

K Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. (1912-1990) Papers, 1902-1978
0316 0.33 cubic feet

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri-Research Center, Kansas City. If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org.

INTRODUCTION

The papers contains correspondence, event programs, newspaper clippings, legal and financial documents, and home movies.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Beverly Pendergast on 5/6/1994 (Accession No. KA0808).

COPYRIGHT AND RESTRICTIONS

The Donor has given and assigned to the State Historical Society of Missouri all rights of copyright which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the Society from others.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. (7/22/1873 – 1/26/1945) was a political boss who controlled Kansas City and Jackson County, Missouri, in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a powerful figure in the Democratic Party, and the Pendergast organization helped launch the political career of President Harry S. Truman. Pendergast, Sr. also founded and owned the T. J. Pendergast Wholesale Liquor Co. and the Pendergast Distributing Co., and in 1928 he organized the Riverside Jockey Club. Pendergast, Sr. was married to Carolyn Elizabeth Pendergast, and they had three children – Thomas, Marceline, and Aileen. Pendergast, Sr.'s addiction to gambling led to a large accumulation of personal debts, and that fact combined with his failing health led to his downfall. In 1939, he was convicted of income tax evasion related to those debts and served fifteen months in federal prison. Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. died in 1945.

Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. (4/17/1912 – 2/17/1990) owned and operated the City Beverage Company until 1965. In 1935, Pendergast, Jr. married Mary Louise Weyer at St. Peter's Church in Kansas City. Pendergast, Jr. also founded the Pendergast-Weyer Foundation. Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. died in December, 1996.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers have been arranged into the following three series.

Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. Papers

The series consists of event programs, correspondence, baptismal certificates, clippings, and miscellaneous items related to Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. and his estate. The series includes event programs from the 1902 Bartenders' First Annual Ball and

1904 Messenger Boys Benefit Ball. The series also includes certified copies of Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr.'s certificate of baptism from St. Joseph's Cathedral; a typewritten letter from Theodore Gray and Company; photocopied newspaper clippings concerning Pendergast from the *Kansas City Journal* and other publications; and a letter from Carolyn Elizabeth Pendergast concerning the estate of Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. Also included is assorted stationery from the T. J. Pendergast Wholesale Liquor Co. and the Pendergast Distributing Co.; a wine list from the Jefferson Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri; and an undated reprint of Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr.'s mug shot.

Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. Papers

The series consists of documents related to the City Beverage Company, a transcript of testimony, general correspondence, cancelled notes and stock certificates, claims against the Internal Revenue Service, correspondence concerning the liquidation of the Thomas S. Pendergast Liquor Company, documents related to the Pendergast v. Hill case of 1967, and undated biographical notes.

The series contains documents concerning City Beverage Company, including blank checks, correspondence, mortgage forms, terms of lease, articles of agreement, certificate of authority to commence business, account files, and a certificate of incorporation for the City Beverage Company. The series also includes a transcript of testimony between Internal Revenue Service agent P. J. McGrath and Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr.; general typewritten and handwritten correspondence; claims against the IRS filed by Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr.; typewritten transcripts, correspondence, and a copy of the final court order concerning the Pendergast v. Hill case of 1967; and a book of undated handwritten biographical notes.

Film

The series consists of home movies made by and concerning Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. The home movies are divided into three segments: identified reels reformatted to VHS, identified reels not reformatted; and unidentified reels not reformatted.

The reformatted VHS contains brief footage of Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. and Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. standing outside at what appears to be a graduation ceremony. The reformatted segments also contain footage of horse races at the River Side Jockey Club; footage of the exterior buildings and surrounding scenery of Waterfill and Frazier Distillery Co.; footage of a church in Bardstown, Kentucky; footage of Shawhan Distillery, including shots of the exterior and brief shots of the interior; footage of a swimming meet, including diving, swimming, and a comedy act; footage taken from a train window; footage of LaFolla, including scenic shots and shots of a graveyard; footage of scenery in Santa Barbara; footage of a hotel and Scripp's home in LaFolla; and views of McCrory House in LaFolla.

The identified reels that are not reformatted contain footage of Waterfill and Frazier, footage of Marceline and Mary, Hawaii, airplane views, views from a ship, and

footage of Mr. E. P. Cleary. The unidentified reels contain unknown footage. Reels that have not been reformatted currently cannot be viewed.

PREFERRED CITATION

Specific item; box number; folder number; *Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. (1912-1990) Papers (K0316)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

INVENTORY

- f. 1-7 Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. Papers
- f. 1 Ball programs, 1902-1904
 - f. 2 Correspondence and baptismal certificates, 1931-1945
 - f. 3 Clippings, 1935-1974
 - f. 4 Thomas S. Pendergast estate, 1947
 - f. 5 Letterhead, n.d.
 - f. 6 Wine list, n.d.
 - f. 7 Mug shot, n.d.
- f. 8-15 Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. Papers
- f. 8 City Beverage Company documents, 1933-1950
 - f. 9 Transcript of testimony, 1939
 - f. 10 General correspondence, 1945-1978
 - f. 11 Cancelled notes and stock certificates, 1942, 1946
 - f. 12 Claims against IRS, 1945-1946
 - f. 13 Correspondence re: liquidation of liquor company 1949
 - f. 14 Pendergast v. Hill, 1967
 - f. 15 Autobiographical notes, n.d.

