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**ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**MS 1195**

**Bentley, Evalyn A., 1878-1960**  
**Personal Papers, ca. 1912-ca. 1930**

**DESCRIPTION**

This is a small collection of the personal papers of Evalyn A. Bentley who was a home economist in Arizona from 1914 to 1947, first in northern Arizona and later in Tucson. The bulk of the collection chronicles Bentley's career, especially the time she spent on Hopi Indian reservation land in northern Arizona from 1914 to 1921.

4 boxes, 2.5 linear feet.

**ACQUISITION**

Donated by the Estate of Evalyn Bentley.

**RELATED MATERIAL**

U of A biographical file on Evalyn A. Bentley at Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson, Arizona.

**ACCESS**

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

**COPYRIGHT**

Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society-Tucson, Archives Department.

**PROCESSING**

The collection was processed by Dena McDuffie, April 2001.

**ARRANGEMENT**

The collection is arranged topically.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Evalyn A. Bentley was born on May 25, 1878 in Friend, Nebraska, the daughter of Randall S. and Sarah E. (Laycock) Bentley. By age 15, she was living in Kansas and had earned a teaching certificate. She later attended Kansas State Agricultural College where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics. She spent a brief time at Elbowoods Missionary in North Dakota. The Fort Berthold Indian Reservation at Elbowoods was the home of the Hidatsa and the Mandan Indians. Beginning about 1891, Elbowoods was the Indian Agency headquarters (the community was abandoned by 1954 due to rising waters behind the Garrison Dam).

In 1914, Bentley moved to Arizona where she did home demonstration work between Chimopovy and Oraibi on the Hopi Indian reservation in northern Arizona.

Bentley moved to Tucson in 1921 to become Pima County's first home demonstration agent for the University of Arizona's agricultural extension service. Her office was in the downtown Tucsonian Hotel; her annual pay was \$1,900. Assisted by registered nurse Minnie Benson, Bentley described their work as "two old maids guiding young mothers."

In 1926 Bentley was appointed chair of a committee to conduct a better homes campaign in Pima County by then-Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Bentley spent time in Corvallis, Oregon where she studied radio production and earned a Master's degree at Oregon State in 1931. In 1939, Bentley attended a peace conference in London; she returned pooh-poohing the possibility of war. After the war, in 1946, Bentley and her 98-year-old mother, a niece, and the niece's 4-year-old child drove 3,600 miles across the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest.

The following year, 1940, Bentley retired although she remained active in a number of civic organizations. She established the 4-H Club in Pima County and was a member of the Saturday Morning Musical Club, Business and Professional Woman's Club, the Altrusa Club, Mem Collegiate Club, Tucson Civic Club, and her church.

In 1960, Evalyn A. Bentley was struck and killed by an automobile while crossing Speedway on her way to church.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Correspondence, publications, and photographs relating to Evalyn Bentley's career as a home demonstration agent make up the bulk of this collection

In an effort to create more comprehensive collections and to reduce redundancy, a small photograph collection, PC 11, has been incorporated into this collection.

## SERIES NOTES

### **Series 1: Correspondence, Papers, and Manuscripts.**

This series contains minimal correspondence; articles written by Bentley and published in *The Associated Arizona Producer* in 1929; verses written about various people on Sunlight Mission to the Hopi and Navajo Indians stationery, including the following about Lorenzo Hubbell (owner of the famous Hubbell Trading Post): "To give the world a bit of cheer/I'll do the best I can./Though automobiles have muddy wheels/I am a thankful man"; Bentley's account of a trip to Guatemala in 1931; and a carbon copy of the 1920 census of the Oraibi Indians, with additions made in ink.

**Series 2: Scrapbook.** Compiled in 1938, this scrapbook chronicles a trip made by Ms. Bentley and three friends to northern Arizona. The scrapbook contains: maps, distance tables, travel brochures, newspaper clippings about the places visited, postcards and photographs. Also found in the scrapbook are an etching titled "The Last House-Walpi" and an essay written by Bentley about the trip, titled "Arizona, New Mexico and Utah in June 1938."

