



Summary Information

Title: C. A. "Neal" Pickett Papers

Collection Number: 1986:005

Creator: C. A. Pickett

Collection Dates: 1930-1986

Extent: 3 cubic feet (7 boxes)

Language: English

Collection Abstract:

The C. A. "Neal" Pickett Papers consist of correspondence, photographs, speeches, reports, clippings, newsletters, and other papers documenting his tenure as mayor of Houston and involvement in the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Federal Housing Administration in Houston, Rotary, Methodist Church, and Deep East Texas Development Council.

Repository:

The History Center
102 N. Temple
Diboll, TX 75941
936-829-3543
www.thehistorycenteronline.com

Author/Processing Information: Finding aid created by Darrel Thornhill in May 1999.

Revision History: Revised by Emily E. Hyatt on September 3, 2008. Description updated and finding aid reformatted by Matt Gorzalski in October 2011.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Cornelius Augustus "Neal" Pickett was born in Houston, Texas on 22 December 1902, the son of carpenter Cornelius D. Pickett and Margaret Moody Pickett. In 1916, he organized the first troop of Boy Scouts in Brazoria and served as patrol leader. He attended public schools in Brazoria and Beaumont and graduated from the University of Texas, where he was president of the senior class. In 1927, Pickett married Margaret Yarborough, sister of Ralph Yarborough, later United States Senator from Texas.

Pickett was the manager of the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce from 1927-1930, Secretary-Manager of Houston Insurance Exchange from 1930-1935, and Executive Vice President of the Lumberman's Association of Texas from 1935-1941. He ran for mayor of Houston in 1938 and was narrowly defeated. Running again in 1940, he won the office with 62% of the vote. As mayor, Pickett appointed Houston's first professional police chief, set up the first civil defense office, and prided himself on managing city affairs with high ethics. After serving one term as mayor, Pickett left Houston to work for the Red Cross in England and Belgium during World War II, serving from 1943-1946. He earned the United States Medal of Freedom for his service.

Following the war, Pickett worked with investments, securities, and contracting as vice president of Realty Mortgage Corporation from 1946-1961. He also worked in Ralph Yarborough's successful campaign for U.S. Senator. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Pickett Director of the Federal Housing Administration in Houston. Bringing efficiency to that agency, the former mayor reduced the processing time for loan applications from six weeks to five days. In 1967, Pickett went to Diboll as the first executive director of the Deep East Texas Development Council. In Diboll he was active in the Rotary Club and Diboll United Methodist Church. He retired from public life in 1975. Mr. Pickett died on March 22, 1990 at the age of 87.

Collection Scope and Content:

The Pickett papers contain three cubic feet of material. While some of the papers are original, they are primarily photocopies of correspondence, clippings, memos, and speeches that reflect his activities in the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Federal Housing Administration, Rotary, and Methodist Church. The bulk of the collection concerns his leadership of the Deep East Texas Development Council, documenting housing and urban development and resource conservation in East Texas. Papers of his time as mayor of Houston document Pickett's accomplishments in office, his campaign, and election and event speeches. Also included in the collection are photographs, directories, newsletters, and reports.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged and described at the collection level.

Subject Terms

Topics

- Conservation of natural resources -- Texas, East
- Housing development -- Texas, East
- Mayors -- Texas -- Houston
- Methodism
- Public administration -- Texas, East
- Public officers -- Texas, East
- Urban development -- Texas, East
- World War, 1939-1945

Corporate Names

- American Association of Retired Persons
- American Red Cross
- Boy Scouts of America
- Deep East Texas Development Council
- Lumbermen's Association of Texas
- Rotary Club of Diboll, Texas

- Rotary International
- United States. Federal Housing Administration

Personal Names

- Pickett, C. A. (Cornelius Augustus), 1902-1990

Family Names

- Pickett family

Locations

- Brazoria County (Tex.)
- Diboll (Tex.)
- Houston (Tex.)
- Mount Pleasant (Tex.)
- Texas, East

Access and Use

Access Restrictions: There are no restrictions on this collection.

Acquisition Information: Donated to the T. L. L. Temple Memorial Library & Archives in 1986.

Citation: C. A. "Neal" Pickett Papers, 1930-1986, 1986:005, The History Center, Diboll, TX

Related Materials:

Neal Pickett Oral History, Interview, 18a, December 11, 1982, The History Center, Diboll, TX

C. A. "Neal" Pickett Papers. East Texas Research Center. Ralph W. Steen Library. Stephen F. Austin State University

Additional Pickett papers are located at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library.

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Collection Inventory

Box 1

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| Folder 1 | Biographical Information: Resumes, biographical essays, letters of reference, articles, 1940's-1980's. |
| Folder 2 | Air Conditioning Council of Greater Houston: correspondence, memos, 1982. |
| Folder 3 | American Association of Retired Persons (AARP): memos, correspondence, Diboll chapter membership and officers lists, 1980-84. |
| Folder 4 | American Red Cross: correspondence, reports, articles, commendations, 1942-1986. |
| Folder 5 | Awards and honors, general: articles, resolutions, guest lists, 1961-1981. |
| Folder 6 | Boy Scouts of America: articles, correspondence, 1920-1979. |
| Folder 7 | Brazoria County: articles, correspondence, Brazoria hurricane relief (1932), 1932-1986. |

- Folder 8 Clippings: news articles, 1940-1986, bulk 1971-1985.
- Folder 9 Deep East Texas Development Council: clippings, reports, resolutions 1967-1979.
- Folder 10 Deep East Texas Development Council: correspondence, memos, procedures manual, speeches, 1967-1968.

