
Guide to the Benbough Family Collection MS 243

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills

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.

San Diego History Center Document Collection

1649 El Prado, Suite 3

San Diego, CA, 92101

619-232-6203

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Title: Benbough Family Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MS 243

Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 2.75 Linear feet(4 boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1899-1992

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English and German.

Abstract: This collection contains Benbough family papers and records from the family mortuary business as well as scrapbooks and newspaper clippings pertaining to Percy Benbough's civic career.

creator: Benbough family

Preferred Citation

Benbough Family Collection, MS 243, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

Processing Information

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Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials.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

Biographical / Historical Notes

Percy J. Benbough was born in Watford, England on April 14, 1884, to Isaac and Sarah Ann Benbough. His family moved to San Diego, CA in 1889. In 1905 he married Grace Legler, a native of Valley Falls, Kansas. She moved to San Diego with him, where they opened Benbough Mortuary. Benbough Funeral Parlors eventually grew to include mortuaries throughout Southern California and into Arizona. Percy soon transitioned into civil service, and served as a San Diego City Councilman and Fire Chief in 1913, as Chief of Police in 1931, and as Mayor from 1935 till his death on November 4, 1942. Grace remained active in the mortuary business and San Diego club life till her death on October 12, 1961.

George Legler Benbough (commonly referred to as Legler Benbough) was born to Grace and Percy in 1909. He managed the family mortuary business after his father's death. Legler was a lifelong bachelor and spent much of his time traveling and collecting antiques. He was also a well-known philanthropist. In 1985 he established the charitable Benbough Foundation, and in 1987 he sold the 22,000 acre Benbough family ranch in Rancho Santa Fe to fund its operations. Legler died in 1998.

Scope and Content

This collection contains Benbough family papers including Percy, Grace and Legler Benbough. Papers include correspondence, club certificates, school papers, and newspaper clippings regarding family recreational activities and philanthropy. There are several business records from the family mortuary business, Benbough Funeral Parlors. The collection also contains scrapbooks and newspaper clippings regarding Percy Benbough's service as a City Councilman, Fire Chief, Police Chief, and Mayor of San Diego.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into two series:

Series I: Benbough Family Papers

Series II: Percy Benbough Civic Papers

Items within each series are arranged by subject.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Benbough family

Benbough Foundation.

Benbough Funeral Parlors.

Benbough Mortuary.

Benbough, George Legler

Benbough, Grace Legler

Benbough, Percy J.
Cypress View Mausoleum.
San Diego (Calif.). City Council.
San Diego (Calif.). Police Dept.
San Diego (Cruiser : CL-53).
City council members
Correspondence
Funeral homes
Mayors
Mayors -- Election
Political campaigns
San Diego (Calif.)
San Diego (Calif.). Fire & Life Safety Services
School yearbooks
Scrapbooks
Undertakers and undertaking

Series I: **Benbough Family Papers**

- Box-folder 1:1 **Family correspondence, 1905 March 23-1992 October 1**
Box-folder 1:2 **Family correspondence, undated**
Box-folder 1:3 **Family school papers, 1899-1927**
 Includes:
 Legler Benbough's 1927 High School Yearbook
 Grace Legler's diploma from Valley Falls, Kansas High School, June 2, 1899 (in Oversize Collections D3)
 Grace Legler's diploma from Great Bend, Kansas Normal School, August 14, 1900 (in Oversize Collections D3)
 Legler Benbough's Certificate of Penmanship, October 9, 1923 (in Oversize Collections D3)
- Box-folder 1:4 **Family mortuary business, 1927-1976**
 Includes:
 Mausoleum building agreement
 Embalming licenses for Legler Benbough
 Property appraisal
- Box-folder 1:5 **Family mortuary business: newspaper articles and advertisements, 1918 March 3-1932 May 31 and undated**
Box-folder 1:6 **Grace Benbough: U.S.S. San Diego Christening, 1941 June 14-1987 September 21 and undated**
Box-folder 1:7 **Legler Benbough: Clubs and organizations, 1925-1970 and undated**
Box-folder 1:8 **Family newspaper articles, 1912 October 6-1922 August 25 and undated**
 Includes:
 Articles on the Benboughs' real estate acquisitions, recreational events, philanthropy, and society news.

Box-folder 1:9

Miscellanea, 1913-1915 and undated

Includes:

Copies of a poem presented to Grace Legler Benbough before her marriage
Deed
Guest sign-in sheet

Series II: **Percy Benbough Civic Papers**

Box-folder 3:1

"The Outlaw Race" scrapbook, 1912

Box-folder 1:10

"The Outlaw Race" scrapbook (copy), 1912

Box-folder 1:11

Councilman / Fire Chief, 1913 March 26-1928 September 13 and undated

Box-folder 1:12

1927 Mayoral Campaign correspondence, 1927 April 1-8 and undated

Box-folder 1:13

1927 Mayoral Campaign newspaper articles, 1927 February 12-April 6

Box-folder 1:14

1927 Mayoral Campaign newspaper articles and advertisements, 1927

Includes:

Two newspaper advertisements in German

Box-folder 1:15

Police Chief, 1929 October 23-1931 August 2 and undated

Box-folder 3:2

"The Mayor Says" scrapbook, 1935 August 10-1937 October 3

Box-folder 1:16

"The Mayor Says" scrapbook (copy), 1935 August 10-1937 October 3

Box-folder 3:3

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 1-54), 1935 January 1-July 24

Box-folder 1:17

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 1-54) (copy), 1935 January 1-July 24

Box-folder 4:1

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 55-118), 1935 July 9-December 25

Box-folder 2:1

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 55-118) (copy), 1935 July 9-December 25

Box-folder 4:2

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 119-178), 1936 January 1-July 31

Box-folder 2:2

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 119-178) (copy), 1936 January 1-July 31

Box-folder 4:3

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 179-226), 1936 June 7-1937 April 24

Box-folder 2:3

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 179-226) (copy), 1936 June 7-1937 April 24

Box-folder 4:4

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 227-274), 1937 April 1-December 29

Box-folder 2:4

"Mayor of San Diego" scrapbook (pages 227-274) (copy), 1937 April 1-December 29

Box-folder 2:5

Newspaper articles, Mayor of San Diego, 1940 July 8-1942 November 5 and undated

Box-folder 2:6

Miscellanea, 1930-1931 and undated

Includes:

H. H. Scott bid for Chief of Police
David Roscoe letter to Mayor Elect Walter W. Austin