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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: The Eisenhower Years: a Chronicle the Eight Years of the Administration

Date: January 19, 1961

Recording number: Tape A 1961-01-19

Length of recording: 21:34

[transcript begins]

ANNOUNCER: WLBZ News presents the Eisenhower Years. [Music]

NARRATOR: Good evening. The Bangor Hydro Electric Company in association with WLBZ Radio News is pleased to present the Eisenhower Years, a chronicle in sound of the past eight years of the Eisenhower Administration. Eight years fraught with crisis and achievement in our national history. We trust you'll find this program to be of real value as Americans face the unfolding of a new era under a new president and administration. In a moment we'll hear the echoes of history, the reflections of an era as the Bangor Hydro Electric Company presents the Eisenhower Years. [Music]

Families, like armies, travel on their stomach. So heed the call. Key your kitchen to modern living. It's time to change to an electric range and get cooking that's quicker, cooler, more economical. Even the watched pot races to a boil on the new extra high-speed units, while new controls take guesswork out of baking. And when man meets rotisserie, it's love at first bite. Or if you prefer, built-in ovens and counter units are the last word and style and convenience. To get better frying, faster boiling, finer baking, delicious broiling, get a new electric range. See the wonderful variety of new electric ranges built-in ovens and counter units now being featured by your appliance dealer. [Music]

NARRATOR 2: Eight years ago this week a five star general named Dwight David Eisenhower hung up his uniform and became President of the United States. Now it's over; an era has ended. Last Tuesday evening, Mr. Eisenhower officially said farewell to the people of the world and the United States as President of the United States.

VOICE OF EISENHOWER: To all the peoples of the world, I once more give expression to America's prayerful and continuing aspiration. We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied. That those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full. That all who yearn for freedom may experience its few spiritual blessings. Those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy responsibility. That all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity and that the sources, scourges, of poverty disease and ignorance will be made disappear from the earth. And that in the goodness of time all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love. Now on Friday noon I am to become a private citizen. I am proud to do so. I look forward to it. Thank you, and good night. [Music]

NARRATOR: The 96 months, the 416 weeks, that have elapsed since that January day in 1953 when President Eisenhower was inaugurated for his first term will go down in the history books as the Eisenhower years. But to many it will be remembered simply as the age of Ike. During those years, the president came through three grave illnesses, past the seventy year mark, wound up playing as much golf as ever, apparently in excellent health, ready to retire to his Gettysburg farm. And those years were years of the jet age. And Mr. Eisenhower, believing strongly in personal diplomacy, was the traveling-est president ever. He grinned and waved his arms to millions in Europe, the Middle East, in Asia. And in June of 1955, Mr. Eisenhower came to Maine.

EISENHOWER: There is no thanks due me for coming to this section of the United States. For long, I have felt that my education was sadly lacking in that I did not have an intimate acquaintance yet with this region. I have satisfied a long felt desire to come here. And incidentally, I should like to point out one thing. The office that I hold, being what it is, I did not come alone. Now there must be millions of Americans as ignorant as I was of the beauties of this region. And think of all the newspaper people, photographers and others that now should be educating those people and possibly they will come and get the same first-hand knowledge that I have. [Applause]

NARRATOR: But for most Americans, the Eisenhower years will be remembered for more than things political, more than trips. It will be remembered for manners and morals, as well as for the probing of space, the clash of ideologies, and the march of nationalism, and science. During those Eisenhower years, mankind began exploring the hole were in, namely, space. The earth played hula-hoop with satellite orbits. The Russians, in the words of historian Dick May, violated the moon and shortly thereafter they took a picture of the moon's backside. And these were the rock and roll years. [Music, One, two, three o'clock, four o'clock Rock] Yes, rock and roll. Bill Haley, The Comets, the years of sideburns and guitars, hula hoops and pizza pies. The supermarket became every man's castle. The move to the suburbs reached full time. It was an era of teenage determinism. Instead of mere children of parents, they became a separate entity to which the whole merchandising lines and campaigns were directed. And it was the era of the doggie in the window, the hound dog, the purple people eater, and the itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny yellow polka-dot bikini. And remember the Vicuna coats, and presidential assistant Sherman Adams, who resigned after pressure was brought to bear because of alleged influence charges?