**Series 3: Photographs.** This is an impressive collection of photographs; the bulk of the collection chronicles the time Bentley spent living on Hopi lands. The images people, homes, lands, and dances of Native Americans are an invaluable documentation of times past.

## BOX AND FOLDER LIST

### Box 1

#### **Series 1: Personal Correspondence, Papers, and Manuscripts**

- F. 1 Personal correspondence
- F. 2 Clippings
- F. 3 Manuscripts-1920 census-Oraibi Indians
- F. 4 Manuscripts-Miscellaneous
- F. 5 Civic organizations

#### **Series 2: Scrapbook**

- F. 6 Scrapbook, 1938. Travel guides, newspaper and magazine clippings, postcards (some have captions typed under them), religious pamphlets, *Ganado News Bulletins*, *Doctoring in the Desert*, cartoons, etching titled "The Last House-Walpi."

#### **Series 3: Photographs**

- F. 7 Portraits-Missionaries
- F. 8 Portraits-Native Americans-Hopi
- F. 9 Portraits-Native Americans-Navajo. The Navajo live in extended kinship groups; women have an important position in the society. The traditional Navajo religion is elaborate and complex, with many deities, songs, chants, and prayers and numerous ceremonies. The Navajo reservation in Arizona surrounds the Hopi reservation, resulting in numerous land disputes.
- F. 10 Portraits-Native Americans-Papago (Tohono O'odham)
- F. 11 Portraits-Native Americans-Miscellaneous

### Box 2

#### **Series 3: Photographs**

- F. 12 Places-Native Americans-Chimpovy (Second Mesa?)
- F. 13 Places-Elbowoods, North Dakota
- F. 14 Places-Native Americans-Hotevilla (Third Mesa)
- F. 15 Places- Native Americans-Mishongnovi (Second Mesa), one of 12 villages in the Hopi Tribal Nation. Mishongnovi and the Hopi reservation are isolated geographically in the high desert of Northern Arizona; Mishongnovi sits atop one of the desert mesas.
- F. 16 Places-Native Americans-Oraibi (Third Mesa)--This pueblo, on a mesa north of Winslow in northern Arizona, was built ca.1150 and was discovered in 1540 by Pedro de Tovar, a lieutenant of Coronado. Oraibi was long the most important pueblo of the Hopi, but because of economic disturbances and internal dissension many of the inhabitants left in 1907 to form the pueblos of Hotevilla and Bakavi. Oraibi is now little more than a ruin.
- F. 17 Places-Native Americans-Walpi (First Mesa). Walpi is a pueblo on a mesa northeast of Flagstaff, Arizona. Founded ca.1700, its inhabitants are Pueblo who speak the Hopi language. One of the most picturesque pueblos of the Southwest, it is a major tourist attraction. The pueblo, however, is gradually being deserted for the new village of Polacca at the foot of the mesa.
- F. 18 Places-Northern Arizona
- F. 19 Places-Southern Arizona

- F. 20 Subjects-Buildings Pueblos -- A permanent village or community of any of the Pueblo peoples (Hopi, Zuñi, and Taos), consisting of multilevel adobe or stone apartment dwellings of terraced design clustered around a central plaza.
- F. 21 Subjects-Native Americans-Dancers
- F. 22 Subjects-Landscapes
- F. 23 Subjects-Miscellaneous

**Box 3**

**Album 1.** This album contains photographs of people, homes, landscapes, handicrafts, and missions in northern Arizona, ca. 1914-1921. Of special interest are pictures (1FR and 1FW), labeled "Teddy," of Theodore Roosevelt attending Native American dances. Arizona Governor Hunt is also pictured.

**Box 4**

**Album 2.** Included in this album are photographs, clippings, and brochures. Also included are programs for "The Pilgrimage Play" theatre presenting historical/religious entertainment.