miscellaneous.....	1,207
	<hr/>
	20,000

The character of the surviving population was all male and included a thousand boys under 14 years of age. The prisoners at this camp included the intelligentsia and leadership groups from continental Europe, as well as democratic or anti-Nazi Germans and their relatives. Among the 20,000 survivors were about 4,000 Jews.

The mission of this camp was an extermination factory and the means of

extermination were starvation, beatings, tortures, incredibly crowded sleeping conditions, and sickness. The effectiveness of these measures was enhanced by the requirement that the prisoners work in an adjacent armament factory for the manufacture of machine guns, small arms, ammunition, and other matériel for the German Army. The factory operated 24 hours a day, using two 12-hour shifts of prisoners. At the time your committee visited the camp the factories were no longer in operation, having been totally destroyed by remarkably effective precision bombing. The factory area was completely demolished, but not one bomb fell within the camp area, which was immediately adjacent to the factory area and separated from it only by a barbed-wire fence. In addition to those inmates performing slave labor at the munitions factory, other inmates were organized into labor parties to perform various kinds of work on farms in the vicinity of Weimar.

The main elements of Buchenwald included the "Little Camp," the "regular barracks" and the "hospital," the medical experimentation building, the body-disposal plant, and the ammunition factory.

THE "LITTLE CAMP"

The prisoners in this camp slept on triple-decked shelves, the clearance height between the shelves being little more than 2 feet. They were so crowded into these shelves that the cubic content figured out to about 35 cubic feet per man, as against the minimum for health of 600 cubic feet prescribed by United States Army regulations. We were informed that after arriving, new prisoners were initiated by spending at least six weeks here before being "graduated" to the "regular barracks." During this initiation prisoners were expected to lose about 40 percent in weight. Jews, however, seldom if ever graduated to the regular barracks. Camp disciplinary measures included transferring recalcitrant prisoners back to the "Little Camp." As persons became too feeble to work, they were also sent back to the "Little Camp" or to the "hospital." Rations were less than at the regular barracks, and the death rate in the "Little Camp" was very high, recently about 50 per day.

REGULAR BARRACKS

The dormitory room here was approximately 42 by 23 feet and about 10 feet

high, having a content of about 9,500 cubic feet. In each such room there were installed, triple-decked, 38 stacks of 3 bunks each, or a total of 114 bunks, each bunk 30 inches by 72 inches, outside measurement. Most of these bunks were double; that is, 2 parallel bunks occupying the space of 60 inches by 72 inches. The aisles were narrow, being less than 24 inches wide and permitted movement through them only with the body being kept edgewise. One hundred and fourteen bunks placed in 9,500 cubic feet make less than 85 cubic feet per person. Since the beginning of the war, 250 persons have been made to sleep in each such room, or less than 40 cubic feet per person. There was less than 1 blanket per prisoner. Blankets were thin, shoddy, and undersized. There was substantially no heat in these dormitories.

THE HOSPITAL

This was a building where moribund persons were sent to die. No medicines were available and, hence, no therapy was possible. Typhus and tuberculosis were rampant in the camp. About half of the wards of the hospital were about 15 feet deep and 5½ feet wide, with one window on the outside end. From six to nine "patients" occupied each ward, lying crosswise on the floor, shoulder to shoulder. The room was too narrow for most of them to extend their legs. The death rate in the "hospital" was from 5 to 20 persons per day.

MEDICAL EXPERIMENT BUILDING

Block No. 41 in the camp was used for medical experiments and vivisections with prisoners as guinea pigs. Medical scientists came from Berlin periodically to reinforce the experimental staff. In particular new toxins and antitoxins were tried out on prisoners. Few prisoners who entered this experimental building ever emerged alive. Prisoners were induced to volunteer for experimentation on the representation that living quarters provided there were far superior to those in the barracks and that their rations were far superior to those received by ordinary prisoners.

THE BODY DISPOSAL PLANT OR CREMATORY

The design of this installation was a striking example of German industrial efficiency. It had a maximum disposal capacity of about 400 bodies per 10-hour

day, which is about 2 percent of the camp population at the time of liberation. We were informed that when the death rate exceeded the capacity of the crematory, the bodies were taken out and buried in pits without any means for identification. Teeth having gold fillings were extracted prior to cremating the bodies. We have been advised that on the day following our visit to Buchenwald, a large cache of gold fillings and gold jewelry was discovered in a quarry near the camp. Included were literally thousands of wedding rings alone.

The crematory was entirely enclosed within a high board fence. No one, except a small operating force of S. S. personnel were allowed even to look inside this fence. No prisoner who passed within it—as a member of a labor party or for any other person—came out alive. Inside this fence was the incinerator building, centrally located between two yards. This building was of substantial brick construction with cement floors, 1 story high, with full-size 12-foot-high basement beneath. The main floor contained an administration office at the front end, a locker and washroom for S. S. personnel at the far end, and the incinerator room in the center. The latter contained, in line, 2 batteries of 3 firebrick incinerators each; 15 to 20 minutes were required for the incineration of a total of 18 bodies, each incinerator having a capacity of 3 bodies, or a total charge of 18 bodies; 15 to 20 minutes were required for the incineration of a charge.

The floor of each incinerator consisted of a coarse grate, through which the day's accumulation of bone ash was extracted at the end of operation. The fire came from a furnace room occupying the rear two-thirds of the basement, the flames being deflected downward onto the bodies by baffle plates in the roofs of the furnace. Fuel used in this plant was coal. The front of the basement was occupied by the strangling room.

The method of collecting bodies was as follows: Roll call was held every evening outdoors outside the dormitory buildings. Internees were required to strip and bring to roll call the naked bodies of all comrades who had died during the previous 24 hours. After roll call a motortruck drove around the camp, picked up the bodies, and was

driven to the front yard of the incinerator plant to await the next day's operation. But this was not the only source of bodies. Emaciated prisoners who had been around too long, or who had committed infractions of discipline, or who knew too much, or who had refused to be broken in mind, were arbitrarily condemned to death. For instance, in the little camp, where prisoners slept 16 to a shelf, an infraction of discipline—particularly an attempt to escape—not infrequently resulted in all 16 being condemned. Such persons were immediately marched on foot to a small door in the fence of the back yard at a point immediately adjacent to the incinerator building. This door opened inward until it hit a doorstep which held it in a position parallel to the building's wall, thus creating a corridor 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep. At the far end was an opening about 4 feet by 4 feet, flush with the ground, the head of a concrete shaft, about 13 feet deep, the bottom floor of which was a continuation of the concrete floor of the room at the front end of the basement. The condemned prisoners, on being hurried and pushed through the door in the fence, inevitably fell into this shaft and crashed 13 feet down to the cement cellar floor. This room, on the floor at one end of which they now found themselves, was the strangling room. As they hit the floor they were garrotted with a short, double-end noose by S. S. guards and hung on hooks along the side walls, about 6½ feet above the floor, the row of hooks being 45 or 50 in number. At the time of our visit all of the hooks except 5 had been removed, but we could observe the holes where the other hooks had previously been. When a consignment had been hung up, any who were still struggling were stunned by a wooden mallet, which was exhibited to us in the chamber still bearing stains of blood. The bodies were left on the hooks until called for by the incinerator crew. An electric elevator, with an estimated capacity of 18 bodies, ran up to the incinerator room, which was on the floor above the strangling room. The day's quota of approximately 200 bodies was made up of from 120 to 140 prisoners who had died—mostly in the hospital, the medical experimental building, or the little camp—and from 60 to 80 were supplied by the strangulation room.

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For a period of about 10 days in March, the coal supply for the incinerator ran out. The incinerator furnace grates had not been cleared of entirely unconsumed bodies as we observed portions thereof. Awaiting the arrival of a new supply of coal, bodies, to the number of about 1,800, were allowed to collect in the front yard, stacked up like cordwood. The sudden arrival of American armor prevented the S. S. garrison from disposing of the bodies which had accumulated due to the lack of fuel for the incineration plant. At the time of our visit to the camp we saw a truckload of bodies within the area of the incinerator. It is estimated that there were about 60 bodies in this truck. Near the truck, on the ground, were piled about 20 or 25 additional bodies. We were advised that the death rate, prior to the liberation, was approximately 200 per day. At the time of our visit the American medical authorities had been able to reduce the death rate to about 20 per day. Upon liberation of the camp the American authorities provided decent interment for the unburied dead and for those who died thereafter.

The American surgeon stated that the adult corpses weighed from about 60 to 80 pounds each.

MISCELLANEOUS

Rations: We were advised that the ration allowance for the regular camp was between 600 to 700 calories per day and consisted generally of a very weak soup made from cabbage and other vegetables, and a small piece of bread about 3 inches square. This meal was provided only once a day—in the morning and in the evening another small piece of bread was furnished. The diet was heavily deficient in animal fats and vitamins and contained no meats. In the "little camp" the ration allowance was about 500 calories. About 3,000 to 3,600 calories per day is required for adult health. Red Cross packages were almost entirely appropriated by the S. S. camp commander and distributed to suit himself to S. S. personnel and to citizens of Weimar and even to Nordic German camp prisoners. Meals were prepared and served by prisoner personnel under S. S. supervision.

The committee was informed that the S. S. troops had received orders to destroy all of the occupants of the camp prior to their departure, but in their haste to flee before the advancing Amer-

ican troops they had been unable to undertake such a large scale operation.

