

Collection #
P 0256

**GENERAL WALTER BEDELL SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1980 COPIES OF 1896, CA. 1938**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	4
Contents	4

Processed by

Barbara Quigley
8 June 2018

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder of photographs in Cold Storage

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1980 copies of photographs from 1896 and ca. 1938

PROVENANCE: Gift from Stephen Bedell Smith of Ft. Myers, Florida, 1981

RESTRICTIONS: Any materials listed as being in Cold Storage must be requested at least 4 hours in advance.

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1981.0719

NOTES: For more photographs of Walter Bedell Smith, see: Bretzman Photograph Studio Collection (P0338) and Larry Foster Collection (P0569); or see our digital collections.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Walter Bedell Smith was born 5 October 1895 in Indianapolis to William Long Smith (1854–1921) and Ida Frances Bedell Smith (1861–1937). He was a career Army officer who made significant contributions during World War II as General Eisenhower's chief of staff, eventually achieving the rank of general. He later served as ambassador to the Soviet Union, as director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and as United States Under Secretary of State.

Beginning in childhood he was called Bedell, which was his mother's maiden name. This eventually transformed into the nickname "Beetle."

While a student at Emmerich Manual High School, Smith joined the Indiana National Guard on his sixteenth birthday in 1911. His unit mustered twice in 1913: once during the great flood that spring and again in the summer to restore order in the midst of a streetcar strike. His work during the flood earned him a promotion to corporal, and soon thereafter to sergeant.

In D.K.R. Crosswell's book, *The Chief of Staff*, it is stated that in 1913 Smith met Mary Eleanor "Nory" Cline (1893–1963), whose family lived three blocks from his, and that they were wed on 1 July 1917. However, there is a record for the marriage of a couple with the names of W. Bedell Smith and M. Eleanor Cline that occurred in Louisville, Kentucky, on 14 July 1913.

In 1917 Smith began a ninety-day officer training course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, where he earned the rank of lieutenant. He was sent to France in 1918 where he led a platoon on the Western Front in World War I, and was wounded in action. After WWI, Smith was assigned as an intelligence officer at Camp Sherman, near Chillicothe, Ohio, for two years, and then moved on to Fort Sheridan on the shore of Lake Michigan in northern Illinois. In 1925 he was assigned to the Bureau of the Budget in Washington, D.C. Four years later the War Department sent him for duty in the Philippines and he was promoted to captain.

In 1931 while Smith was at Fort Benning, Georgia, his abilities came to the attention of U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. Smith was promoted to major, and in 1939 Marshall brought him to the War Department General Staff as an assistant secretary. In May 1941 Smith was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and then to colonel in August of the same year. Early in 1942, Marshall selected Smith to be the head of the secretariat of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, which set all the major policy decisions for the United States and Great Britain during World War II, subject to the approvals of Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt.

In 1942 General Dwight D. Eisenhower requested that Marshall send Smith to join him in London as chief of staff in the European Theater of Operations for the war. Smith was promoted to brigadier general in February 1942 and stayed with Eisenhower through the end of WWII. Smith handled disciplinary actions in the field, and as Eisenhower's representative, he negotiated and signed the terms of surrender with Italy in 1943 and with Germany in 1945.

After the war, President Harry Truman appointed Smith as ambassador to the Soviet Union in April 1946, and he served in that position through December 1948. In 1949 Smith was assigned command of the First Army on Governor's Island, New York, and attained the

rank of four-star general. Truman appointed Smith as director of the CIA in October 1950. Smith served in that position until February 1953, at which time President Eisenhower appointed him United States Under Secretary of State. He resigned from the State Department on 1 October 1954, but continued to serve the Eisenhower administration as a consultant on various advisory committees.

In his final years, Smith turned to the private sector. He became director and member of the executive committee of the United Fruit Company (UFC) soon after he, as Under Secretary of State, had ordered a CIA plan for a coup in Guatemala after its president threatened to nationalize land owned by the UFC. He also served as president and chairman of the board of two defense contractors: AMF Atomics Incorporated and the Associated Missile Products Company. He also served as vice-chairman of the American Machine and Foundry Company, and as director of RCA and the Corning Glass Company. When he died, Smith left an estate valued at nearly \$2.5 million, the vast majority of which he acquired in the last six and a half years of his life, after leaving government service.

Long plagued with health problems, Smith died 9 August 1961 in Washington, DC. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery near the grave of General George C. Marshall.

Sources:

Ambrose, Stephen E. "Ike, Beetle, and D-Day: The Hoosier at Supreme Headquarters." In *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, Summer 1996, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 34–45.

Crosswell, D.K.R. *The Chief of Staff: The Military Career of General Walter Bedell Smith*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991. General Collection: E745 .S57 C76 1991

Find a Grave <findagrave.com>. Accessed 8 June 2018.

Kentucky, County Marriage Records, 1783–1965 <ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 8 June 2018.

U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928–1962 <ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 8 June 2018.

U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918 <ancestrylibrary.com>. Accessed 8 June 2018.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of two color snapshots of older black-and-white photographs. One of the original photographs was a cabinet card of Walter Bedell Smith as an infant with his mother (1896), and the other was a photo of Smith as an army captain (ca. 1938).

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Color photograph of black-and-white cabinet card portrait of Walter Bedell Smith as an infant with his mother, Ida Frances Bedell Smith. It is written on back that she was the "daughter of Andrew Bedell of Madison, Ind. / [original] Photo taken 1896."

Color photograph of black-and-white photo of Walter Bedell Smith "as a young Captain -- between Wars (about 1938)."

CONTAINER

Cold Storage,
Folder 1 of 1

Cold Storage,
Folder 1 of 1