The Finding Aid of the George Pepperdine Family Papers 0026

Jamie Henricks
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Pepperdine University. Special Collections and University Archives.
January 2012
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URL: https://library.pepperdine.edu/collections/boone-special-collections-university-archives.htm
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Pepperdine University. Special Collections and University Archives.
Title: George Pepperdine Family Papers
Identifier/Call Number: 0026
Physical Description: 22.51 Linear Feet(25 boxes, 1 oversize drawer)
Date (inclusive): 1907-2002
Abstract: The George Pepperdine family papers are comprised of paper materials (such as correspondence, writings, and newspaper clippings), photographs, films, and memorabilia, dating from 1907 to 2002. Individuals represented in the collection include George Pepperdine, Lena Rose Pepperdine, Helen Louise Pepperdine, George B. Pepperdine, Florence May Pepperdine Crossley, Esther Louise Pepperdine Thurston, Marilyn Pepperdine, George Pepperdine II, and Wendell Pepperdine.
Pepperdine University. Special Collections and University Archives.
Language of Material: Materials are in English.
Conditions Governing Access
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Conditions Governing Use
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Preferred Citation
[Box/folder# or item name], George Pepperdine family papers, Collection no. 0026, Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries, Pepperdine University.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Materials from the collection came in multiple installments from various individuals prior to 1997. Items were donated primarily by Marilyn Pepperdine, Florence Pepperdine Crossley, and George Pepperdine II; other boxes were found in Helen Pepperdine's home following her death and given to Pepperdine University.
Other individual items were added to the collection by the following donors: Pat Corner, Randolph Crossley, Bill Henegar, Dr. Larry Hornbaker (including many photographs), Milford Johnson, Dorothy Moore, Mike O'Neal, Heather Pepperdine, Pepperdine University, Pepperdine University Library, Russell and Doris Squire, and M. Norvel Young.
Biographical note
George Pepperdine was born on June 20, 1886, in Mound Valley, Kansas, to John and Mary Pepperdine, the second of three children. His siblings were Fred and Benjamin. In 1903, John sold the family farm and moved the family to Parsons, Kansas. In 1905, George graduated from Parsons Business School and took his first job with a local gas company. Over the next few years, he held a variety of office and bookkeeping jobs in Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma. In 1907, the family moved and returned to farming, but George stayed in Kansas City, Missouri, and took a job as a bookkeeper at an automobile garage.
George married a woman from his hometown, Lena Rose Baker, on October 17, 1907. Lena was born on March 20, 1888, in Kansas to William and Agnes Baker. She was the oldest of seven children, with five brothers (Ralph, Ernest, Hallie, Herbert, and Wayne) and one sister (Winnifred). Her father was a carpenter, and one brother studied to be a druggist. George and Lena had two daughters, Florence May Pepperdine (married name Florence Crossley), born on November 22, 1908, and Esther Louise Pepperdine (married name Esther Thurston), born on January 6, 1911.
In March 1909, George came up with the idea to supply automobile parts via mail order. At the time, cars came from factories with few accessories or spare parts. With business connections made at his job at the garage, he was able to secure discounted prices on parts and ordered advertisements printed on credit. His initial investment of $5.00 for 500 one-cent stamps was used to mail out his batch of advertisements. George called his business Western Auto Supply Company, and sold more than $12,000 in car parts within the first year of operation. Lena wrapped and mailed the auto parts out of their home until the business made enough money for a permanent shop. An article titled How $5.00 And An Idea Became A Multi-Million Dollar Business was later published in Psychology Magazine describing his success. In 1914, he produced a catalog called Ford's Owner Supply Book to market to Model-T owners, and sales hit $229,000 that year.
In June 1914, George was diagnosed with tuberculosis and traveled to Denver, Colorado for treatment. The following year he opened another store in Denver. By January 1916, he sold his Kansas City store and moved to Southern California. In an effort to promote car ownership in San Diego and Los Angeles, he opened another branch of the Western Auto Company in Los Angeles on the corner of 12th Street and Main Street on March 16, 1916. In 1923, George opened the corporate headquarters in downtown Los Angeles, and by 1929 there were over 170 stores in the United States. Lena was the company's vice president and treasurer until her retirement in 1919. She worked six days per week at the headquarters.
Pepperdine Family Members


Scope and Content

The collection includes correspondence, photographs, writings, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, collectibles, and home movies from George Pepperdine and his family members' personal and professional lives. Much of the material is about George Pepperdine, including autobiographical material, newspaper articles, poems written by George, family history, and travels. Information and catalogs from his business, Western Auto Supply Company and two autobiographies of George Pepperdine are included in the collection: *Faith is my fortune: a life story of George Pepperdine* (1959) and *Faith was his fortune: the life story of George Pepperdine* (1976).

