Title: Harley Knox Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 212
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 8.5 Linear feet (14 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1922-1990
Abstract: This collection contains papers pertaining to Harley Knox’s political career as a city councilman and as mayor of San Diego, California between 1939 and 1951, as well as some of his personal papers.
creator: Knox, Harley E.

Conditions Governing Use
The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply.

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Biographical / Historical Notes
Harley Eugene Knox was born in Memphis, Nebraska on January 26, 1899, and he came to San Diego with his parents in 1912. He founded the Knox Dairy Company in 1919, at 4810 Logan Avenue, and married Bessie Irene Kirk in 1921. They had three daughters, all of whom married: Virginia Harris, Donna Sefton, and Marna Moore.

Knox was elected without opposition as city councilman from the Fifth District in 1939. He became mayor of San Diego in 1943 and was re-elected in a landslide victory in 1947: he was the first mayor in San Diego history to win in a primary. He declined to run for a third term and retired in 1951, but he remained active in the community till his death in 1956.

During his two terms as mayor, Knox ushered in numerous achievements for the City of San Diego. He made a profitable trade with the Navy to acquire the 244 acres of land at Lindbergh Field, and another profitable trade with the Army to acquire the Camp Callan lands on Torrey Pines Mesa. He helped organize the County Water Authority in 1944, which brought Colorado River water to San Diego via the San Diego aqueduct. He created a long-range development plan for Mission Bay, and spearheaded programs to aid war veterans, reduce juvenile delinquency, and transition San Diego from a wartime military economy to a post-war tourism economy. In 1944 Knox survived a plane crash which took the life of San Diego City Manager Walter Cooper.

In 1952, Knox was appointed to the California Crime Commission by Governor Earl Warren. In 1953 he was elected president of the Navy League’s San Diego Council, and at the time of his death he was also president of the California Fish and Game Commission. Additionally he held positions on the League of California Cities, the First National Trust and Savings Bank Board, the 1956 United Success Drive, the Chamber of Commerce Industrial Development Board, Camp Fire Girls and Boy Scouts, the San Diego California Club, the Oceanview Improvement Club, the Southeastern Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego County Farm Bureau Dairy Department, the San Diego Boys’ Club, and the San Diego Rowing Club.

Harley Knox died from a heart attack at age 57, on September 13, 1956. His wife, Bess, survived him by nearly forty years, and died July 10, 1994.

Arrangement
Collection is arranged into five series:
Series I: City Council Service (1939-1943)
Series II: Mayoral Campaigns (1943, 1947)
Series III: Mayor of San Diego (1943-1951)
Series IV: Harley Knox Personal Papers
Series V: Knox Family Papers
Items within each series are arranged by subject.

Comments
Harley Knox file from Document Files Collection added to this collection.

Scope and Content
The collection contains papers pertaining to Harley Knox’s political career in San Diego, California between 1939 and 1951, as well as some of his personal papers. The collection includes Knox’s campaign materials such as posters, brochures, advertisements, and scrapbooks about his service as city councilman and as mayor. There are also invitations and programs to events Knox attended as mayor, documentation of several business trips, and subject files on specific issues.
such as city development projects and San Diego’s economy and military connections during World War II. Personal papers include correspondence with friends and family, documentation of the plane crash Knox survived in 1944, and programs, meeting minutes, and newspaper articles about his involvement in clubs and other organizations. Finally, this collection contains memorial resolutions released by several organizations after Knox’s death, dedications of Harley Knox Elementary School and Harley Knox Memorial Lake, as well as some personal items from his wife Bessie and his sister Dorothy.

**Processing Information**
Collection processed by Samantha Mills on November 1, 2012.
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.