The administration of the camp and the maintenance of records were carried on by prisoners under the supervision of S. S. troops. The available records at the time of liberation had been examined by the prisoners engaged in the administration of the camp and the records revealed that 51,000 persons had died in the camp. At the time of our arrival the prisoners, in a pathetic gesture, had erected of flimsy materials, a memorial to the dead of Buchenwald. Pictures and descriptions of the conditions at this camp cannot adequately portray what we saw there, and it is only when the stench of the camp is smelled that anyone can have complete appreciation of the depths of degradation to which the German Nazi Government and those responsible for it and its agencies, organizations and practices had dropped in their treatment of those who had failed to embrace the doctrines of the "master race".

CAMP DORA AT NORDHAUSEN

The group visited the concentration camp at Nordhausen, which is located in the province of Saxony, about 125 miles southwest of Berlin, on May 1, 1945. This was a political concentration camp and was known as the Dora Camp. It is located on the outskirts of Nordhausen, adjacent to a large underground manufacturing plant which produced V-1 bombs, the V-2's, airplane engines and parts and other munitions of war. At the time of our visit to Nordhausen the camp had been in American hands about 3 weeks, and, of course, did not portray the filth and operating conditions which existed at the time of its liberation. The prisoners at this camp had been used as slave labor in the underground factory and for work parties on adjacent farms and in smaller munitions factories. The magnitude of the operation at Nordhausen is demonstrated by the fact that there were 31 miles of railroad track in the underground factory. The factory itself contained well organized production lines and enormous quantities of fine machine tools, many of which were new and all in fine operating condition. The underground factory had also been used as barracks for prisoners until the death rate exceeded that apparently desired and began to affect the efficiency of production. We observed a crematory similar to the one that we saw at Buchenwald. We

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observed a large cement apron on which we were told by a reliable inmate that 135 prisoners had been executed by hanging at the rate of 4 at a time a few days before the camp was overrun by the American forces. This inmate stated that all of the prisoners who were physically able were required to witness the executions. He also told us that the executions had been for violations of camp disciplinary regulations and for alleged sabotage in the underground factory. He further stated that the individuals executed on this occasion were all Russians. At the time of our visit to the camp it was being additionally used by the American authorities as a rendezvous for displaced persons who had been wandering about in the area.

The prisoners had been segregated by our forces after liberation as far as possible by nationalities and every effort was made to alleviate their physical condition by food and medicine. On the whole, we found this camp to have been operated and administered much in the same manner as Buchenwald had been operated and managed. When the efficiency of the workers decreased as a result of the conditions under which they were required to live, their rations were decreased as punishment. This brought about a vicious circle in which the weak became weaker and were ultimately exterminated.

DACHAU

The committee next visited the infamous concentration camp at Dachau, in two groups, on May 2, 1945. Dachau is located in the province of Bavaria, about 325 miles south of Berlin. The groups visited Dachau within 48 hours after its liberation by American forces.

In the drive of General Patch's Seventh Army toward Munich, the Forty-fifth United States Division fought into Dachau 7 miles to the north and surprised and surrounded the concentration camp on the outskirts of the town. The camp was in charge of about 200 Storm Troopers who resisted as the American Army approached. The camp was occupied after many of the German guards were killed and the remainder captured.

Because of the surprise due to the speed of the American advance, this camp was captured practically intact. By orders of General Patch, the evidences of German brutality were left untouched awaiting our inspection. Two days later we

arrived. We found a large rectangular-shaped camp filled with numerous barracks or sheds, in which were perhaps 30,000 political prisoners. Two high parallel barbed-wire fences surrounded the camp, the inner one 15 feet from the outside one which was electrically charged. At intervals of about 50 yards, 20-foot towers rose above the outer wire and from these towers armed guards looked down on the interior of the camp. At one end of the large enclosure was an open space for assembling the prisoners and at the extreme end was a large administration building.

When we arrived there were many prisoners lying dead between the inner and the outer barbed-wire fences—apparently shot by the guards. The living, Russians, Poles, Dutch, and in fact many nationalities, were being cared for by our Army. We found women segregated in another enclosure behind the administration building. An inspection of one of the better barracks for men disclosed 390 jammed into a room built to accommodate 50. Most were suffering from typhus or tuberculosis, and all were living skeletons due to lack of food. The stench was sickening.

Outside, lying in rows, were about 300 bodies of those who had died and had been collected that morning from the various barracks. They were yet to be disposed of, as were those lying between the fences, and others, including the bodies of some of the German guards, which were strewn along the approaches to the entrance.

This camp was apparently built in 1933 or 1934, and we were told the original occupants were those who dared to oppose the Hitler regime. After their liquidation fresh prisoners in ever-increasing numbers were furnished by the countries overrun by the German armies. The complete break-down by nationalities of the prisoners in the camp at Dachau was being undertaken by the American Army authorities while we were there, but the record has not yet been received in Washington.

Across a canal or moat filled with water which ran between this wire-enclosed camp and the highway there was what appeared to be an old German Army caserne, the buildings of which were scattered throughout an area of considerable size, all completely surrounded by a stone wall. Trees lined the

driveways in this secluded area in the center of which was a modern brick building, where the executions of the prisoners from the camp across the street took place.

As we visited Dachau we saw on a railroad sidetrack paralleling the main highway, and close to the gates of the prison camp, a train of cars which had been used to bring additional civilian prisoners to this camp. These cars were an assortment of odd box cars, some of which could be locked, and some were the coal-car type. In each of them the floor of the cars was covered with dead, emaciated bodies. In some of the cars there were more than enough to cover the floors. In size these cars were of the small European type, which, when used for the movement of troops, would never accommodate more than 40 men. Nevertheless the army officials in charge of this camp advised us that there were 50 of these cars in this one train, and that at least 100 of these civilian prisoners had been jammed into each car—locked in—and they had been on the road for several days without food or water, and that approximately 3,000 of them were dead upon arrival and most of the others were in a dying condition.

We saw many dead bodies on the ground. These prisoners had apparently crawled out of the cars and had died on the ground. Our officials advised us that many of the others who had survived the trip in the cars, had died since in the camp and many more, although still alive, were starved beyond redemption.

Directly across the road from the cars—near the entrance of this Dachau Camp—we saw three dead members of the Nazi S. S. troops. Two had been shot and the skull of one had been crushed. We were advised that these three were members of the S. S. guards at the prison who were captured and killed by Russian inmates of the prison when the camp was liberated by the advancing American Army.

EXECUTION AT DACHAU

A distinguishing feature of the Dachau camp was the gas chamber for the execution of prisoners and the somewhat elaborate facilities for execution by shooting.

The gas chamber was located in the center of a large room in the crematory building. It was built of concrete. Its

dimensions were about 30 by 30 feet and the ceiling was some 10 feet in height. In two opposite walls of the chamber were airtight doors through which condemned prisoners could be taken into the chamber for execution and removed after execution. The supply of gas into the chamber was controlled by means of two valves on one of the outer walls, and beneath the valves was a small glass covered peephole through which the operator could watch the victims die. The gas was let into the chamber through pipes terminating in perforated brass fixtures set into the ceiling. The chamber was of size sufficient to execute probably a hundred men at one time.

The room in which the gas chamber stood was flanked on both ends by ware-rooms in which the bodies were placed after execution to await cremation. The size of each room was approximately 30 by 50 feet. At the time we visited the camp these ware-rooms were piled high with dead bodies. In one of the rooms the bodies were thrown in an irregular heap. In the other room they were neatly stacked like cordwood. The irregular pile of bodies was perhaps 10 feet high, covering most of the floor space. All of them were naked.

It was quite evident that the daily death rate at Dachau, by execution and otherwise, far exceeded the daily capacity of the crematory to dispose of the bodies. The stench indicated that some of them had been there for several days.

In the rear of the crematory building was an enclosure where the executions by shooting were carried out. There were three separate places for execution in this yard. One, we were informed, was for common political prisoners, one was for women, and one was for prisoners of distinction, including those who at some time had had military records. The latter were not prisoners of war. As has been stated, no prisoners of war were kept in any of the concentration camps, but all of the camps had political prisoners who had served in the armies of their countries prior to the beginning of the present war, and, particularly, during the First World War.

These three places of execution, which were separated from each other by tight board fences, consisted of banks of earth some 20 feet in length and 3 feet high. The condemned prisoners knelt down facing the bank and were shot through

the back of the head. The only difference between these separate places of execution was that in front of the bank of earth where the distinguished prisoners were shot there was a small board-walk upon which the prisoners knelt, while the common prisoners and the women knelt on the bare ground. A considerable amount of blood still remained on the ground at two of these execution places.

In the enclosure was a pile of rough wooden coffins. Since we had seen no coffins at the other camps visited, we inquired why coffins were used at Dachau and were informed that these coffins were reserved for prisoners of distinction. The bodies of ordinary prisoners, if not cremated, were buried without coffins and usually without clothing.

PART 3. CONCLUSION

While the above three camps which were visited by the joint committee differed in some details, they were all of the same general pattern and design and administered for the same purpose.

At each of these camps we found four general classifications of prisoners: First, political prisoners; second, habitual criminals; third, conscientious or religious objectors; fourth, persons who were imprisoned for failure to work.

Although differing in size, they all carried into effect the same pattern of death by hard labor, starvation, hanging, strangulation, disease, brutality, gas chambers, gallows, and filthy and insanitary conditions, which meant inevitable death eventually to every imprisoned person.

