



Betsy Balsley Collection (SP0062)

Collection Number: SP0062

Collection Title: Betsy Balsley Collection

Dates: 1865-2009

Creator: Balsley, Betsy Barr, 1924-2019

Abstract: The Betsy Balsley Collection contains the personal and professional papers of Joplin, Missouri, native and *Los Angeles Times* Food Editor, Betsy Barr Balsley. The collection consists of correspondence, photographs, scrapbooks, newspaper articles, and various publications such as magazines and cookbooks.

Collection Size: 6 cubic feet
(51 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at springfield@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Betsy Balsley Collection* (SP0062); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Virginia Laas on October 30, 2019 (Accession No. SPA0066).

Processed by: Processed by Haley Frizzle-Green, September 9, 2021

Biographical Note:

Betsy Barr Balsley was born September 2, 1924, to Clyde Martin Balsley and Ruth Sayre Barr Balsley in Joplin, Missouri. Betsy attended Joplin High School, as well as Joplin Junior College.

Betsy's father, Dr. Clyde T. Balsley, died of a heart attack in 1935. In 1937, her brother, Clyde Herbert Balsley, died from heart failure at the age of 15.

Betsy went on to attend the University of Missouri, majoring in chemistry and English. During her time at the University of Missouri, she was a member of the Red Cross and Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. At the age of 30, she moved to Hawaii and worked for First National Bank of Hawaii in the public relations department. Shortly after, Betsy's mother, Ruth Balsley, left her Joplin home to live with her daughter. In 1968, Betsy was hired as the Food Editor for the *Honolulu Star Bulletin Press*. During this time, Betsy was a member of the Public Relations Society and served several terms as an officer of the Honolulu Press Club.

In 1973, Betsy and her mother relocated to Los Angeles, California, after Betsy was hired as the Food Editor for the *Los Angeles Times*. During her tenure at the Times, her and her staff produced multiple cookbooks, including *The Los Angeles Times Cookbook* and *Best Recipes from the Los Angeles Times*. Betsy was the founding member and early president of the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association. She and her fellow members traveled frequently to different countries around the world to learn about their cuisine. In 1990, Betsy retired after 17 years as the Food Editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. She is a winner of seven Vesta awards for Excellence in Food Journalism and in 1983 she was awarded the Times editorial award for Sustained Excellence.

After her mother died in 1987, Betsy lived the rest of her life in Palisades, California, and was a long time member of Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Church. Betsy died on June 7, 2019. At her request, her ashes were scattered off the coast of Hawaii.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following five series and one subseries:

- Personal Records
- Professional Records
- Publications
 - Books
- Photographs
- Oversized

Scope and Content Note:

Personal Records

This series contains materials related to Betsy Balsley's personal life and the Balsley-Barr family history. These records include birth certificates, burial records, and identification cards. Most of the records pertain to Betsy and her mother Ruth, as well as her aunt, Mary Helen *Barr* McMullen. Other materials include academic records such as grade cards, degree transcripts, a diploma, and Joplin High School Reunion booklets. This series also contains correspondence sent to Betsy and her family members from friends and other relatives. This series is arranged by subject then chronologically.

Professional Records

This series consists of materials pertaining to Betsy's professional career in Hawaii and as the Food Editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. The records include business cards, awards, administrative paperwork, correspondence, and copies of her articles. This series also contains materials related to Betsy's professional association memberships, including the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association. This series is arranged by subject then chronologically.

Publications

This series contains books, magazines, newspaper clippings, and yearbooks belonging to Betsy. The Books subseries consists of mostly cookbooks that were gifted to Betsy, which include author inscriptions, and is arranged chronologically by publication date. Some of the magazines include articles written by Betsy or her staff. The yearbooks included in this series are from when Betsy was a student at Joplin High School and Joplin Junior College, covering the years between 1941-1944. This series is arranged by subject then chronologically.

Photographs

This series contains photographs from the late 1800's featuring the Barr family, including Betsy's grandparents William Patterson Barr and Lulu Lee Treadway Barr. Other identified family members include Betsy's great-grandmother Eliza "Mere" Treadway, and her ancestor, Mary Mastin, as well as her cousin William Francis McMullen. The majority of photographs are of Betsy from infancy to adulthood with both her mother and brother. This series also contains professional photographs from the *Los Angeles Times* and photographs from international trips taken with the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association. In addition to photographs, this series also contains slides and negatives. Some slides were originally housed in a slide tray which have been kept in their original order. The slide tray was titled "*Los Angeles Times* Food Presentation, 1988" and contained a cassette tape recording that is stored with the slides. This series is arranged by subject then chronologically.

Oversize

This series includes oversize personal and professional memorabilia, photographs, and scrapbooks created by Betsy. This series also contains an original handwritten document from 1865 titled *The Philothean Journal*, a Kentucky school newspaper written by students, including Betsy's ancestor, Mary Mastin. This series is arranged by subject.