**Preferred Citation**
Harley Knox Collection, MS 212, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**
Accession number 991019.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
California. Fish and Game Commission.
Cooper, Walter
Harley E. Knox Elementary School.
Knox, Bessie Kirk
Knox, Dorothy
Knox, Harley E.
League of California Cities.
Navy League of the United States.
Oceanview Improvement Club.
Rhodes, Fred
Rotary Club (San Diego, Calif.).
San Diego Business and Professional Women's Club.
San Diego International Airport.
San Diego Rowing Club.
Simpson, Fred
Baja California (Mexico : Peninsula)
Camp Callan (Calif.)
City council members
Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)
Clubs
Dairy products industry
Harley E. Knox Memorial Lake
Linda Vista (Calif.)
Mayors
Mayors -- Election
Mission Bay (Calif.)
Obituaries
Political campaigns
Political posters
San Diego (Calif.)
Scrapbooks
Soldiers' homes
Tuna industry
Veterans
Series I: City Council Service (1939-1943)

Box-folder 1:1

City Council Service, 1939-1943
Includes:
"Campaign Souvenir 1939," newspaper supplement (in F4D1)

Series II: Mayoral Campaigns (1943, 1947)

Box-folder 1:2

Mayoral campaign materials, 1943 February 23-April 20 and undated
Includes:
Campaign Statement of Expenditures
Election ballot
Harley Knox campaign brochures, cards, and posters
Harley Knox campaign posters (9) (in F4D1)

Box-folder 1:3

Mayoral campaign speeches, undated

Box-folder 1:4

Other mayoral candidates (newspaper), 1943 February 4-1947 March 6 and undated

Box-folder 1:5

1943 Mayoral Campaign coverage (newspaper), 1943 January 1-1944 November 1 and undated

Box-folder 1:6

1943 Mayoral Campaign advertisements (newspaper), 1943 February 4-1944 October 23

Box-folder 1:7

1947 Mayoral Campaign coverage (newspaper), 1946 December-1947 May

Box-folder 1:8

1947 Mayoral Campaign advertisements (newspaper), 1947 March 5-8 and undated

Box-folder 6:1

Scrapbook - "Harley Knox," City Council Service and 1943 Mayoral Campaign, 1939-1944
Scope and Content
Contains newspaper clippings about Knox as city councilman, local politics including the mayoral election, Rowing Club, and some event programs.

Box-folder 7:1

Scrapbook - 1943 Mayoral Campaign, 1939-1943
Scope and Content
Contains newspaper clippings, campaign posters, and correspondence. The bulk of the materials regard Knox’s 1943 mayoral campaign.

Box-folder 7:2

Scrapbook - 1943 Mayoral Campaign, loose materials, 1939 May 2-1957 January 16
Scope and Content
Contains loose items from previous scrapbook, including Certificate of Election for Knox’s councilman term, an official proclamation of Knox’s retirement from mayoral office, and a copy of the California State Legislature’s memorial resolution after Knox’s death.

Box-folder 6:2

Scrapbook - 1947 Mayoral Campaign, 1947 April
Scope and Content
Contains newspaper clippings about Knox’s 1947 campaign for re-election, as well as articles about the Cedar Street Mall issue.

Series III: Mayor of San Diego (1943-1951)