We found, in each case, that the supervision of the camps was carried out by the criminal tactics of S. S. troops, who, in addition to their own brutality, assigned some of their punitive duties to the prisoners, especially the habitual criminals who had charge of the barracks in which all types of prisoners were subject to their vicious and inhuman methods.

We found that this entire program constituted a systematic form of torture and death administered to intellectuals, political leaders, and all others who would not embrace and support the Nazi philosophy and program. We found the extent, devices, methods, and conditions of torture almost beyond the power of words to describe.

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We found, from all the evidence available, that in these camps the Jews and Russians and Poles were treated with a greater degree of severity than other nationalities. We found that a colossal scheme of extermination was planned and put into effect against all those in occupied countries who refused to accept the principles of Nazi-ism, or who opposed the saddling of the Nazi yoke on their countries. The Nazi leadership in the pursuit of this policy found especially expedient the use of various forms of terrorism calculated to reduce the opposition and to render futile all efforts to throw off the yoke.

The over-all pattern of the scheme varied but little. First, vast numbers of nationals of overrun countries were abducted and brought into Germany—sometimes whole families, sometimes just the men. The number of these persons is variously estimated at between 12 and 20 million people. These people were forced to labor long hours by their Nazi masters and for slight infractions they were placed in concentration camps.

Likewise, the intelligentsia, college professors, former Army generals, business leaders, and professional men of the occupied countries were taken captive and placed in these camps, unless they agreed to spread the doctrines advocated by the Nazis.

The treatment accorded to these prisoners in the concentration camps was generally as follows: They were herded together in some wooden barracks not large enough for one-tenth of their number. They were forced to sleep on wooden frames covered with wooden boards in tiers of two, three, and even four, sometimes with no covering, sometimes with a bundle of dirty rags serving both as pallet and coverlet.

Their food consisted generally of about one-half a pound of black bread per day and a bowl of watery soup for noon and night, and not always that. Owing to the great numbers crowded into a small space and to the lack of adequate sustenance, lice and vermin multiplied, disease became rampant, and those who did not soon die of disease or torture began the long, slow process of starvation. Notwithstanding the deliberate starvation program inflicted upon these prisoners by lack of adequate food, we found no evidence that the people of Germany as a whole were suffering from

any lack of sufficient food or clothing. The contrast was so striking that the only conclusion which we could reach was that the starvation of the inmates of these camps was deliberate.

Upon entrance into these camps, newcomers were forced to work either at an adjoining war factory, or were placed "in commando" on various jobs in the vicinity, being returned each night to their stall in the barracks. Generally a German criminal was placed in charge of each "block" or shed in which the prisoners slept. Periodically he would choose the one prisoner of his block who seemed the most alert or intelligent, or showed the most leadership qualities. These would report to the guards' room and would never be heard from again. The generally accepted belief of the prisoners was that these were shot or gassed or hanged, and then cremated. A refusal to work, or an infraction of the rules, usually meant flogging and other types of torture, such as having the finger nails pulled out, and in each case usually ended in death after extensive suffering. The policies herein described constituted a calculated and diabolical program of planned torture and extermination on the part of those who were in control of the German Government. These camps, on the whole, were conducted and controlled by the S. S. troops and the Gestapo, who acted under orders from their superiors, or who were given wide discretion in the methods which they were to adopt in perpetrating these hideous and inhuman sufferings.

It is the opinion of your committee that these practices constituted no less than organized crime against civilization and humanity, and that those who were responsible for them should have meted out to them swift, certain, and adequate punishment.

We found that the propagation of the Nazi theories and the practices which were carried forward under those theories created within Germany a disregard for human rights, and for the dignity of the individual human being, which not only degraded the life of the people within the German Reich, but which was inevitably calculated to bring about war between Germany and her neighbors and was calculated also to subject the conquered nations to the brutalities and indignities which struck fear and terror into the hearts of those who might oth-

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erwise oppose these policies, which we have attempted to describe.

With reference to the punishment of those guilty of war crimes, which an indignant world will expect and demand, we desire to report that at the present time various agencies are actively and comprehensively engaged in the gathering of evidence throughout the regions where these atrocities were committed. The officers of our Armies, and of the Allied armies, have been alert for many months to the conditions which prevailed in all Nazi occupied territories and a very competent corps of investigators in each military area, under the control of our armed forces and those of our allies, has been for months engaged in gathering and documenting testimony which will be available for use when those guilty of these atrocities are brought to trial. The Army of the United States alone has already gathered testimony and sworn statements that will fill many volumes.

In Paris the French Provisional Government has set up a Commission for the investigation of war crimes. The Allied Nations have set up a War Crimes Commission, with its headquarters in London, made up of competent men representing 16 of the Allied Nations, and already specific charges are being made against many of the outstanding leaders of this criminal program.

It was the high privilege of the members of your committee to confer with our military authorities in Europe, with the French Commission in Paris and the Allied Commission in London, concerning their methods and procedures and the results intended to be obtained by their activities, and the members of this committee were gratified at the thorough way in which this work is being undertaken. It has already been announced by the President that Justice Robert H. Jackson of the Supreme Court of the United States has been designated to represent this country in the preparation

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and representation of the evidence which will be brought before such tribunals as may be in existence, or may be established, for the trial of major war criminals.

In view of all these activities, the committee does not feel at liberty at this time to recommend the creation of an additional agency for the investigation of these war crimes or for their ultimate disposition, but feel that the agencies now dealing with the problem are approaching the subject from the standpoint of practical justice in every area and in all categories of crimes that may be involved.

The committee is happy to report that each and every member approached the performance of this task with solemnity and with a sense of responsibility which deserves the commendation of our people. It was approached without regard to differences of political affiliation or geographical location. The committee feels that out of it all justice will emerge, and that through the sickening spectacle which we have witnessed of the degradation to which human beings have been subjected, will come ultimately a firmer realization that men of all nations and all tongues must resist encroachments of every theory and every ideology that debases mankind, and that a more just and enduring peace may arise upon the ruins and from the sacrifices which the human race has endured through one of the most crucial periods of its history.

ALBEN W. BARKLEY,
WALTER F. GEORGE,
ELBERT D. THOMAS,
WAYLAND BROOKS,
KENNETH S. WHEERY,
LEVERETT SALTONSTALL,
R. EWING THOMASON,
DEWEY SHORT,
JAMES W. MOTT,
JAS. P. RICHARDS,
JOHN M. VOYSE,
ED. V. ISAAC.

Big Bend National Park

SPEECH

HON. R. E. THOMASON

Speech of

Hon. R. E. Thomason

of Texas

in the

House of Representatives

April 3, 1940

(Not printed at Government expense)



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Big Bend National Park Speech, 1940

SPEECH OF HON. R. E. THOMASON

Mr. THOMASON. Mr. Chairman, the proposed Big Bend National Park is located in Brewster County, Tex., in my congressional district. The area is bounded on the south by the Big Bend of the Rio Grande, from which circumstance the park derives its name.

The Big Bend is literally what the name implies, and a glance at the map will make this clear. On one side of the river lies the United States, and on the other Mexico. Mexico has set aside for park purposes a large area contiguous to the land on our side and this international park is dedicated to peace.

The park in Brewster County comprises an area of approximately 736,000 acres. In May 1935 a bill of which I am the author, was passed in Congress providing for the establishment of the Big Bend Park in the State of Texas. This act made no mention of funds for purchase of the necessary land, as it is against the policy of the Federal Government to appropriate money to buy land for national park areas, it being expected that adequate appropriation by the State legislature will be made and supplemented by funds which shall be raised through private subscription.

I say it is against the policy of the Government to purchase land for national parks, and generally this is true. However, the Government made a substantial contribution to the fund for purchase of land in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I voted for that appropriation, as I felt that Federal funds could not be expended to a more worth-while end. I wish my colleagues would support me in an appropriation for the Big Bend Park. The people not only of my district but the entire State are making a vigorous campaign at this time to raise money to buy land for the Big Bend Park, but up to this time nothing like a sufficient amount has been raised. I also hope the Texas Legislature will do its fair share toward making this great project a reality by making an appropriation to aid in buying the land. A few years since the legislature did appropriate \$750,000 for this purpose, but the bill was vetoed by Governor Allred on the ground that the financial condition of the State did not warrant the outlay. Governor O'Daniel has expressed interest in the project, and I very

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much hope he will use his effort to the end that funds may be made available at the next session of the legislature. The State should render full cooperation, and I believe will do so.

A vital need in the world today is cultural and economic understanding between nations, and an international peace park on our southern border would be a means of promoting contacts that would be not only interesting and instructive, but invaluable to the people of both countries.

The southernmost spur of the Rocky Mountains runs through the Big Bend country, the highest and most rugged peaks attaining an altitude of almost 8,000 feet. The Rio Grande here cuts through three canyons, the walls in places reaching a height of 3,000 feet.

Biologically as well as scenically this area presents features of absorbing interest. The varied forest cover is still virgin. The Chisos Mountains, surrounded on all sides by half-desert, are covered with trees far removed from forest types of like character. The National Park Service is authority for the statement that, according to botanical authorities, some of the trees of the Mexican area of this park are found nowhere else on this continent. Growths include chaparral, cactus, juniper, various oaks, mountain mahogany, Douglas fir, pine, cypress, and maple.

