

LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION:

Fonds

No.:

AU022

TITLE:

Helen S. Petersen Bentley fonds

CREATORS:

Bentley, Helen

Bentley, Fred

Manson, Ann (Bentley)

Bentley, Ted

Petersen, Mary

Petersen, Thorwald

Petersen, Vera

Petersen, Oakley

DATE RANGE:

1860-2011, predominant 1930-2000

EXTENT:

4.14 m textual records and other material

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Helen Signe Petersen was born to Thorwald (Thorvald) Petersen (1882-1965) and Mary (Schultz) Petersen (1889-1972) in Cicero, Indiana, on May 28, 1912. Her mother, Mary (Marie), was born in Fjelstrup parish, Haderslev, Denmark to Johan Nissen Schultz (1839-1911) and Hansine (Slifsgaard) Schultz (1889-1922).

Helen and her siblings had many aunts and uncles, as her grandparents Johan and Hansine (Sine) had five other children: Jenny Marie (Schultz) Holm (1875?-1979), John (Johannes) Schultz (1883-1967), Jeppe Schultz (1878-1924), Nis Johan Schultz (1875-1948), and Walter (Valdemar) Schultz (1879-19-?).

Helen Petersen Bentley's father Thorwald, was born in 1882 to Niels Peter Petersen, a blacksmith in Draaby, Denmark, and his wife Dorthe (Sorensen) Petersen. Thorwald had eight siblings, five of whom – Kjerstine (1872-1937), Ane (1874-after 1930), Frederik (1885-ca. 1953), Olga (1887-1960) and Thybo (1895-after 1953) – immigrated to the United States. The other three, Tyra (1881-1882), Margrete (born (b.) 1879) and Dortea (1879-after 1955) remained in Denmark. Thorwald Petersen married Mary Schultz in

June 1911, at Fredsville Lutheran Church, in Fredsville, Iowa. He died in 1965 and was buried in the Fredsville Lutheran Church cemetery.

Jenny Marie (Schultz) Holm had four children, Ellen Marie (1896-1981), Ted (Hans), Signa Jonette (b. 1905), and Art, and moved to Seattle around 1908. Jeppe Schultz married Tillie Tobias.

Nis Schultz participated in the Klondike gold rush, traveling north at the end of the 19th century into Alaska and the Yukon, and eventually settled in Wayne, Alberta ca. 1919, with his wife, Walborg (1898-1975).

Helen Petersen Bentley was the eldest of three children born to Thorwald and Marie Petersen, the other two being Vera Petersen and Earl Oakley Petersen.

Vera Petersen was born December 5, 1913 in Cicero, Indiana. After high school she studied education at Iowa State Teachers College, earning a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Early Childhood Education in 1938. She taught for several years in Des Moines public schools before attending Teachers College, Columbia University in New York, NY, where she received her Master of Arts Degree (M.A.). After that Vera worked for a time as a nurse's aide in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and also as a reading tutor in New York. After completing her dissertation in 1951, she received her doctorate in education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Vera Petersen then taught for Milwaukee State Teachers College, now the University of Wisconsin, before accepting a job in 1955 at Portland State College, later Portland State University, in Portland, Oregon. In 1962, she became a professor of education, a position she held until her retirement in 1977. She was awarded Professor Emeritus status in 1978.

Vera was a member of several professional organizations in her field, including the Association for Childhood Education International, where she served on the executive board from 1971-1974. After her retirement, she donated her collection of children's books to the Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Minnesota. Vera Petersen passed away on June 28, 1989 in Portland, Oregon and was buried in Fredsville, Iowa.

Second Lieutenant Oakley Petersen was born on February 6, 1921 in Dike, Iowa. He graduated from Dike High School in 1938 and attended Iowa State College at Ames, Iowa. In November 1942, he enlisted in the United States army and joined the Air Force. Oakley Petersen was killed in action on September 23, 1944 during a bombing run over Italy and is buried at the Florence American Cemetery in Impruneta, Italy.

Like her siblings, Helen Signe Petersen attended high school in Dike, Iowa. After graduating, Helen attended Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa where she graduated in

1936 with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Art (B.A.Sc.), and in 1940 with a Master of Science in Applied Art (M.A.Sc.).

