Finding Aid for the Ester F. Bentley papers, circa 1880s-2000s LSC.1981

UCLA Library Special Collections
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Online finding aid last updated 10 October 2017.
Title: Ester F. Bentley papers
Identifier/Call Number: LSC.1981
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 8.2 linear feet (14 boxes, 1 record carton, 2 flat boxes and 1 media box)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1960-1990
Date (inclusive): circa 1880s-2000s
Abstract: This collection contains photographs, correspondence, awards, clippings, ephemera and memorabilia from lesbian activist, community organizer and social worker, Ester F. Bentley.
Language of Materials: Materials are in English.
Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.
Creator: Bentley, Ester F.

Conditions Governing Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Ester F. Bentley Papers (Collection 1981). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Acquisition Information
Provenance unknown, 2013. This collection is part of an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library.

Processing History
Description enhanced and further physical processing completed by Jessica Tai, 2017.
The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA is an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library. These collections expand the pool of primary source materials available to researchers and to the community at large. This partnership was initiated by CSW and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to inventory, organize, preserve, and digitize more than eighty Mazer collections pertaining to lesbian and feminist activism and writings.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 7400203

Biography
Ester Bentley was a life long advocate of womens and lesbian and gay rights. Bentley was born in Louisville, Kentucky on October 24, 1915. She completed her Bachelor's of Science at Catherine Spalding College in 1941. During the war years, Bentley worked as the Director of U.S.O. in programs for war workers and their families. Bentley went on to complete her Master's in Social Work at the National Catholic School of Social Service at Catholic University of America in 1949. Following the completion of her degree, Bentley became the Director of the Kentucky Society for Crippled Children. Bentley moved to California in the 1960s and became the District Director for Community Planning and Development in San Bernardino, California. Bentley also served as the Executive Director of the Girl Scout Council in Santa Ana, California. In the 1960s, Bentley acquired her Real Estate License from the Scadron Business College in San Bernardino, California and continued her work in community organizing as a consultant. From 1966 to 1974, Bentley served as a field consultant and supervised students in the UCLA School of Social Welfare. After retiring, Bentley became very involved in both Catholic ministries and gay and lesbian organizations. Bentley was also a founding member of the Coalition of Older Lesbians (COOL). Ester Bentley died on January 20, 2004, at the age of 88 in Los Angeles, California.

Scope and Content
This collection contains photographs, correspondence, awards, clippings, ephemera and memorabilia from lesbian activist, community organizer and social worker, Ester F. Bentley. The collection documents Bentley's professional career in community organizing in California, and includes research and reports that Bentley wrote and/or contributed to. The collection also includes material related to Bentley's advocacy work, in which she was specifically focused on issues affecting LGBTQ Catholic communities. Also included are material from organizations such as Women Against Violence Against Women, Coalition of Older Lesbians and Old Lesbians Organizing for Change. The collection also includes personal material such as photographs, correspondence and Bentley's writing and poetry.

**Organization and Arrangement**
The collection is arranged into five series.

- **Series 1: Photographs, circa 1880s-2000s**
- **Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1940s-2000s**
- **Series 3: Personal Material and Memorabilia, 1931-circa 2000s**
- **Series 4: Professional Material, 1930-1986**
- **Series 5: Community Engagement Material, 1956-circa 2000s**

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements**
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Bentley, Ester F. -- Archives.
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA.
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.
Catholic gays--Religious life.
Lesbian activists--United States--Archives.

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**Series 1: Photographs circa 1880s-2000s**

**Scope and Contents note**
Photographs span from the 1880s-2000s and include images of Bentley, her friends, family, home and pets. Many of the images appear to be taken in Los Angeles, at Bentley's home, as well as other locations in Los Angeles. Photographs represent a wide variety of commercial photographic processes, primarily from the 20th century. Included are black and white and color photographic prints, in addition to 35 mm slides and 35 mm, 110 mm, and large format negatives.

**Organization and Arrangement**
Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

- Box 2, Folders 2-6,
- Box 3, Box 1,
- Box 4, Box 5,
- Folders 1-4
- Box 2, Folder 1

**Photographic prints circa 1880s-2000s**

**Negatives circa 1940s-2000s**

**Series 2: Correspondence circa 1940s-2000s**

**Scope and Content**
Correspondence includes greeting cards, holiday cards, postcards and letters written to Bentley. Also included is correspondence between Bentley and her partner, Gayle Scott, as well as letters that appear to be written to Scott.

**Organization and Arrangement**
Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

- Box 5, Folders 5-6,
- Box 6, Box 7

**Personal Correspondence circa 1940s-circa 2000s**

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Series 2: Correspondence circa 1940s-2000s

Series 3: Personal Material and Memorabilia 1931-circa 2000s

Scope and Content
Personal material including loose notes and notebooks written by Bentley, holiday crafts, LPs, material from Bentley's memorial, poetry and writing by Bentley, material related to Bentley's participation in various sports, a transcript and audiocassettes of an interview with Bentley and her partner Gayle Scott and materials related to her former partner and friend, Martha Foster. Also included is memorabilia such as keychains, flags, paper weights, artwork, textiles and keepsake boxes. Some material appear to have belonged to or were created by Gayle Scott.