Many animals wander up from the wildernesses of Mexico into the Big Bend, which region has representatives of more than 60 species of mammals. Among the larger game animals are bear, mountain lions, wild hog, and several kinds of deer. Over 200 species of birds have been noted. I quote from a report on this section by the National Park Service, which has made an exhaustive examination of the area:

The variety of geologic phenomena presented in this limited area is so great that illustrations can be found of almost every phase of the science. It is apparent that the Big Bend National Park, when established, will be recognized as one of the outstanding geological laboratories and classrooms of the world.

As our country nears the saturation point in population, we are forcibly reminded of the need of extensive recreation areas that shall be established in perpetuity. There are no more public lands that may be set aside for national park purposes and unless the Federal Government establishes the policy of acquiring areas of outstanding scenic aspects for such use, then our people must raise funds and buy them. As I have said, this is being done by the people of Texas, and we welcome all the help our neighbors will give us in the establishment of the Big Bend Park, which will be enjoyed by people from every section of our own country and travelers throughout the world.

I request the unanimous consent of the House for the insertion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as a part of my remarks of an article on the Big Bend Park, written by Rev. Milton F.

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Hill, pastor of the Methodist Church at Pecos, Tex., and published in the El Paso Times of March 24. It is both interesting and informative, and Mr. Hill is one of the most prominent ministers in my State. [Applause.]

[From the El Paso Times of March 24, 1940]

To become a national park a region must have exceptional qualifications. It must be able to rank with Yosemite and the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone, and Glacier, and Mount Rainier.

It is a little difficult for us to realize that right here at our back door is such a place. We have been in the habit of thinking of beautiful and picturesque places as being far, far away in some distant State, so that it is hard to realize that such conditions can be found here in our own State of Texas. But the national park people, who are familiar with the scenery of the entire Nation tell us that the Big Bend does qualify.

Let us clearly understand some things, however, at the very beginning. The Big Bend is a desert country, and the traveler who goes there should realize this fact. As most of us know, the region is very dry. It has some forest, but this is to be found only in the upper levels of the Chisos Mountains. The only stream is the Rio Grande, with the exception of Tornillo Creek and a few short streams in the higher Chisos.

When I was a college boy I worked one season in Yellowstone Park, and I remember how disappointed some tourists were because Yellowstone did not have flower beds with iron fences around them. That was their idea of a park. Someone might form an entirely wrong impression of the Big Bend Park. Its outstanding feature is grand and spectacular desert and mountain scenery, and it is a wonderful example of the unspoiled wilderness of the Southwest and of the health-giving atmosphere that goes with it.

TERRITORY OF PARK IS TREMENDOUS BASIN

The territory of the proposed park is a vast basin, roughly diamond shaped. The natural gateway to the park is Persimmon Gap, a notch in the wall of the Santiago Mountains. Through Persimmon Gap the Comanche Indians used to travel on their annual raids into Mexico. The gap is a little more than 40 miles south of Marathon, and when you have reached its highest point you get a remarkable view of the Big Bend country.

Directly south are the Rosillas Mountains, which rise nearly 3,000 feet above the plain at their base. On a clear morning these mountains are a fine purple red in color. To the east extend the Santiago Mountains and the foothills of the Dead Horse range.

Geologists tell us, by the way, that these two ranges bring together at the only place on the continent the two great mountain systems, the Rockies and the Appalachians. Out in the west are the ragged peaks of the Corazones, while directly south and towering above the Rosillas are the magnificent Chisos.

The road to the Chisos Mountains is in excellent condition, and as you travel the 35 miles from Persimmon Gap you are traveling a great plain. Soon you begin to get views of the Dead Horse Mountains. Beyond and far in the southeast you see a tower-like peak which rises from a great block of mountain. This is Shot Tower Peak in the Del Carmen Mountains of Mexico, and it rises 8,000 feet higher than the Rio Grande. The river cuts through these mountains to form the Boquillas Canyon.

CHISOS MOUNTAINS ARE HIGH AND RUGGED

But what attracts your attention now are the Chisos, and as you approach them you become more and more conscious of their height and ruggedness. Some miles before you reach them the road swings to the west and seems to be leaving the mountains. Then it turns south and leads directly into them.

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Panther Peak, on the left, and Pulliam's Bluff, on the right, are tremendous portals for the gateway into the mountains. The road enters Green Gulch, an inadequate name for this beautiful canyon. On your right are the high crags and pinnacles of Lost Mine Peak, while directly ahead, like the towers of an immense feudal castle, rises Casa Grande.

You notice an abrupt change in the vegetation. The desert shrubs give place to oak, pinon, and cedar. Green Gulch has marvelously beautiful colored and sculptured rocks and cliffs. I have visited the Chisos fully 15 times, and each time this scene becomes more impressive and beautiful to me. Very fortunate is the visitor who sees the clouds when they hang low in the mountains and drift among the great cliffs and crags. I have seen them pour down through the clefts in immense cascades of white vapor.

As you descend from Green Gulch the road twists up the base of Casa Grande and climbs to the summit of the pass which looks west down into Oak Canyon and the basin. Down below you is the C. C. C. camp, where a company of boys are at work. The road hairpins down to the camp, which is as far as you can go in a car.

All around you are rugged mountains. To the west is the "Western Window," through which you can see the quicksilver-mining town, Terlingua, and beyond it the distant blue Bofecillas Mountains. Casa Grande towers above you in the east, while in the south is the highest summit of the Chisos, Mount Emory, its rugged sides covered with dense forest.

THREE BEAUTIFUL TRIPS AVAILABLE TO VISITORS

Three very fine trips can be made from here. The first is down Oak Canyon to the Western Window. You make your way through a narrow, winding gorge with springs and a beautiful little creek. Tremendous cliffs rise on each side. The window is an opening less than 6 feet wide, and during part of the year the stream drops through it, making a waterfall 300 feet high.

On the second trip you follow a good trail to the head of Juniper Canyon, a great trough which comes into the mountains from the east. It is walled in on the south by the South Rim and on the north by the Chinese Wall. At the end of the Chinese Wall is magnificent Crown Peak. To reach it is hard and strenuous, but any tourist can easily take the short walk out to the head of Juniper Canyon and be rewarded by marvelous views.

You can see the Rio Grande 20 miles away and nearly a mile below you. Nearer is Elephant's Tusk, a sharp fang of a mountain rising from the plain. If you take the trail on up to the top of the Chinese Wall, you will see even more. Far below, on the left, is the deep ravine, Pine Canyon, and all around are great crags and pinnacles of colored rock, with fine stands of yellow pine not far away.

THIRD TRIP HELD FINEST IN MOUNTAINS

The third trip is considered the finest in the mountains. I made it on foot, but it is best to go by horseback. You climb the steep trail through the forest to the pass just west of Emory. You then go by an old lake bed, the Laguna, turn to the east, and pass under the south side of Mount Emory. Dropping off to the west is Blue Creek Canyon. You cross another pass on the east side of Emory, and then the trail slopes down a half mile through dense forest to Boot Creek.

All around are great forested mountains. To the north you look through the notch where Boot Creek drops into Juniper Canyon and see the Boot, a pinnacle probably 200 feet in height. Towering trees shade the trail here—pines, firs, and a splendid mountain cypress.

The trail continues on to the south rim. Here you stand on the edge of a tremendous escarpment, 6,000 feet higher than the Rio

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Grande out there below you. A vertical cliff nearly a thousand feet high is below you, and below that the mountain drops away steeply. To the south you are looking down on the summits of high mountains, the southern Chisos.

You stand in a land of clouds and trees; far below is the desert wilderness. To the southwest stretch the great ranges of Mexico, Del Carmen, Fronterizas, and others beyond them. You stand in one world looking out upon another shimmering and opalescent and changing in the light, a vast panorama of mountain and plain. The national park people are accustomed to grand and spectacular scenery and are not easily made enthusiastic. So it means something when they state that they consider this as magnificent a view as can be found in the United States.

BIG BEND REGION IS RARE PARADISE

I have described three trips in the Chisos Mountains. Many others are possible. For the lover of the outdoors, of magnificent mountain scenery, of trees and plant life, of birds and wildlife, this region is a paradise. Here are found the rare Sonora or fantail deer, with the horns of a full-grown buck no larger than a man's outstretched hands. The blacktail deer is also found.

The park will be a large-scale museum for the botanist, with a range of plant life extending from the desert types at the bases of the mountains to Douglas fir, yellow pine, and accompanying vegetation on the upper levels. Geologically the region is one of the most interesting on the continent. The Chisos have been carved from a volcanic intrusion, while the Dead Horse, Santiago, and Del Carmen Ranges are limestone. Remains of many types of fossils have been found, among them the huge bones of dinosaurs.

But, the Chisos Mountains by no means exhaust the resources of the Big Bend. Equally remarkable are the magnificent canyons of the Rio Grande. The Santa Helena has been famous for many years. It is cut through a tremendous block of limestone, the Mesa de Anguila. It is 8 miles in length and some 1,500 feet in depth. The walls rise sheer from the river, but the canyon is by no means the dangerous and awful place which many people consider it.

I am very confident that it will be possible for tourists to make the trip up into the canyon with little difficulty and no danger. My wife and I camped for three nights in the canyon about 2½ miles from where the river emerges, and some time before, a party of us made the trip through the entire gorge. One part, it should be remembered, is difficult and dangerous and should be undertaken only by experienced and careful persons. Fortunately, most of the canyon is below this place, the labyrinth.

