Ben Hitt Papers

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2014
Descriptive Summary

Title: Ben Hitt Papers
Dates: approximately 1930-1977
Collection Number: 2014-38
Creator/Collector:
Extent: 1 box, including newspaper clippings and photographs.
Repository: History San Jose Research Library
San Jose, California 95110
Abstract: Benjamin Hitt (1916-2005) was the Managing Editor for the San Jose Mercury News for over 30 years. The collection is a compilation of his early works, personal photographs, and other mementos.
Language of Material: English
Access
Open to the public for research by appointment with the Curator of Library and Archives.
Preferred Citation
Ben Hitt Papers. History San Jose Research Library
Acquisition Information
Donated to History Park in 2014.

Biography/Administrative History
Ben Hitt (1916-2005) was born in Riverside, California and began his editing career early. He was editor of his high school newspaper and went on to become Editor-in-Chief of Fullerton Junior College's Weekly Torch and again and San Jose College's Spartan Daily. Hitt also served in World War II and wrote small articles for the troops newsletter. After the war he settled in Santa Clara Country and eventually worked his way up to Managing Editor at the San Jose Mercury News. His first wife, Anne Hitt, worked for the Mercury and collected records from early Santa Clara history. She died in a car accident, but Hitt's second wife kept the collection and other mementos from Hitt in her garage. Hitt passed away from bone cancer in 2005, but the records and Hitt mementos were not found until 2013 when Hitt's wife's niece was cleaning out her aunt's garage and found the historical items.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection is a compilation of the career of Benjamin Hitt, who was a former Managing Editor at the San Jose Mercury News. The collection contains newspaper clippings from the multiple newspapers that Hitt has worked with. It includes bound volumes from the Fullerton Junior College Weekly Torch and San Jose College Spartan Daily during the time that Hitt served as Editor-in-Chief. There are also some clippings from military newspapers that Hitt wrote for during World War II. Additionally, there is a folder containing clippings from his column "Hitt-ing the High Notes" and a folder containing multiple letters and correspondence addressed to him. The collection also has a series of portraits and head shots done of Hitt in his later career while at the Mercury News. Besides Hitt's personal mementos there are two older advertisements for the San Jose Mercury and a program for the San Jose Newspaper Guild's first annual Gridiron Dinner party. Within the photos there is a group shot of men working for PG&E in 1938. Finally, there was an L.C. Smith typewriter model number 8-11.