Box-folder 1:9

Correspondence, 1943 February 28-1946 October 2 and undated
| Box-folder 1:10 | **Business trips and vacations, 1943 July 16-1948 March 15 and undated**  
Includes:  
Map of the Colorado River Aqueduct for 1944 trip (in F4D1) |
| Box-folder 1:11 | **Social events: programs and invitations, 1943 March 3-1951 March 30 and undated**  
Includes:  
Menu for Commissioned Officers' Mess at National Naval Medical Center (in F4D1) |
| Box-folder 1:12 | **Social events: newspaper articles, 1943 October 10-1951 April 3 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:13 | **Retirement announcements, 1950 December 28-1951 May 5 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:14 | **Editorial newspaper articles, 1943 September 25-1988 April 18 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:15 | **Baja California (some in Spanish), 1944 August 2-1948 August 25 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:16 | **Cedar Street Mall issue, 1944 December 30-1948 August 25 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:17 | **Lindbergh Field reopening (newspaper), 1945 January 16-May 5 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:18 | **Mayoral proclamations, 1944 January 20-1951 May 9 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:19 | **Military connections (newspaper), 1943 March 14-1949 November 11 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:20 | **Military connections: Camp Callan (newspaper), 1945 March 20-1947 January 28 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:21 | **Mission Bay development (newspaper), 1944 August 12-1947 December 9 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:22 | **Race relations, 1944 May 31-October 20**  
Road issues (newspaper), 1944 February 16-1945 February 16 and undated |
| Box-folder 1:23 | **San Diego City Council business (newspaper), 1943 May 5-1945 November 11** |
| Box-folder 1:24 | **San Diego City Council business (newspaper), 1946 April 8-1950 January 12 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:25 | **San Diego youth, 1943 February 13-1947 January 10 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:26 | **Special Crime Study Commission on Organized Crime, 1951 May 1-October 22 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:27 | **Tourism development (newspaper), 1943 November 4-1949 April 29 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:28 | **Traffic accident with Mayor's car (newspaper), 1946 August 26-27** |
| Box-folder 1:29 | **Tuna industry (newspaper), 1945 November 29-1947 October 7 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:30 | **Visitors (newspaper), 1944 August 7-1966 February 21 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:31 | **Wartime economy (newspaper), 1942 March 27-1948 February 5 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:32 | **Wartime housing, 1941 September 10-1948 November 14 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:33 | **Water issues, 1943 March 14-1945 October 18 and undated** |
| Box-folder 1:34 | **Water issues (newspaper), 1946 May 10-1948 May 21 and undated** |
| Box-folder 8:1 | **Scrapbook - "Mayor Harley E. Knox," 1943 April 20 and undated**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about Knox as mayor.  
Written inside front cover:  
“Virginia Bess Knox 862 Hilgard Avenue West Los Angeles.” |
| Box-folder 8:2 | **Scrapbook, 1943 May 12-September 3**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego City Council proposals and resolutions. |
| Box-folder 8:3 | **Scrapbook, 1943 September 6-December 30**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about further San Diego City Council news. |
| Box-folder 8:4 | **Scrapbook, 1944 August 28-1945 July 25**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Written inside front cover:  
“Virginia Bess Knox 862 Hilgard Avenue West Los Angeles.” |
| Box-folder 9:1 | **Scrapbook, 1944 March 4-1945 December 31**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Emphasis on war efforts. Includes a pamphlet about Fred Simpson written by Curtis Hillyer. |
| --- | --- |
| Box-folder 9:2 | **Scrapbook, 1946 September 26-1947 July 8**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings and newsletter sheets regarding San Diego politics. Emphasis on housing for war veterans. |
| Box-folder 10 | **Scrapbook, 1946 January 1-December 31**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Topics include military and wartime connections, water issues, Camp Callan, sale tax rates, and Mission Bay. |
| Box-folder 11 | **Scrapbook, 1947 January 1–December 31**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Topics include City Council news, housing issues, water issues, Mission Bay development, public safety, and the Balboa Park restoration. |
| Box-folder 9:3 | **Scrapbook, 1947 September 4–1948 June 18**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Emphasis on wartime housing problems. |
| Box-folder 12 | **Scrapbook, 1949 January 1-1950 January 1**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Topics include City Council news, housing issues, water issues, veterans’ issues, the Cedar Street Mall issue, and the city budget. |
| Box-folder 13 | **Scrapbook, 1950 January 3-1951 May 8**  
Scope and Content  
Contains newspaper clippings about San Diego politics. Topics include budget problems, water issues, and the end of Knox's mayoral career. |
| Box-folder 2:13 | **Miscellanea, 1943 May 28-1949 April 18 and undated**  
Includes:  
Subpoena  
Map of the Port of Long Beach (in F4D1)  
Newspaper clippings |
| Series IV: **Harley Knox Personal Papers** |  