WORDS FAIL TO DESCRIBE GRANDEUR OF CANYON

Words are utterly inadequate to describe the magnificence and grandeur of this canyon. The traveler has one vista after another unfold before him. I will mention the cave, a huge oven-shaped cavern high on the canyon wall, 150 feet wide and equally high.

Fern Canyon is a spectacular side gorge from Mexico. Penguin Rock is a leaning stone splinter full 200 feet high. Most spectacular of all is the labyrinth, a wild inferno of great tumbled boulders with the water rushing through the narrow channels between them.

The Mariscal Canyon, about 50 miles downstream from Santa Helena, and at the very tip of the Big Bend, is in some respects as remarkable as the Santa Helena. It has marvelous rock sculpture, wonderfully varied scenery, and it can be traversed by boats, with no danger when the river is normal. A little farther down is the San Vicente Canyon, which would be famous were it not overshadowed by its great neighbors.

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Beyond, the Rio Grande enters the third great canyon, the Boquillas, to leave the Big Bend region. These canyons will some day be recognized among the most magnificent and beautiful pieces of scenery in the United States. It will not be difficult for tourists to be conducted through them with an avoidance of all danger.

ENTIRE REGION IS ONE OF WONDER

I have spoken of these outstanding features of the Big Bend. The whole region is one of wonder and interest. The desert badlands, where the earth has been carved into weird and fantastic shapes with rich and beautiful coloring, will surpass the noted badlands of South Dakota and Nebraska. Along the Rio Grande are numerous hot springs, which have been famous for their healing properties. A little health resort is maintained at Hot Springs near Boquillas.

At Boquillas the river enters the great canyon bearing that name. Here the rough ridges of the Dead Horse Mountains reach the river. A little restaurant at Boquillas has long been famous for its Mexican dishes.

Across the Rio Grande and 12 miles distant is the huge wall of Del Carmen. The mountains rise in a huge escarpment 8,000 feet above the river. The summit is a smooth cliff, 200 feet high, with lines of cliff beneath it. Its level top is broken in one place by a rough canyon and the jutting crag of Shot Tower Peak.

To see this great wall at sunset on a clear winter evening is the event of a lifetime. The great cliffs glow with the richest and most gorgeous red imaginable. Between you and the Del Carmen is a range of considerable height, but it is dwarfed by the great wall 20 miles in length, and towering a mile and a half above you and flaming with the light of the dying sun.

CLIMATE IS MILD AND INVIGORATING

In our hurried and busy age there is needed a region such as this, rich in grand and varied scenery, mild and invigorating in climate, a place of healing and restoration for mind and body. It will be usable and attractive every month of the year. While Yellowstone and most of the other national parks are closed during a large part of the year, the Big Bend can be visited the year round. I know personally of one lady who has traveled all over the world. She always chooses the northern routes across the United States on account of the national parks.

A great number of others follow the same policy. For the people of the entire Nation and for our own great State and its citizenship, the establishment of the Big Bend National Park will be of incalculable value. It will be, I believe, the greatest single step ever taken in the history of the State of Texas.

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Thomason Chosen for Federal Court, 1947

James F. Smith, Memphis, as president of the Highway 236 Ass'n, which will have its 1948 convention at Turkey.

Vote Unanimous On West Texas Federal Post

EL PASO TIMES June 4, 1947.

Washington (AP)—Rep. R. Ewing Thomason of El Paso was unanimously confirmed by the Senate Tuesday to be a Federal district judge for western Texas, without a word of debate.

He will take the bench after adjournment of the present session of Congress.

Thomason had the approval of both Sens. Tom Connally and W. Lee O'Daniel, who have disagreed on several other Texas appointments.



REP. R. E. THOMASON

Chavez First To Break News Of Approval

By SARAH McLENDON
Times Washington Correspondent

Washington. — Rep. R. Ewing Thomason first received the news of his confirmation for the Federal judgeship of West Texas by the Senate from Sen. Donald Chavez of New Mexico.

The representative was called to the telephone in the House cloakroom where he had just gone after defending the War Department and its spending for national defense. Senator Chavez was on the other end of the wire.

"I just wanted to be the first to tell you that you were confirmed by the Senate without any opposition whatsoever," said Chavez.

Senator Chavez and Congressman Thomason have been good friends although on opposite sides over the question of more dams on the Rio Grande above El Paso.

After the notification, Congressman Thomason walked back in the cloakrooms of the House where he announced the news. He then received widespread congratulations from a number of friends. Rep. Sam Rayburn, Democratic leader, extended his heartiest good wishes. Colleagues began to say, "We'll mix you up here."

Thomason began to protest his blessings, adding, "I just don't know how it happens that I have been the luckiest bird, all along. I am truly grateful."

Thomason's appointment was sponsored directly by President Truman.

O'Daniel is opposing the nomination of Joe B. Dooley of Amarillo to be a Federal judge for northern Texas.

Connally, who is backing Dooley, asked Chairman Wiley (R-Wis.) the status of that nomination immediately after Thomason's confirmation.

Wiley replied:

"I hope we can soon fit in the matter of Joe B. Dooley, but because that is a contested matter, I did not feel I could bring it up today."

The committee has approved Dooley's nomination by an eight to four vote.

Both Connally and O'Daniel expressed satisfaction over Thomason's confirmation. Thomason's appointment was a personal selection by President Truman.

Thomason and Truman have been friends for several years. His appointment was made after the two Texas senators failed to agree on a man for the west Texas judgeship.

Thomason was delighted.

"I am very appreciative and grateful of this high honor," he said.

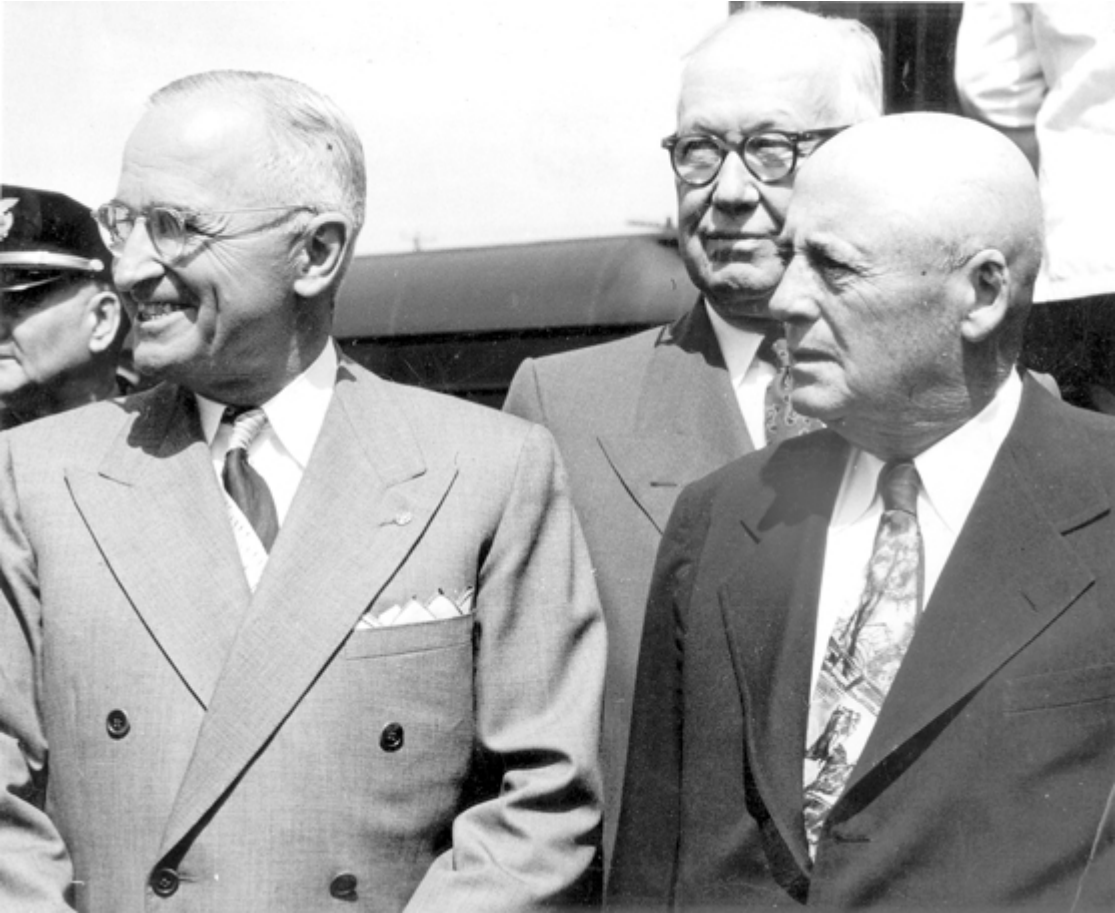
"I will not take the oath of office until all important legislative matters have are out of the way, which won't be until near the close of the session, probably late in July."

In his judicial post, Thomason will preside in El Paso. He said he will "be happy to go back among the people I know and love best."

Oath as Federal Judge, 1947



Thomason, Sam Rayburn, and Pres. Truman, 1948



Thomason Ends Segregation in Texas, 1955

E. P. Federal Judge Ends Segregation In All State Schools

Orders Negro Student Admitted To College Here

Texas Constitution
Sections Are
Ruled Invalid

Federal Judge E. E. Thomason today, in effect, told unconstitutional that portion of the Texas Constitution and all Texas laws which provide for segregation of white and Negro students in Texas schools.