Helen began her career as a school teacher in various school districts around Iowa, including Grundy County, Fort Dodge, and Burlington, before becoming an instructor at the University of Minnesota, circa (ca.) 1940. There she met her husband, Charles Frederick (Fred) Bentley Jr., whom she married on September 16, 1943 in Fredsville, Iowa.

Fred Bentley (1914-2008) was born on March 14, 1914 to Charles F. and Lavina (MacKenzie) Bentley in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He had five siblings, Newcombe Bentley (1908-2000), John MacKenzie Bentley (1909-1911), Robert Gordon Bentley (1918-1982), Phillip Bentley (b. 1940), and Mary Helen Bentley (died (d.) 1920). Fred Bentley grew up on a farm near Edmonton and attended Edmonton Normal School. After graduation, he taught school for three years before entering the University of Alberta where he received both a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Agriculture. He later attended the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he received a Ph.D. in soil science, worked as an instructor, and met Helen S. Petersen.

Helen and Fred had two children together, Ann Catherine Bentley and Theodore Carl Bentley.

Ann Bentley was born on June 14, 1945 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and married Brian Cameron Manson on May 18, 1968. They had two children, Catherine Marie Manson, born on December 30, 1972, and Robert Manson, born on November 14, 1975.

Ted Bentley was born April 19, 1947 in Edmonton, Alberta, and was married to Louise (Macmillan) Bentley on June 12, 1971. They had two children, Derek Cameron Bentley, born in Edmonton, Alberta on September 16, 1974, and Seena Marie Bentley, born May 22, 1978.

Helen and Fred Bentley moved from Minnesota to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1943, where Fred taught soil science at the University of Saskatchewan. They moved to Edmonton, Alberta in 1946 after Fred was hired at the University of Alberta to teach soil science there as well, later becoming the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture in 1958.

Helen found part-time extension work at the University of Saskatchewan when the family lived in Saskatoon. When they moved to Alberta, she became an Instructor in Interior Design at the Banff School of Fine Arts, as well as an Instructor in Clothing and Textiles at the University of Alberta. She eventually became an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, a position she held until her retirement from the School of Household Economics in 1971.

In 1968 Fred Bentley retired as Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta to serve as the first special advisor in agriculture with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ottawa. He was later chairman of the governing board of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) from 1972-1982, and in 1985 he established the International Board for Soil Research Management (IBSRM) in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Bentleys' careers had them traveling widely and frequently, both individually and as a family. Fred Bentley worked for The Colombo Plan in Sri Lanka (1952-1953) accompanied by his family, and also brought his family to Thailand where he worked for three months for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) from October 1962 until January 1963. Over the years, as a team leader for CIDA, Fred Bentley worked with teams in India (1967), Sri Lanka (1979-1980), Indonesia (1980), China (1983), the Sudan (1984), sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel Region in Africa (1985), and Pakistan (1986). Beginning in 1962 Helen accompanied him on many of the trips. Helen also took a leave-of-absence from the University of Alberta in 1968-1969, to travel across Canada and the United States, south to the Caribbean and Mexico, and overseas to Southeast Asia and East Africa on a textile tour. On some occasions Fred traveled with her.

Helen's research interests included interior design, and the design of clothing and textiles. While traveling, Helen studied local textile artists, learning about different art, textile, and handicraft designs and processes from across the globe. She was a member of a number of professional associations, including the Edmonton Weaver's Guild, the Canadian, American, Alberta and Edmonton Home Economics Associations, the Iowa State University Home Economics Alumni Association, the Canadian Craftsmen's Association, and the American Craftsmen's Council. She also held executive positions as president of the Saskatoon Home Economics Association, chairman of the Education Committee of the Canadian Home Economics Association, and president of the Alberta Home Economics Association.

Helen passed away in Edmonton on March 18, 1999. A scholarship entitled the AHEA Helen Bentley Bursary, endowed by the Alberta Human Ecology and Home Economics Association and Dr. C. Fred Bentley, is awarded at the University of Alberta to a student in the field of Human Ecology from the faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY:

Ann (Bentley) Manson received the records upon the death of her father, Fred Bentley, in 2008. In 2011, Ann Manson donated the records to Thomas A. Edge Archives & Special Collections at Athabasca University.