Organization and Arrangement
Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

Sports Related Correspondence and Photographs (photocopies) 1931-1995
Scope and Contents note: newsprint, printed paper, handwritten notes
General Physical Description note: clippings, certificates, rosters and other materials from Ester Bentley's lifelong involvement in softball and various sports.

Songbooks circa 1930s-1940s
Holiday Crafts circa 1940s
Ester Bentley Memorial 1945-2004
Family Material 1957-circa 2000s
Notes circa 1960s-2000s
Notebooks circa 1960s-1990s
Funeral and Memorial Material circa 1960s-1990s
Martha Foster Material 1963-1991
The Shape of Things by Gayle Scott and Louise Baldwin 1969

Vinyl Records 1970-1990
Scope and Content
Sixteen records. All records are by women musicians, predominantly lesbian artists.
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

Laguna Beach Property Documents 1975-1979
Publications 1977-2000
Poetry by Various Authors circa 1970s-1980s
Clippings circa 1980s-2000s
The Azusa Project by Gayle Scott 1980
The Diary of Ester Bentley circa 1990s-2000s
### Series 3: Personal Material and Memorabilia 1931-circa 2000s

**Box 11, Folders 2-3**

**Ester Bentley and Gayle Scott Interview 1997**

**Scope and Content**
Includes transcript and recorded interview on two audiocassettes.

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements**
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

**Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center Writing Course 1997**

**Poetry by Ester Bentley circa 2000s**

**Artwork undated**

**Scope and Content**

Bentley's collection of drawings by unknown artists.

### Memorabilia circa 1940s-2000s

**Scope and Content**

Memorabilia includes keepsake boxes, paperweights, keychains, textiles and flags.

### Series 4: Professional Material 1930-1986

**Scope and Content**

Professional material includes resumes, job applications, school records and awards from OCCRD and Spalding University, where Bentley received her Bachelor of Science. Included are reports that Bentley wrote and/or contributed to during her time serving in various positions such as a specialist in the Regional Center of Orange County, a member on the steering committee of the Health and Welfare Council at the Kent School of Social Work, the District Director of Community Planning and Development in the San Bernardino County Council of Community Services and as a field representative for the United Catholic Community Defense Services. Also included are blank surveys from Bentley's time as Executive Director of the Santiago Girl Scout Council, as well as from her position in the United Catholic Community Defense Services.

**Organization and Arrangement**

Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

**Box 11, Folder 7**

**Education Documents 1930-1964**

**Box 11, Folder 8**

**Summer Camp Activity Guide circa 1930s-1940s**

**Box 11, Folder 9**

**Resumes and Application Material circa 1940s-1970s**

**Box 12, Folders 1-4**

**Reports 1948-1979**

**Box 12, Folder 5**

**Business Cards and Conference Badge 1950-circa 1960s**

**Box 12, Folder 6**

**Surveys circa 1950s-1960s**

**Box 12, Folder 7**

**Newsletters circa 1970s**

**Box 16**

**Plaques and Awards 1980-1986**
Series 5: Community Engagement Material 1956-circa 2000s

Scope and Content

This series includes material from Bentley's life long engagement with community issues and advocacy of women's, lesbian and gay rights. Also included is material from Bentley's engagement with the Catholic community and advocacy for lesbian and gay rights in the Catholic Church. Material includes newsletters, fliers, correspondence, clippings and plaques and medals from Bentley's involvement with organizations such as the Glassell Park Improvement Association and the Team of Advocates for Special Kids. Also included are material from organizations that Bentley was engaged with, such as Women Against Violence Against Women, Coalition of Older Lesbians and Old Lesbians Organizing for Change.

Organization and Arrangement

Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

Box 12, Folder 8  Religious Material 1956-circa 2000s
Box 13, Folder 1  Women Against Violence Against Women circa 1970s-1980s
Box 13, Folder 2  Highland Park Ebell Club 1973
Box 18, Box 14, Folder 1  Coalition of Older Lesbians, Old Lesbians Organizing for Change and Material Related to Senior Lesbian and Gay Communities 1987-2000s
Box 13, Folder 3  Reformation of the Heart: Seasonal Meditations by a Gay Christian by Chris Glaser 1989
Box 13, Folder 4  Catholic Lesbian and Gay Fliers and Ephemera circa 1990s-2000s
Box 13, Folders 5-6  Clippings on Catholicism and Lesbian and Gay Issues circa 1990s-2000s
Box 13, Folder 7  Correspondence 1990-2001
Box 14, Folder 2  Fliers circa 1990s
Box 14, Folder 3  Lesbian and Gay Organizations Material circa 1990s-2000s
Box 14, Folder 4  Newsletters and Publications circa 1990s-2000s
Boxes 16  Plaques circa 1990s
Box 14, Folder 5  Dignity LA 1994-2000
Box 14, Folder 6  Awards 1994-2003
Box 14, Folder 7  Lesbian Visibility Week 1997