The historic ruling was made in a case in which to attend Miss Thelma White, Negro, admitted to Texas Woman's College.

Only a small group was in the federal district court to hear a ruling which if upheld will render unconstitutional the Texas segregation laws. A majority of those present were Negroes. The attorney for Texas Woman's College gave no notice of appeal.

Brought Forward

The case arose when officials for Texas Woman's College appeared to seek dismissal of Miss White's application and filed a motion for restraining admission to the college. She was refused admission last September and attended New Mexico A. and M. College last year.

She testified in court today that she would attend Texas Woman's next September.

President David Fairbank, Business Manager A. A. Smith and Registrar J. H. Whitson of the college were in the courtroom.

Officials for the college testified that a ruling granting Miss White admission to the college was unnecessary at this time because of the action of the university's board of regents on July 4 opening the local college to Negroes. All but one-third admission to some branches of the university system was put off until September, 1955.

'Set of Cases'

U. S. Gov. Attorney for Miss White said that Texas Woman's had been opened only after the El Paso Public School Board had opened local schools to Negroes and that there was no prejudice against the college ruling would not be considered if, for any reason, the El Paso board demonstrated its intent.

President Fairbank testified, "There will be no discrimination against any person at Texas Woman's College as long as they meet our academic requirements."

"We seek only that Miss White, this case, should be given equal rights, unqualified, and admission to the college to Texas Woman's college only on an equal basis or on a system of priorities."

Wants Heavy Evidence

"Admission to college on the basis of the action of Texas Woman's leaves the situation too hazy," he said. A declaratory judgment that Article 5, Section 51 of the Constitution of Texas and Article 20 of the Revised Civil Statutes are valid.

"We wish to have a declaratory judgment that the Texas Constitution and laws which require segregation of white and Negro students have the right to admit any white and Negro students of the university board of regents. We do not wish to have such a decision in any other court as we see the case in El Paso."

Judge Thomason's ruling was reported this morning when he indicated in effect, the request by plaintiffs against the Texas Constitution and laws which require segregation of white and Negro students.

In the opinion issued on behalf of Miss White's attorney asked the court to issue a final judgment of those who would declare the laws which require segregation of white and Negro students to be unconstitutional because it denied to Negroes their privileges as citizens of the United States.

In upholding the request for a "final decree," Judge Thomason cited attention to the United States Supreme Court ruling of May 17, 1954, in which that segregation was ruled unconstitutional, and later, in which the Supreme Court left to local officials the power to bring into effect of integration.

"There is a government of Texas," Judge Thomason said in a previous ruling. "The United States has no power to force integration. This court has given the matter much thought."

"In view of the Supreme Court's decision, this court rules that the plaintiff Thelma White is entitled to have her local and constitutional rights reinstated."

"Cleancut Texas Justice", 1955

LOS ANGELES HERALD-EXPRESS MAR. 16, 1955
Cleancut Texas Justice

The eyes of Texas, and the eyes of the nation, were on United States District Judge R. E. Thomason of El Paso the other day when he upheld the conviction of Clinton Jencks, union leader, on charges of lying in a non-Communist affidavit.

At the same time, the judge, no pussyfooting jurist, charged witness Harvey Matusow with criminal contempt of court.

The judge also barred a top attorney for Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers at Bayard, N. Mex., from his court.

Said Judge Thomason anent Lawyer Witt, who had been called to the witness stand and declined to answer questions about possible Communist affiliation:

"No lawyer who takes the witness stand and invokes the Fifth Amendment on grounds of self incrimination will be allowed to practice in this court."

Judge Thomason should be applauded for so forthrightly tearing

the veil from Harvey Matusow's brazen attempt to save Communists by gaining new trials for them through repudiating his own testimony which helped to convict them.

The judge also deserves the nation's commendation for the action he took concerning Lawyer Witt.

In California, the State Bar Association is struggling with the same difficult problem of lawyers and Reds.

A committee of the bar association has proposed discipline, up and to the point of disbarment, for attorneys who refuse to answer questions on subversion, who show disrespect for legislative committees or who invoke the Fifth Amendment when examined by bar disciplinary committees.

The bar association is earnestly endeavoring to clean its own nest of those who would foul it and discredit the legal profession in the eyes of the great American public.

Judge Thomason Recalls: (4)

Jencks Case Caused Law To Be Written

Judge Thomason recalls the history-making trial of Clinton E. Jencks and the Supreme Court's reversal of conviction and sentence in this fourth article by the distinguished jurist.

By JUDGE R. E. THOMASON

8-25-64.

Another noted case which I tried was that of the U.S. vs. Clinton E. Jencks. It not only attracted national attention but also caused new law to be written by the Congress. Jencks was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury in El Paso, charged in two counts of the indictment with swearing falsely that he was not a Communist.

The oaths were made in an affidavit filed by Jencks under the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. Jencks resided in Bayard, N.M., where his alleged Communist activities were carried on, but the affidavit was made and signed in El Paso, which gave my court jurisdiction of the case. It was the first case of its kind ever to be tried in the South or Southwest.



Judge Thomason

Jencks was president of Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. The affidavit was made on April 20, 1950, and there was no denial that he was not a Communist.

(Continued on Page 2-A, Col. 1)

Jencks Case

Judge Thomson Recalls: Jencks Case Caused Law To Be Written

(Continued from Page 14)

The trial of the case itself was exciting, but the aftermath of the trial, which I still have vividly recalled, was more dramatic and significant.

The trial commenced about five weeks and the sensational headlines that followed the courtroom during the entire time. Many newspaper reporters and special writers from all over the country were present. The prosecution was represented by Charles Brannan, U.S. district attorney, and assisted by Asst. U.S. Atty. Gen. Harry Williams, together with other members of the Department of Justice in Washington. Leading counsel for the defense was John W. Jencks, one of the ablest and most famous lawyers in the country. Jencks was working with the late Sen. Frank B. Rowland, who had sponsored the bill, and many other prominent members of Congress, as he later did in the case of the late Sen. James H. Doolittle, who also was among counsel for the defense.

LEGAL STRINGS
Legal strings were run out of the courtroom of the trial in the country, having about 1,000 spectators and with the doors kept shut that would not do so. The trial was reported in the FBI as being completely and had been investigated by a committee of Congress, and also government agents as well as by the attorney general of France.

Many witnesses stated that they had not in contact of the case with Jencks when he returned to the United States. They stated that he had been in the Government and had been in the office of the attorney general of France.

The late J. W. Frank, partner of the late William H. Jencks, Los Angeles, and one of the trial witnesses, testified that he was in the office with Jencks when Jencks returned to the United States.

It was a Commission and was headed by the late Sen. Frank B. Rowland, who was then in the United States. The Commission was headed by the late Sen. Frank B. Rowland, who was then in the United States.

The hearing witness for the defense was Harry Williams, who was then in the United States. The hearing witness for the defense was Harry Williams, who was then in the United States.

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Lovebirds Case

'Love Bird' Swindler Case Caused Sensation

The "Love Birds" swindling trial is the first of six notorious cases to be reviewed by U.S. Senior District Judge R. E. Thomason in a series of articles to be published exclusively by The El Paso Times. Other sensational cases to be reviewed include the trials of Clinton E. Jencks, Leon Bearden and Billie Sol Estes.

By JUDGE R. E. THOMASON

On June 1, 1963, I retired as active judge for the Western District of Texas to become what is called senior judge. Under the law I still retain an office, courtroom and secretary. I am not required to handle the regular heavy dockets of the court but I can select cases I would like to try and with my consent and approval of the Court of Appeals. I can also be assigned to hold court in any other jurisdictions in the country where my services might be needed.

An examination of the records at El Paso, Pecos and Del Rio Divisions of the court over which I have presided for nearly 17 years shows that I have been one of the busiest judges in the nation. I doubt if any judge in the country has disposed of more cases numerically than I



Judge Thomason

have. The great majority of these were immigration cases, commonly known as "wet-backs" and were uncontested, nevertheless there had to be a hearing in each case and the docket cleared.

"The record from the clerk's offices in the three divisions shows that 54,655 legal hearings were disposed of. Of this number 39,785 were criminal cases; 4,521 civil cases; 406 bankruptcy cases and 9,943 aliens coming from

Reporter.

(In Monday's issue of The Times: The Babb brothers cattle smuggling case.)

Airplane Hijacking Case

Judge Thomason Recalls:

Airplane Hijacking Most Sensational Case

(The 1961 hijacking of a Continental Airlines 707 jet by Leon and Cody Bearden is the final article by Judge Thomason recalling prominent trials he conducted during 19 years on the federal bench.)

By JUDGE R. E. THOMASON

8-26-68

Probably the most unusual and perhaps the most sensational case I tried during my many years on the federal bench was that of Leon Bearden and his 16-year-old son, Cody Bearden.

They were charged in the most sensational airplane hijacking case in American history. The case was unique in the jurisprudence of the country in that it was the first case where defendants were charged with theft of an airplane in interstate commerce and the kidnaping of its crew and passengers.

The indictment charged them with kidnaping, obstruction of interstate commerce by robbery and also interstate theft.

Defendants lived in Chandler, Ariz. Leon Bearden did odd jobs, including sale of used automobiles. At the time he became involved in this case he was on parole from the state penitentiary of California where he was serv-



Judge Thomason

ing a sentence for robbery by the use of dangerous weapons.