ADAMS: Against my distaste for giving any grounds whatever to the charge of retreating under fire, against my desire to complete my duty, during the remaining two years of the term for which President Eisenhower was elected, I must give full consideration to the effect of my continuing presence on the public scene. Under the circumstances and in light of the events of the past three months in which I have been made to be directly concerned, I must ask myself whether my retention in office might conceivably delay or retard, even in small degree, the achievement of those goals of President Eisenhower which lie ahead.

NARRATOR: Special presidential assistant, Sherman Adams, who resigned his position after charges of influence. Yes, the Eisenhower years. The years when Grace Kelly married a prince. A couple of British sergeants and a Russian lady doctor walked across the country. Other adventurers climbed Everest.

Living quarters were established at the South Pole. The Dodgers won the World Series and got out of town. In London, a queen was crowned. Princess Margaret renounced lover, gained a husband, and lost a butler. The American language was enriched by these phrases: isolation booth, brush war, defense posture, population explosion, cholesterol level, Van Allen belt, fallout, blast off, cross national product, all that jazz, don't bug me Jack, and two-four-six-eight we don't want to integrate. Salk triumphed with his polio vaccine, nuclear submarines, the first vehicles to be propelled by the atom, began their prowl.. Some carried the Polaris missile. Each had more destructive power than all the combined explosions of World War II, from grenades to atom bombs. The International Geophysical Year explored all sections of the earth and found out that the earth wasn't round at all but pear-shaped. There were three tragic collisions, Andrea Doria and the Stockholm off Nantucket, 51 dead, Andrea Doria sunk; two propeller driven aircraft over the Grand Canyon, 128 dead; jet and propeller airliners over New York City, 134 dead; and near Tokyo, a US Air Force transport down, 129 dead. And statehood, statehood rather, for two rounded out the Union. Alaska and Hawaii became the 49th and 50th stars in Old Glory. President Eisenhower announced their stars in appropriate ceremonies.

EISENHOWER: I think all of us recognize this as an historic occasion. Certainly for myself, I feel very highly privileged and honored to welcome the 49th state into the Union. [Music]

NARRATOR: And in announcing the statehood for Hawaii, the 50th state, Mr. Eisenhower had this to say.

EISENHOWER: Gentlemen, I think that we shall recognize that this is truly an historic occasion because for the second time in within a little over a year, a new state has been admitted to the Union. It had been a long time any state, since any state, had been admitted, so to have this of our Union in such a short space is truly a unique experience.

NARRATOR: Other figures in the Eisenhower years, Winston Churchill a former naval person and Nobel Prize winner in literature, gave up the British prime ministry at 80. Joseph Stalin and Pope Pius the 12th, two figures who didn't see eye to eye, died during the Eisenhower years and a new pope was named, Pope John the 13th. [Music] [Applause, audio in Latin]

NARRATOR: The Coronation of Pope John the 13th. And death came to two American Statesman, Senator Robert Taft and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. And to the retired George C. Marshall, General of the Armies, John J. Pershing. Both East and West got the H-bomb, like a bear by the tail and were afraid to turn loose. While Communist China began ticking like a time bomb. Man ran a mile in less than four minutes. And fallout sprinkled on a boatload of Japanese fishermen. Autos got smaller. So did the US dollar balance. Thinking machines began [celebrating?] in all fields. Business peaked, recessed, peaked, recessed. The stock market spread its base, the little people got in. The quiz scandals and Payola raised serious questions of public and private morality. And a Negro musician named Louis Armstrong became a Goodwill Ambassador.

INTERVIEWER: Satch, you've been all around the world of that horn of yours. American jazz well received all over wherever you've gone?

ARMSTONG: Well, yes, and I think it's very history, in all the country, natives. They don't even speak the language or anything, but they understand what you're playing, they got their records, all in Africa and everywhere. Down in Ghana, there's 100,000 Africans stand up there, [listen to us blow?].

INTERVIEWER: I've heard a lot of people saying, I think you've said yourself, the music is one way that we can we can create better understanding among in there different nations.

ARMSTONG: [inaudible] and it's a universal language, I think. Because even when you're jamming with those boys, you don't have to worry about saying anything. They just look at one another, smile, keep on blowing, [inaudible].