Box 2

- Folder 1 Deep East Texas Development Council: correspondence, reports, resolutions, memos, 1969-1970.
- Folder 2 Deep East Texas Development Council: correspondence, reports, award recommendations, 1971.
- Folder 3 Deep East Texas Development Council: correspondence, grant applications, retirement resolutions, retirement speech, memos, 1972.
- Folder 4 Deep East Texas Development Council: correspondence, notes, speeches, memos, undated.
- Folder 5 Deep East Texas Development Council: minutes, 1967-73.

Box 3

- Folder 1 Reports: Clay Deposits Survey. Angelina County, Texas, 1969.
- Folder 2 Reports: Overall Economic Development Program, Part I., 1968.
- Folder 3 Reports: miscellaneous, 1969-70.
- Folder 4 Reports: Interim Plan, 1971.
- Folder 5 Reports: Planning Process, 1971.
- Folder 6 Reports: Regional Housing Study, 1973.

Box 4

- Folder 1 Reports: Comprehensive Water/ Sewer Plan, ca. 1970.
- Folder 2 Federal Housing Administration: correspondence, misc., 1961-1967, undated.
- Folder 3 Federal Housing Administration: speeches, articles, news clippings, news releases, resolutions, 1962-1981, bulk 1963-1967.
- Folder 4 General Correspondence and Clippings: Diboll (general), 1967-1985, undated.
- Folder 5 General Correspondence and Clippings: Ethnic Concerns, 1967-1981, undated.
- Folder 6 General Correspondence, 1940-86.
- Folder 7 Insurance Exchange of Houston: correspondence, articles, 1930-1982.
- Folder 8 Junior Chamber of Commerce, Houston: correspondence, articles, 1934-1935.
- Folder 9 Lumberman's Association of Texas: correspondence, articles, speech 1935-41, undated.

Box 5

- Folder 1 Mayor, City of Houston: clippings – Photocopies of news articles, 1938-1986.
- Folder 2 Mayor, City of Houston: correspondence, campaign materials, 1940-1984.
- Folder 3 Mayor, City of Houston: speeches, proclamations, radio addresses, 1940-1942.
- Folder 4 Methodism: Correspondence, 1943-84.

- Folder 5 Methodism: programs, publications, prayers, minutes, directories, tributes, resolutions, clippings, 1938-84, undated.
- Folder 6 Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce: correspondence, articles, 1929-1983.
- Folder 7 Photographs: Deep East Texas Development Council.
- Folder 8 Photographs: Diboll Methodist Church.
- Folder 9 Photographs: Neal Pickett.
- Folder 10 Photographs: Pickett House.
- Folder 11 Photographs: Rotary – Meetings, Assemblies, Dinners.

Box 6

- Folder 1 Pickett, Margaret Yarborough: correspondence, Yarborough Family Reunion plans, 1936-1986, undated.
- Folder 2 Pickett family: correspondence, obituaries, genealogy information, family reunion plans, 1946-1986, undated.
- Folder 3 Pickett House (Heritage Garden Village, Woodville): correspondence, articles, 1974-1979.
- Folder 4 Pilot Club: correspondence, speeches – Houston, speeches – Diboll, Diboll Tree of Light, 1941-85, undated.
- Folder 5 Rotary: awards to Neal Pickett, awards given by Neal Pickett, resolutions, 1960-1977.
- Folder 6 Rotary: clippings – photocopies of news articles, 1946-1985.
- Folder 7 Rotary: correspondence, speech 1941, Diboll Rotary Constitution and Charter members, speech 1942, 1941-1970.
- Folder 8 Rotary: correspondence, Diboll Rotary charter application documents, by-laws, organizing documents, notes, 1972.
- Folder 9 Rotary: correspondence, speech, charter reception information, 1973.
- Folder 10 Rotary: correspondence, speeches, Rotary Governorship, 1974-1976.

Box 7

- Folder 1 Rotary: correspondence, articles, memos, 1977-1978.
- Folder 2 Rotary: correspondence, articles, memos, 1979-1980.
- Folder 3 Rotary: correspondence, newsletters, speeches, memos, 1981-1983.
- Folder 4 Rotary: correspondence, speeches, 1984-1986.
- Folder 5 Rotary: directories, 1972-1977.
- Folder 6 Rotary: Directors' meetings notes, 1972-1973.
- Folder 7 Rotary: newsletter, July 1975-June 1976.
- Folder 8 Rotary: programs, 1973-1984.
- Folder 9 Sawmill Town, U.S.A.: correspondence, by-laws, financial reports, 1972-1976.
- Folder 10 Speeches, 1968-1979.
- Folder 11 Young Democratic Club: correspondence, speeches, minutes, articles, 1937-1978, bulk 1938.