In 2018, Ann Manson deposited an accrual of records and artifacts.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The fonds consists of materials pertaining to the personal life, work and interests of Helen S. Petersen Bentley and her family, and contains textual records, graphic materials, and artifacts.

The graphic materials consist of photographs, transparencies, negatives and photographic postcards pertaining to Helen S. Petersen Bentley's family, and includes images of her parents Mary and Thorwald Petersen, her sister and brother, and her childhood and family life in Iowa, her marriage to Fred Bentley and their children Ann and Ted, and Ann and Ted's marriages to Brian Manson and Louise (MacMillan) Bentley, respectively. There are also materials relating to the careers and travel of Fred Bentley and Helen S. Petersen Bentley, including images of the places and people they visited in Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America, as well as family travels throughout western Canada and Nova Scotia. The graphic materials from the end of the 19th century through to the 1930s are centered around Helen's family, including her grandparents in Denmark, her parents, aunts and uncles and other relatives and friends, mainly in Dike, Iowa and surrounding areas. The majority of the materials are from 1940 to 1960, focusing on Fred and Helen Bentley and their children, with some materials from 1970 to the 2000s focusing on Ted and Ann's children and their extended families.

The artifacts consist of household items, ceramics and pottery, glassware, textiles, handicraft items, artwork and print items, jewelry, metal ware, collectibles, dolls, clothing, souvenirs from travels, wood items, as well as personal items. Many of the items were made or used by Helen S. Petersen Bentley, though some items were handed down from family members.

The textual records consist of records pertaining to the personal and professional life of Helen S. Petersen Bentley and her family members and includes correspondence, biographical information, newspaper clippings, articles, reports, wills, mortgages, assignments, affidavits and other legal documents, drawings, sketches, notes, greeting cards, postcards, programs, obituaries, poems, stories, tourist publications, stationary, birth, marriage and death announcements and certificates, membership cards, product brochures, gallery brochures, teaching materials, handmade items, design and textile information, travel diaries, autograph books, receipts, cancelled cheques, cookbooks, blank notebooks, monographs, songbooks and hymnals, school yearbooks, newsletters, scrapbooks, artist biographies, art project records, clothing and project patterns, calendars, catalogues, and genealogical records.

SOURCE OF TITLE:

Title assigned by the donor.

DATE NOTE:

Some of the materials are dated after the death of Helen S. Petersen Bentley and were created by Fred Bentley and Ann Manson.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Fonds also includes: 2819 photographs. - 1431 artifacts. - 503 transparencies. - 273 negatives. - 27 compact discs (CD). - 5 maps. - 3 posters. - 2 prints

CONSERVATION:

Conservation copies have been made of newspaper clippings, damaged or fragile records, sticky notes, and photograph albums to preserve the original order of the photographs.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE:

The materials were received in no discernible order.

LANGUAGE NOTE:

The material is primarily in English, a significant portion of the material is in Danish, and a small number of the records are in other languages, such as Portuguese, Thai, or French.

ACCESS CONDITIONS:

Some of the files are restricted and will require permission for access by the University Archivist.

USE CONDITIONS:

Permission for use required. Subject to *The Copyright Act*.

FINDING AIDS:

File list and digitized material is available.

INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCESSIONS: 2011.001

Further accruals are expected.

ASSOCIATED MATERIAL:

Other materials associated to, or created by, Helen S. Petersen Bentley can be found at the Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton, Alberta (accession H16.60), the Glenbow Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta (accessions M-8621-16, M-5977-162 and PA-2195(+1)), the Goldstein Museum of Design at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota (accession 1997.069), and the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, in the Department of Human Ecology's Clothing and Textiles Collection.

GENERAL NOTE:

Information for the biographical sketch was taken from the records and provided by the donor.

The finding aids were created by Mike MacLean (intern), Ashley Eisen (Archives Assistant), Marissa Fraser (Archives Assistant) and Jesse Carson (Archives Assistant).

SUBJECT HEADINGS:

Home economics

Textile fabrics