He had a good wife and several nice children, including his son Cody, and he and his wife were separated at times but not divorced. Bearden had also been treated at a mental hospital in Arizona but after the testimony of several noted doctors on the trial the jury found that he was sane and knew what he was doing and could distinguish between right and wrong.

BUYS PISTOLS

Shortly before his indictment in my court he purchased two pistols and forced his son Cody to accompany him on his fateful journey. Cody was under his

(Continued on Page 7-A, Col. 1)

Torch Slayer Case

Judge Thomason Recalls:

'Torch Slayer' Case Given Much Publicity

Editor's note: Third in a series of articles by U.S. District Judge R. E. Thomason deals with "Torch Slayers" Marvin Lee Austin and Raymond Leslie Button, another sensational trial in the distinguished career of Judge Thomason.

By JUDGE R. E. THOMASON 8.24.65.

The next jury case I tried that attracted wide public attention was that of the United States versus Marvin Lee Austin and Raymond Leslie Button, two young soldiers stationed at Ft. Bliss whom the newspapers referred to during the trial as "Torch Slayers." These were both young men in their early twenties. Both came from broken homes, with Austin coming from a little country town in Arkansas and Button from Iowa. Austin had been convicted in misdemeanor cases and Button for automobile theft.

They were both found guilty of first degree murder growing out of the killing of Jesus Alvarez Gonzales, an El Paso taxi driver. On the night of the killing both had been drinking heavily. They



Judge Thomason

learned from an Army buddy about some ammunition having been stolen and buried in a sandhill near Ft. Bliss. They stole an Army rifle and later a large quantity of the buried ammunition. They were in need of money so they decided to rob a taxi driver. They left their barracks and went out to the highway carrying the concealed and loaded Army rifle.

The first taxi that came by did not stop but the second one, driven by Gonzales, did stop and since it was a dark night and Button had the rifle hidden as

(Continued on Page 3-A, Col. 1)

W. L. Babb Not Involved In Case

The W. L. Babb erroneously identified as Walter A. (Dixie) Babb in the second article by U.S. District Judge R. E. Thomason appearing in the Monday issue of The Times is a cousin of the Babb brothers tried in federal court and was not a defendant or in any way involved in the case.

W. L. Babb is a respected businessman in Marfa, Tex.

The Times and Judge Thomason offer their deepest apologies to W. L. Babb for the error.

Another relative, Kent Babb, a graduate of Texas Western College, is a highly respected school teacher at San Angelo, Tex., and had nothing to do with the case.

Torch Slayer Case

Judge Thomason Recalls:

'Torch Slayer' Case Given Much Publicity

(Continued from Page 1-A)

best he could under his coat, Gonzales evidently did not know they were armed. After traveling a short distance they pointed the rifle at Gonzales and demanded his money, whereupon



MARVIN LEE AUSTIN

Gonzales reached for his microphone and they shot him and he died shortly thereafter.

They drove the taxicab out into the desert back of Ft. Bliss where they gathered a large quantity of big tumbleweeds and stacked them around the automobile and then set it afire. The automobile was completely destroyed and Gonzales' body was

burned almost beyond identification. In fact, the only certain proof of identification produced at the trial was by a dentist who had filled some of his teeth and had a record and X-ray picture of them. Austin and Button staggered back to their quarters and the next day were arrested



RAYMOND L. BUTTON

and charged with murder. Shortly thereafter, Button made a full confession to the local Army chaplain. In fact, it was he who furnished the prosecuting officers with the confession and much of the evidence that later led to conviction.

FOUND GUILTY

After a rather long and hotly contested trial, both men were found guilty of murder in the first degree. Neither took the stand. The jury refused to recommend mercy, which made it compulsory upon the court to impose the death penalty.

I sentenced both of them to die in the electric chair at the State Penitentiary at Huntsville, Tex., on June 1, 1952. I had no alternative under the law and I directed that they be executed in compliance with the manner prescribed by the laws of the state of Texas.

In my long and varied experience as a lawyer and judge it was the toughest job I ever had. I did not sleep well for several nights. I did some praying.

When I was district attorney at Gainesville I prosecuted a man for killing his brother. He sneaked up to the brother's house at night and shot him through the window. He was one of the worst men I have ever known in or out of court. I was pleased however, when the jury in his case sent him to the penitentiary.

ment, although there is considerable argument against it. Many of the states are now repealing the law. There are some terrible cases where the defendant by reason of some terrible crime deserves the death penalty, but I think the law is as a deterrent to others. I am not chicken hearted or over sympathetic, but I would prefer not to have any man's blood on my hands or anything to do with depriving him of his right to live.

APPEAL CASE

Austin and Button appealed their case to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals at New Orleans. I think those fine judges on that court felt like I did and that was to find some good excuse to reverse the case and give these young men another trial. They reversed the case on technicalities and when the record was returned to my office I called in the district attorney and the attorneys for the defendants and told them there seemed to be no question that the defendants were guilty of first degree murder but I did not want to impose the death penalty and if they would like to plead guilty I would assure them in advance that they would receive only a life sentence. This was done and so far as I know they are both still in the penitentiary, although I had a letter not long since from the prison authorities that Austin had a good prison record and they thought he should soon be paroled.

He has now served 12 years and that is a considerable amount of time to take out of any young man's life and if he shows signs of rehabilitation I hope his petition for parole is granted. He had a very fine war record in Korea where he did much combat duty and the record shows that he killed several of the enemy in brutal and bloody combat. In fact, his lawyers argued on the trial that he was mentally upset when he was returned to this country and, to drown some of his recollections of the horrors of war, had become a heavy drinker of intoxicating liquors. Button's record was bad before the murder, but if, and when, he shows promise of rehabilitation I have an idea he will be paroled and if I am written about the matter I will give my consent.

A Federal judge has a very heavy duty and grave responsibility in having to sentence every man who appears in his court. I hope and pray that, if in the days to come my record of sentences is investigated, it will be found that if I have erred it was on the side of mercy.

(Wednesday's article in The Times: Jencks and Matson trial.)

Babb Cattle Rustling Case

C.V.F. - THOMASON R.E.

Judge Thomason Recalls: Babb Cattle Rustling Case Proved Unusual

EL PASO TIMES AG 23 '65

(Editor's Note—The Babb brothers rustling trial is the second of six notorious cases to be reviewed by U.S. Senior District Judge R. E. Thomason in a series of articles exclusive to The El Paso Times. Other sensational cases to be reviewed include the trials of Clinton E. Jencks, Leon Bearden and Billie Sol Estes.)

By JUDGE R. E. THOMASON

Cattle theft or "rustling," as it is usually called in the West, was a common practice in the early days of the frontier and the border. It was usually confined, however, to the theft of one, or a very few, cattle.

To me fell the lot of trying the biggest cattle smuggling case ever known in the Southwest.

Three Babb brothers, together with four other alleged conspirators, were indicted in my court in 1953 for stealing and smuggling into the United States from Mexico more than 400 cattle during the period of a very few months.

They were smuggling in about 100 at a time. Babb brothers, together with their parents and other members of the Babb family in the border country, had a reputation for several years of being outlaws of one kind or another. Dixie Babb, Walter Babb and Irvin Babb, along with their mother, owned a small ranch about 25 miles from Sierra Blanca, Tex., where they had some corrals and loading pens. This small ranch in sorry desert country would support very few cattle. It was located only a few miles from Indian Hot Springs and very near the Mexican border.



Judge Thomason

STOLEN FROM RANCH

Cattle covered by the indictment had been stolen from the Los Lamentos Ranch in Mexico, which was about 25 miles from the border and one of the largest in Mexico.

The ranch was owned by A. A. Raynal, rich and prominent attorney of the City of Chihuahua, and his well-to-do family. The evidence showed on the trial that the Babb brothers employed two Mexican cowboys to help round up and smuggle the cattle into the United States. They crossed the Rio Grande River at Indian Hot Springs where there is very little water and no trouble to ford. The cattle were then driven to the Babb ranch where three big trucks with trailers were awaiting them. The trucks were owned by the co-conspirators, Wilkerson Brothers of Big Spring, Tex.

The cattle were driven across the river at night and as soon as they reached the Babb ranch they were promptly loaded on the trucks headed at rapid speed for various auction sales barns at various places in Texas. Two hundred and thirty-three head of the cattle were sold at an auction barn in Midland, 40 at Austin, seventy-five at Lexington and 80 at San Angelo.

There was more than one theft and more than one transportation of the cattle. W. L. (Dixie) was the leader in the entire movement. He claimed the cattle as his own but sold them under assumed names.

Farmers and ranchers from various parts of East Texas and Oklahoma bought the cattle at auction, at the sales barns, and took them to their ranches for feeding.

I have tried many cases on circumstantial evidence but this was the best one I ever tried. The Customs Agents and the District Attorney did a very fine (Continued on Page 1-A, Col. 4)

Judge Thomason Recalls: Babb Cattle Rustling Case Proved Unusual

EL PASO TIMES AG 23 '65

(Continued from Page 1-A)

job in presenting the case. The Customs men went to the various ranches over Texas and Oklahoma where the cattle had been then after purchase and stripped the cattle brands.

A piece of the hide of the animal about 12 inches square was tanned and tacked on a wooden board for exhibits on the trial. They also had records of sales, routes of transportation and canceled checks for payment to Babb brothers for the stolen cattle.

It was a most unusual and interesting circumstantial case. The jury was out only a little while and found all defendants, except the truck drivers, guilty. I sentenced Dixie Babb, the leader, to serve five years and the other defendants to serve three years. I was later affirmed by the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court, but Dixie Babb fled to Mexico.