**Box-folder 2:14**  
**Personal correspondence, 1939 February 9-1953 June 9**  
**Box-folder 2:15**  
**Retirement congratulatory letters, 1951 March 19-31 and undated**  
**Box-folder 3:1**  
**Retirement congratulatory letters: "Your Friends Speak, March 30, 1951" (bound scrapbook), 1951 March 10-30**  
Scope and Content  
Contains letters from friends, businesses, and other associates expressing admiration for his city service. |
<p>| <strong>Box-folder 3:2</strong> | <strong>1944 plane crash: articles, 1944 November 28-1945 July 28 and undated</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box-folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>1944 plane crash: get-well letters (Scrapbook), 1944-1945</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:3</td>
<td>Aircraft Carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt trip, 1956</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:4</td>
<td>Airport controversy, 1956 June 26-July 3</td>
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<td>3:5</td>
<td>Dairy industry, 1939 November 14-1964 September 9 and undated</td>
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<td>3:6</td>
<td>Fish and Game Commission, 1948-1957</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Includes:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two copies of official document appointing Knox to the Fish and Game Commission (in F4D1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:7</td>
<td>League of California Cities, 1939-1953 and undated</td>
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<td>3:8</td>
<td>Navy League: correspondence, 1953 June 2-1956 January 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:9</td>
<td>Navy League: booklets and articles, 1947 October 7-1963 April 6 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10</td>
<td>Oceanview Improvement Club, 1922 September 23-1953 February 24</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Club’s charter and by-laws</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Real-estate project for Oceanview school district</td>
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<td>Club’s final donation after their dissolution</td>
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<td>3:11</td>
<td>Oceanview Improvement Club: meeting minutes, 1922 September 23-1925 December 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>Oceanview Improvement Club: meeting minutes, 1926 January 22-1929 December 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:13</td>
<td>Oceanview Improvement Club: meeting minutes, 1930 January 24-1939 November 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>Oceanview Improvement Club: meeting minutes, 1940 January 26-1953 January 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>Rotary Club, 1943-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3</td>
<td>San Diego Club, 1939 February 8-1944 October 11 and undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:4</td>
<td>San Diego Rowing Club, 1931 July 4-1990 August 16 and undated</td>
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<td>Includes:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rowing Club Membership Certificate (in F4D1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:5</td>
<td>Miscellaneous club memberships, 1941 February 12-1956 April 13 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:6</td>
<td>Miscellaneous club newsletters, 1944-1971 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:7</td>
<td>Social events, 1939 March 8-1960 June 9 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:8</td>
<td>In Memoriam: obituaries, 1956 September 14-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:9</td>
<td>In Memoriam: Memorial Resolutions, 1956 September 14-1957 January 8 and undated</td>
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<td>Includes:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>California State Legislature Memorial Resolution, January 17, 1957 (8 copies) (in F4D1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harbor Commission Memorial Resolution, October 10, 1956 (in F4D1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:10</td>
<td>In Memoriam: First National Trust and Savings Bank Memorial Resolution, 1956 September 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:11</td>
<td>In Memoriam: Harley Knox Elementary School, 1956 October 17-1958 November 18 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:12</td>
<td>In Memoriam: Harley Knox Memorial Lake, 1957 March 26-1958 October 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:13</td>
<td>Miscellaneous newspaper articles, 1939-1986 and undated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box-folder 5:1  **Miscellanea, 1939 March 29-1983 March 21 and undated**  
Includes:  
Personal letterhead  
Notes  
Poems  
Pamphlets on Old Town history and fire safety  
Business cards  
Newspaper clippings  
"Marston Department Store’s Sixtieth Anniversary," San Diego Sun, August 8, 1938 (in F4D1)  
"Marston Department Store’s Sixtieth Anniversary," supplement to the San Diego Union, August 8, 1938 (in F4D1)  
Article about San Diego Union’s seventieth anniversary, San Diego Union, December 4, 1938 (in F4D1)

Series V:  **Knox Family Papers**

Box-folder 5:2  **Bessie Knox (wife), 1955 May 14-1988 January 22 and undated**  
Includes:  
Correspondence  
Photographs  
Event programs  
Handwritten notes about Harley Knox’s childhood and his family’s involvement with vaudeville

Box-folder 5:3  **Dorothy Knox (sister), 1943 May 13-1958 August 18 and undated**  
Includes:  
Correspondence and documents pertaining to Dorothy’s Marine Corps service during World War II

Box-folder 5:4  **Bessie Knox Kintner (sister) (newspaper), undated**  
Includes:  
Newspaper articles on death of Bessie Knox Kintner