Film

Reformatted

Seg.	Box	Contents	Time range	Notes
01	12	T.J.P. 6/13/30 (June 12, 1930) – Showing Thomas J. Pendergast, Sr. and Thomas J. Pendergast, Jr. standing together outside. Event appears to be a graduation.	00:02:02:05 – 00:02:48:01	16mm - b/w
02	02	Riverside Jockey Club (June 1938) – Showing horse races along the track, some slow motion.	00:02:48:01 – 00:05:35:25	16mm - color
03	01	Riverside Jockey Club (July 1938) – Showing horse races along the track, also panning of shots of fields.	00:05:35:25 – 00:06:40:05	16mm - b/w
04	03	Waterfill and Frazier Distillery Co., KY Apr. 13 (May 1937) – Showing building	00:06:41:05 – 00:09:29:00	16mm - b/w

		from a distance at various angles, surrounding scenery, close ups of barrels at the distillery, close ups of road.		
05	05	Waterfill and Frazier Distillery Co. (Nov.1938) – Showing exterior of the building and smokestack, shots of the road outside the distillery, short shot of man outside of car.	00:09:30:00 – 00:10:55:00	16mm - b/w
06	04	Church, Bardstown, KY (May 1937) – Showing exterior of church, close up shots of church sign and statues, women in field adjacent to church, exterior of apartment buildings.	00:10:55:00 – 00:13:47:00	16mm - b/w
07	06	Shawhan Distillery, Bardstown, KY (Aug 1939) #1 – Showing exterior of buildings and smokestack.	00:13:47:00 – 00:15:13:00	16mm - b/w
08	07	Shawhan Distillery (March 13, 1939) #2 – Showing four men standing with barrels, close up shots of barrels, exterior of buildings, brief shots of interior of distillery.	00:15:13:00 – 00:16:38:00	16mm - b/w
09	08	B.O.G. June 1, 1938 – Showing women outside with palm trees, shots of scenery, shots of ocean and beach, man walking in gardens.	00:16:38:00 – 00:18:00:00	16mm - color
10	10	Swimming meet, June 1, 1938 (Apr 1939) – Slow motion shots of diving, shot of swimming, comedy act involving a diving board.	00:18:02:00 – 00:19:27:00	16mm - color
11	13	Train views 1 June 1938 – Views from a train window showing mountains, fields, and abandoned buildings. Also shots of swimming pool, tennis courts, and buildings from stationary train window.	00:19:27:00 – 00:20:51:00	16mm - color
12	14	Views of LaFolla [La Jolla], June 4, 1938 [California – San Gaibrille [San Gabrielle] Mission] – Beach and ocean scenery, distant buildings, overhead bi-plane, close ups of graveyard, tombstones, and bell.	00:20:51:00 – 00:22:15:00	16mm - color
13	15	Santa Barbara, June 1, 1938 – Panorama of town and surrounding hills, close ups of flowers and plants in a garden, close ups of cacti, shots of tents and palm trees.	00:22:15:00 – 00:23:40:00	16mm - color
14	16	Santa Barbara, 1 June 1938 – Church exterior, close ups of buildings, ocean	00:23:40:00 – 00:25:03:19	16mm - color

		from a car window, shots of mountains in the distance, man and woman standing outside the building.		
15	17	Hotel and Scripp's Home, LaFolla [La Jolla] – Panning view of house, exterior of buildings and palm trees, exterior of gardens, ocean horizon shot.	00:25:03:19 – 00:26:29:00	16mm - color
16	18	Views of McCrory House, LaFolla, [La Jolla] June 4, 1938 – Exterior of house, woman standing outside the house, beach and ocean scenic shots, close ups of building and front door.	00:26:29:00 – 00:27:52:00	16mm - color

Not reformatted

Seg.	Box	Contents	Footage	Notes
	19	Waterfill and Fraizer [KY?]	50	16mm - b/w
	20	Waterfill and Fraizer billboard. Large city, street sign "Norton and ____". Close up of man and Woman: TJjr and wife?	50	16mm - b/w
	21	Agfa 1936 leader. Young man in chair (outside). Several people playing badminton.	100	16mm - b/w
	22	Marceline Mary taken May 15, 1936 (18 months old); Child with mother or nanny	25	8mm - b/w
	23	Hawaii [May 1935?] biplane. Marked No. 1.	25	8mm - b/w
	24	Hawaii – hotel, beach views. Marked No. 2.	25	8mm - b/w
	25	"Leaving Harbor, airplane, views. Hawaii". Marked No. 3.	25	8mm - b/w
	26	Views on ship. Shot of Bobo (dog in KC?) Marked No. 4.	25	8mm - b/w
	27	Marceline Mary B. Sept 1935: Baby in carriage; with father (?) and mother (?). Marked No. 5.	25	8mm - b/w
17	28	Mr. E. P. Cleary (July 1944) [man and baby – overexposed, almost no visible image]	25	8mm - color
	29	Unknown		16mm - b/w
	30	Unknown		16mm - b/w
	31	Unknown		16mm - color

LOCATION NOTE

The manuscript portion of the papers is stored offsite (063214) and will need to be retrieved before viewing. The reformatted film is stored onsite.

Processed 3/2016.