SERVE SENTENCES

The other defendants served their sentences and the brother-in-law of the Babbs, who was also a defendant, has now been a City Fireman for several years in El Paso and a good citizen.

Dixie Babb has had a rough time of it ever since his conviction in 1954. He jumped bail and his family had to pay \$3,000 bond money. He went to Mexico where he lived in a cave for some time and later married a Mexican woman and they now

have a young son about five years of age.

Dixie knew that the United States authorities had an extradition warrant for him. He got the idea that if he would have some friend file a trumped-up charge against him for some minor offense he would plead guilty, serve a short sentence and then be immune from extradition.

He was arrested and placed in jail where he remained for four years and suffered much cruel and inhuman treatment. A newspaper reporter in Mexico City wrote a story about the injustice being done him and he was permitted to return to my court in November, 1964 to plead for a reduction of sentence of the original five years I gave him in 1964, 1964.

I reduced his sentence to two years, which he is now serving at LaTuna Correctional Institution just out of El Paso. He has learned the trade of welder and has a good job in sight when released. He is now eligible for parole and I think and hope he will be paroled quite soon.

"The way of the transgressor is hard!"

CZECHS ESCAPE

San Benedetto de Tronto, Italy. (AP)—A Czechoslovak family of four arrived in this small Adriatic fishing port Sunday aboard a tiny rubber boat saying they had fled their country through Yugoslavia with the help of an American relative.

Billie Sol Estes Case, 1964

Billie Sol Hearing Set For Aug. 31

TIMES 8/20/64

Hearing to revoke a \$100,000 appeal bond for Billie Sol Estes, convicted swindler facing 15 years in federal prison, has been set tentatively for Aug. 31.

U.S. District Judge R. E. Thomason, who last year set sentence for the West Texas mortgage manipulator, will preside over the bond hearing if it is held. Estes was sentenced to five years on each of five counts of using the mails to defraud and conspiracy, three of the terms to be served consecutively and two concurrently.

Fred Morton, assistant U.S. attorney who filed the motion to have the appeal bond revoked, said Wednesday the matter may be handled by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, La. Morton said he had conferred with members of the firm of Cofer and Cofer, Estes' legal counsel in Austin, and been informed Estes will file a counter motion for rehearing before the circuit court and, if turned down, a writ of certiorari to advance the appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In this event, Morton felt the circuit court would set a new bond, avoiding the necessity for a hearing before Judge Thomason in El Paso.

Morton said, in either case, it is likely a request will be made either by himself or U.S. Attorney Ernest Morgan of San Antonio to raise the amount of Estes' bail. He indicated the new bond might require double the surety by Estes' crmfwypetaoin \$100,000 presently placed as surety by Estes' father, brother and uncle.

Estes has until Aug. 31 to file motion for a rehearing by the appellate court that then has additional time in which to grant or deny the motion.

Observers feel it is unlikely the rehearing will be granted since the circuit court's three members last week unanimously upheld Estes' conviction and sentencing and commended Judge Thomason for his conduct of the trial.

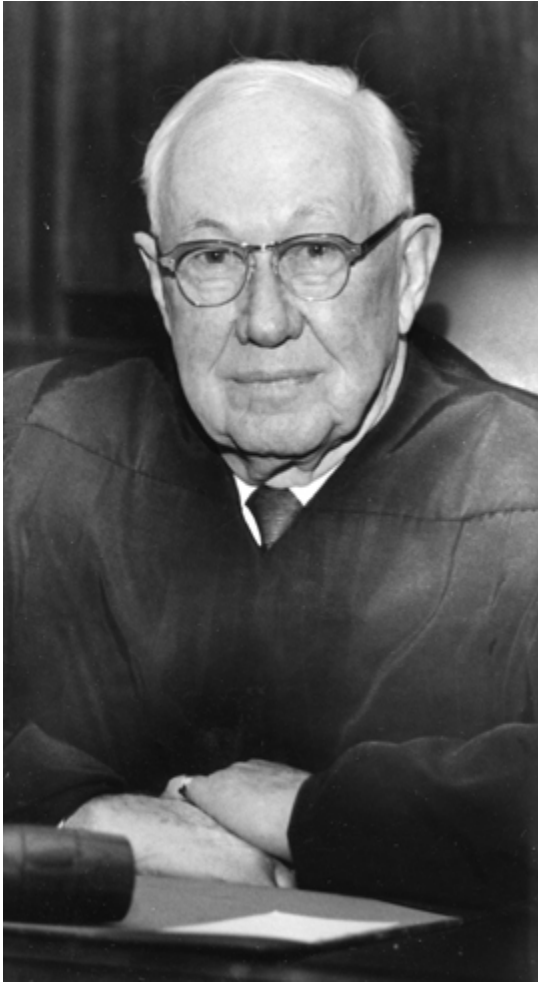
More months will likely elapse before the supreme court acts. Attorneys point out that four members must concur in accepting the case for review and the court presently is in adjournment until late October.

Estes is not apt to see the inside of a prison cell for some time to come.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomason and Mayor Raymond Telles of El Paso, 1959



Judge Thomason, 1960



"A Gentleman Retires", 1963

A Gentleman Retires



Artist Tom Lea's portrait of Judge R. E. Thomason

MANY MEN make their mark in the world, but few can boast of a career as distinguished as that of Federal District Judge Robert Ewing Thomason, who yesterday announced his impending retirement.

Member of the State Legislature, Mayor of El Paso, a 17-year member of the Congress of the United States, and most recently District Judge, he has won the respect and the outright affection of his fellow citizen by his service in each of these fields.

Now, at the age of 83, Judge Thomason is stepping out. It is typical, however, that he will remain "on call" as senior judge, available to try selected cases here or elsewhere in the United States.

Choice of a successor to Judge Thomason has yet to be made, but we hope full consideration will be given to selection of an El Pasoan for the job.

In the course of his long and distinguished career on the federal bench, Judge Thomason has handled an exceptional number of difficult and time-consuming cases. Most recent of these was the Billie Sol Estes case here in El Paso. These were trials that might have worn out a lesser man, but even with his 84th birthday just around the corner, Judge Thomason has the physical vigor and mental alertness of a man many years his junior.

He has, furthermore, retained the warmth and good humor that has made him more than just a fine public servant, but one who has the personal affection of all who have come in contact with him.

There are some men—not enough, unfortunately—for whom the word "gentleman" seems to have been coined. Such a man is Judge Thomason.

We regret that the passing years have made it necessary, in the judge's opinion, for him to diminish his activities, but we cannot begrudge him the right to a more leisurely life.

We salute him and wish him well.

"Thomason Reached Greatness", 1973

Thomason Reached Greatness

Six years after El Paso was incorporated, on May 30, 1879, her number one citizen was born in Tennessee. As with so many others who reached greatness on the border, he came here under a medical order.

U.S. Dist. Judge R.E. Thomason had served four years as district attorney at Gainesville, Tex., where his family moved when he was a year old, before his doctor diagnosed as tuberculosis what the judge always insisted was only a touch of malaria.

Soon after arriving in El Paso, he joined a law firm in which the late Tom Lea was a partner. Both Lea, father of El Paso's fine artist, Tom Lea Jr., and Thomason, went on to become mayors of El Paso. Lea often referred to his partner as the finest trial lawyer he ever had seen in action.

FIRST RACE

In 1916 Judge Thomason made his first political foray in El Paso, elected to the legislature without opposition on a "clean government" platform. He was re-elected without opposition in 1920 and was named speaker of the House of Representatives, also without any dissent. Two years later, riding on his statewide reputation, he was an unsuccessful candidate for governor, learning something of the duplicity of politics and the reluctance of the rest of Texas to recognize its western corner.

In 1927 the judge was approached as a mayoral candidate. "They didn't have much trouble talking me into running," he recalled with a smile, and in the campaign he often gave what he liked to call his "rousing speech." His two terms as mayor brought El Paso some of its greatest years in attracting new industry, including the Phelps Dodge Refinery, the Texas Co., Standard Oil of Texas, and El Paso Natural Gas Co. He also was a leader in giving El Paso a municipal airport.

Judge Thomason's political star was on the ascendancy and when the incumbent U.S. representative from West Texas, Claude Hudspeth, died in 1931, Thomason was elected easily to succeed him.

BECAME POWER

In Washington he became a power on the House Military Affairs Committee, helping set up El Paso as a key training center during World War II. Had he stayed in Congress he would have been chairman of the committee, one of the most powerful in Congress. But when President Harry



R. E. THOMASON

Truman invited him to come home as a federal judge, he was happy to accept the invitation. He was put on the bench on Aug. 1, 1947.

On the occasion of his 10th anniversary on the bench a long article reviewing the judge's career appeared in The El Paso Times and was read into the Congressional Record by a longtime friend, U.S. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who two years ago flew to El Paso to congratulate Judge Thomason on his birthday.

Today he lives quietly with his devoted wife, Abbie, in their North Stanton home, where the judge happily receives old friends and engages in his favorite topic of conversation—politics. He never lost his zest for the "game," even when as a federal judge he was precluded from any active participation. He retired years ago but retained an office in the courthouse for some time after retirement. During his years on the bench he handled some of the most sensational cases to appear in any

Southwestern court, including the trial of Billie S. Eales and of Clinton Jency. Both cases went to the U.S. Supreme Court and made legal history.