Container List:

| | |
|----------|---|
| f. 1-9 | Personal Records |
| Box 001 | f. 1 Balsley family, 1915-1987 |
| | f. 2 Barr family, 1880-1982 |
| | f. 3 Balsley-Barr family genealogy, no date |
| | f. 4 Correspondence, 1913-2009 |
| | f. 5 Correspondence with original tin, 1940 |
| | f. 6 Education, 1937-1992 |
| | f. 7-8 Recipes, 2001, no date |
| | f. 9 Miscellaneous, 1919-1952 |
| f. 10-14 | Professional Records |
| | f. 10 Associations, 1975-1985 |
| | f. 11 Awards, 1982-1985 |

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| | f. 12 | Correspondence, 1973-1990 |
| | f. 13 | Hawaii, 1953-1975 |
| | f. 14 | <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , 1973-1990 |
| f. 15-29 | | Publications |
| | f. 15-20 | Books, 1955-1995 |
| | f. 15 | <i>Fruits of Hawaii</i> , 1955 |
| | f. 16 | <i>Tales about Joplin, Short and Tall</i> , 1962 |
| | f. 17 | <i>Mary Sia's Chinese Cookbook</i> , 1967 |
| | f. 18 | <i>Sweet & Delicious Fruits of Tree, Bush, and Vine</i> , 1973 |
| Box 002 | f. 19 | <i>Woman's Club of Joplin Cookbook</i> , 1979 |
| | f. 20 | <i>Charles Wysocki's Americana Cookbook</i> , 1995 |
| | f. 21-22 | Magazines, 1933-1980 |
| | f. 23 | Newspaper clippings, 1916-1989 |
| | f. 24 | Joplin High School Yearbook, 1941 |
| | f. 25 | Joplin High School Yearbook, 1942 |
| | f. 26 | Joplin Junior College Yearbook, 1943 |
| | f. 27 | Joplin Junior College Yearbook, 1944 |
| | f. 28 | Miscellaneous, 1944-1945 |
| f. 29-47 | | Photographs |
| | f. 29-30 | Barr family, 1889-1893, no date |
| | f. 31-33 | Balsley family, 1924-2007 |
| Box 003 | f. 34-39 | Food Writers' Adventures, 1995, 2005-2009 |
| | f. 40 | Friends, 1977-2009 |
| | f. 41 | Professional, 1973-1979, no date |
| | f. 42 | Travel, no date |
| | f. 43-44 | Unidentified, no date |
| | f. 45 | Slides from Los Angeles Times Food Presentation, 1988 |
| | f. 46 | Slides, no date |
| | f. 47 | Negatives, no date |
| f. 48-51 | | Oversize |
| Box 004 | f. 48 | <i>The Philothean Journal</i> , 1865 |
| | f. 49 | Photographs, 1915-1941, no date |
| Box 005 | f. 50 | Personal and professional records, 1916-1990 |
| Box 006 | f. 51 | Scrapbooks, 1932-1942, no date |

Index:

| Index Term | Folder | Image |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Balsley, Betsy Barr, 1924-2019 | 1-14, 21-28, 31-47, 49-51 | Yes |
| Balsley, Clyde Herbert, 1921-1937 | 1, 3, 31-33, 49-51 | Yes |
| Balsley, Clyde Martin, 1889-1935 | 1, 3, 31-33, 49-51 | Yes |
| Balsley, Ruth Sayre, 1891-1987 | 1-4, 23, 29-33, 49-51 | Yes |
| Barr, Lulu Lee, 1860-1949 | 2-3, 29-30, 49 | Yes |
| Barr, Walter Lee, 1884-1947 | 2-3, 29-30 | Yes |
| Barr, William Patterson, 1860-1941 | 2-3, 29-30, 49 | Yes |
| Food writers. | 10-14, 31, 34-39 | Yes |
| Honolulu (Hawaii) | 13 | |

| Index Term | Folder | Image |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Honolulu Star Bulletin Press | 13 | |
| Jasper County (Mo.) | 1, 4-6, 9, 16, 19, 23-28, 31-33, 51 | Yes |
| Joplin (Mo.) | 1, 4-6, 9, 16, 19, 23-28, 31-33, 51 | Yes |
| Joplin High School, Joplin, Missouri | 6, 23-25, 31-33, 49, 51 | Yes |
| Joplin Junior College, Joplin, Missouri | 6, 26-27, 31-33, 49, 51 | Yes |
| Los Angeles (Calif.) | 10-12, 14, 23, 41, 45-46, 50 | Yes |
| Los Angeles times | 10-12, 14, 23, 41, 45-46, 50 | Yes |
| Mastin, Mary, 1808-1884 | 29-30, 48 | Yes |
| McMullen, Mary Helen, 1889-1985 | 2-3, 29-30 | Yes |
| Newspaper Food Editors and Writers Association (U.S.) | 10, 34-39 | Yes |
| Treadway, Eliza Jane, 1833-1925 | 2-3, 29-30 | Yes |
| Treadway, Simeon, 1830-1903 | 2-3, 29-30 | Yes |
| University of Missouri--Columbia | 6 | |