NARRATOR: And during the Eisenhower years, a former truck driver named Elvis Presley became the most celebrated Sergeant since Alvin York. Adlai Stevenson wore a hole in his shoe and lost two elections. And it was a time of new nations emerging, strident nationalism, and the last gasp of colonialism. In Africa, at the end of the World War, there were four independent nations. At the beginning of 1960, there were 10. At the end of 1960, there were 25, being courted by both the Communists and the West. The McCarthy's subversive influence hearings were on in 1953. And in 1954, there were the Army McCarthy hearings and Senate condemnation of the Wisconsin Senator.

INTERVIEWER: Senator McCarthy, the Scientists Committee on Loyalty and Security of the Federation of American Scientists says that your inquiries into alleged spying at the Fort Monmouth Radar Laboratories has caused, this is a quote, "a very real and immediate damage to the defense program." What is your view on their view?

MCCARTHY: Well Bill, all I can say is, I've been down there and I think the good loyal Americans down there want to get rid of the Communists and the potential espionage agents. I do think we are demoralizing the Communist Party. I hope we continue. I don't think we're demoralizing any good Americans.

NARRATOR: The late Senator Joseph McCarthy when he was in Maine. The Eisenhower manner in conduct were credited with healing some of the passionate riffs of that period and generally with bringing on a time of good feeling. [Music] Internationally, it was a time of tension. The president strove to promote peace. The United Nations adopted his Atoms for Peace Plan in 1954. In 1955, he went to the summit and sparked the goodwill spirit of Geneva. It faded with the foreign ministers meeting. In 1956, the Eisenhower administration supported the Hungarian revolt verbally. It was crushed. The United States broke with its allies in the invasion of Nasser's Egypt and the Eisenhower prestige suffered. But in 1959, he toured Europe and the old affection returned. Communism crept into Latin America. The Chinese People's Republic consolidated its hold on the mainland. Beijing won equal status with Moscow in world communist strategy. It moved into Tibet. On October 5th 1957, Russia tool the age of space over the horizon with the launching of the first man-made satellite. Ours came later and President Eisenhower by recording broadcast a message to the world from the United States satellite.

EISENHOWER: This is the President of the United States. Through the marvels of scientific advancement, my voice is coming to you from a satellite, circling in outer space. Through this unique means, I convey to you, and to all mankind, America's wish for peace on earth and goodwill toward men everywhere.

NARRATOR: On May 17th 1954, the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools. In 1957, President Eisenhower sent federal troops to escort Negroes to school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Negro sit-in demonstrations marked 1960. In 1959, that traveling Vice President, Richard Nixon, went to Russia and Mr. Khrushchev came to this country, toured it from coast to coast, but couldn't get a visa to Disneyland. The President took him to Camp David and a new tension [?] began. But in 1960, the U-2 incident gave Khrushchev an excuse to crawl back into the deep freeze.

KRUSHCHEV: [excerpt of speech in Russian]

NARRATOR: And the Paris Summit was cancelled as well as the scheduled Presidential visit to Russia. And Tokyo riots canceled Ike's Japanese trip. Khrushchev came to the United Nations meeting, hugged Castro, banged on a United Nations bench and got some well planned chaos. The President worried about other chaos in the Congo and he worried about Cuba's communist leanings, severed relations with the island off our southern shores. Tomorrow, Mr. Eisenhower can put aside these worries as well as all the other burdens of what Thomas Jefferson called the splendid misery of the presidency. [Music]

ANNOUNCER: You've been listening to the Eisenhower Years, a recorded reflection of the past eight years of our history, an era that ends tomorrow, when John F. Kennedy is inaugurated as the 35th President of the United States. This program was produced by WLBZ News and was narrated by news director, John Wellington. And now a final word from your host, the Bangor Hydro Electric Company.

The Bangor Hydro Electric Company reminds you wonderful things will happen, you'll see, when you live better electrically. For example you'll find a new refrigerator freezer a year-round joy. Save money, too. New features, new benefits. They hold more food, fresh and frozen, and it's easier to get to. Shelves, crispers and bins now slide, roll, or tilt out. The electric refrigerator freezers show big improvement not only style outside, but inside. Things like ice cube keepers, bakery bins, storage for specialties. It's a family necessity. See the newest in electric refrigerators and freezers at your appliance dealers. Why not drop in tomorrow? [Music]

ANNOUNCER: This is the Maine Broadcasting Company.

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

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