Arrangement

The collection was originally physically arranged thematically, with multiple addendums added to the end (each with a different arrangement scheme). The items maintain their previous physical arrangement and series titles, but the collection has been intellectually rearranged to group similar materials together and consolidate multiple identical series. The collection is organized in eleven series:

Selected items from this collection have been digitized and are included in the online George Pepperdine Collection (http://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15730coll2). For more images of the Pepperdine family, see the University Archives Photograph Collection on the Digital Collections homepage (http://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p271401coll15).


Processing Information

The collection was arranged and described at item-level in installments by James Smythe, from 1997 to 2002. Smythe’s original item-level inventories are available by request. Jamie Henricks integrated Smythe’s multiple addendums into the original collection and rearranged the collection intellectually for the finding aid in January 2012.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Financial records
Malibu (Calif.) -- History -- 20th century
Poems
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History
Correspondence
Publications
Photographs
Clippings
 Scrapbooks
Education, Higher -- California
Sales catalogs
Family archives
Universities and colleges -- California -- History
Autobiographies -- United States
Pepperdine, George B.
Pepperdine, Lena Rose
Pepperdine, Helen Louise
Pepperdine, George, II
Pepperdine, Wendell
Pepperdine, George
Pepperdine, Marilyn
Pepperdine University
Pepperdine family
Western Auto Supply Company
Pepperdine College
Crossley, Florence May Pepperdine
Thurston, Esther Louise Pepperdine

box 1, box 18, 19, 21, box 12-13, box 14, box 7

Series 1: George Pepperdine 1920-1997
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box and Folder Details</th>
<th>Sub-series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>box 1, 7, box 19</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.1: <strong>Newspaper Articles and Clippings about George Pepperdine 1922-1962, 1991</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 1, box 18</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.2: <strong>Faith Is My Fortune: A Life Story of George Pepperdine 1959</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 18</td>
<td>Notes and Final Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 1</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.3: <strong>Faith Was His Fortune: The Life Story of George Pepperdine 1976</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 12, folder 3</td>
<td>Typescript and Galley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 19, box 2, box 12, folder 5, box 13, box 14</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.4: <strong>Western Auto Supply Company 1920-1978</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 12, folder 5, box 13-14</td>
<td>Catalogs 1958-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 7</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.5: <strong>Business Matters 1942-1955</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 1</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.6: <strong>Poems 1928-1931, 1962</strong></td>
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<td>box 7</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.7: <strong>Writings</strong></td>
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<td>box 7</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.8: <strong>Family History 1991-1992</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 19, box 12, folder 2, box 7</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.9: <strong>Travels 1924, 1928</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>box 3</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.10: <strong>Awards and Honors 1941-1962</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>box 19</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.11: <strong>Correspondence</strong></td>
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<td>box 19</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.12: <strong>Biographical Materials</strong></td>
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<td>box 19</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.13: <strong>Speeches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 19, 21</td>
<td>Sub-series 1.14: <strong>George Pepperdine Foundation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 4</td>
<td>Series 2: <strong>Lena Rose Pepperdine 1907, 1924, 1930</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

box 20, box 12, folder 6-13, box 4, box 7, box 16, box 15

box 4

Series 4: George B. Pepperdine 1918

box 4


box 7

Series 6: Florence Pepperdine Crossley 1992

box 7


box 7

Sub-series 7.1: Letters 1982-1984

box 7

Sub-series 7.2: Articles 1991

box 7

Sub-series 7.3: Celebration of the Life of George Pepperdine II 2002

box 20, 23, box 7, box 12, box 17, box 1, box 8, 11, box 24, oversize drawer 1, box 22

Series 8: Photographs of the Pepperdine Family 1907-1997

Sub-series 8.1: Photographs of George Pepperdine

Individual Photographs
Photographs in Chronological Order

Photographs of Helen Pepperdine Sub-series 8.2:

Individual Photographs
Photographs in Chronological Order
Centennial Celebration of George Pepperdine's Birthday
Celebration of Helen Pepperdine Day
Helen Pepperdine Memorial Service

Sub-series 8.3: Photographs of George and Helen Pepperdine

Sub-series 8.4: Photographs of Marilyn Pepperdine

Sub-series 8.5: Photographs of George Pepperdine II

Sub-series 8.6: Photographs of Wendell Pepperdine
Sub-series 8.7: Family Photographs

- box 10, box 25
- box 17, box 12
- box 11, box 20
- box 5, box 24
- box 7, box 23

Series 9: Memorabilia 1923-1968

- box 9

Series 10: Financial Papers

- box 6-7

Series 11: Pepperdine University 1937-2000