

A GUIDE TO THE FREDRICK BENNETT

BALZAR PAPERS MS/NC 686

by

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FREDRICK BENNETT BALZAR

Fred B. Balzar was the thirteenth Nevadan to be elected by popular vote to the office of governor. He was born in Virginia City, Nevada June 15, 1880, the son of Serafino Balzar, a native of Switzerland, and Minnie Bennett Balzar. He attended public schools in Nevada and in California, at the Polytechnic High School, San Francisco. His early work history included jobs as stage driver, miner, prospector, ranch hand and in railroading. He was employed by the Carson and Colorado Railroad as a fireman, brakeman and then conductor on the line between Hawthorne, Nevada and Keeler, CA. He also operated a butcher shop at Mina, NV and served as a justice of the peace in Mina for a time.

In 1904, Balzar was elected to the State Assembly from Esmeralda County, and subsequently was elected to two terms in the State Senate. In 1907, Balzar married Idelle Edna Sinnamon (1881-1943). The marriage produced one daughter, Phylis Rae, later Mrs. George Vargas. He was elected sheriff-assessor of Mineral County in 1916, and gave up railroading to serve in that post full time for the next ten years. An outgoing personality, he was friendly to everyone, which made him a tremendously popular figure wherever he was known. In 1926, Balzar was elected governor of Nevada, the sixth Republican to hold that office.

At the end of his first four-year term he was reelected in 1930, during a very difficult and tumultuous period characterized by the national economic downturn that followed the stock market crash of 1929. In 1931, he signed into law Nevada's legal gambling and six-week divorce bills, but business grew slowly with little economic relief during the depression years. While governor, Balzar served as chairman of the State Board of Education and as chairman of the State Highway Commission. His popularity remained high during his tenure as chief executive. Because of declining health, he turned over much of the duties of his office to Lieutenant Governor Morley Griswold in December 1933. On March 21, 1934, Fred Balzar died of cancer at the governor's mansion in Carson City, at 53 years of age. An outpouring of tributes and expressions of sympathy came in from prominent people throughout the nation. Balzar was a remarkable and beloved figure in Nevada's political history, one who was said to have a special human touch which brought him unusually close to the people.

Fred Balzar was survived by his mother, two brothers, a sister and his wife and daughter. The remainder of his term was served out by Lieutenant Governor Griswold.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE COLLECTION

The Fredrick Bennett Balzar papers consist primarily of financial documents, a few certificates and books, over sixty photographs, three drawings and a diary Balzar kept during 1928. They were acquired in 2000 through a donation by Michael Macintosh, and the Macintosh family, of San Rafael, California.

The financial documents include a check register book from the Reno National Bank, showing checks written between 1924 and 1933. In addition, there are canceled checks and statements for all but a few months between August 1926 and October 1932, arranged in chronological order, one folder for each month. There are a few miscellaneous documents such as bills, receipts, correspondence and stock certificates, and a few honorary or membership certificates from various organizations.

The books retained in this collection are ones that Balzar or members of his family personally owned, with several inscribed to him by the authors. A large portion of the collection consists of photographs, divided into four categories: **Official Functions as Governor, Small Photographs/Snapshots, Portraits** and **Scenic Photographs**. Most of the photos of official functions are 8"x10" black and white pictures, many showing Balzar posing with notable personages such as Jack Dempsey, Governor James Rolph of California and other political figures. The small photos are primarily candid shots of the Balzar family and friends. The portraits are mostly of Fred Balzar, with a few of his wife and daughter taken from the 1910's through 1930. The scenic photographs include four large pictures, one of Lake Tahoe, and three of Walker Lake and road construction adjacent to the lake.

Rounding out the collection are three pieces of artwork, one a photo of a drawing of Balzar by Robert Caples, a Nevada artist in the 1930's, and two charcoal drawings of Balzar by Boyd Moore.

No other substantial collection of Fred Balzar's personal papers are known to exist. His official governor's papers are held by the Nevada Division of Archives and Records, Carson City, while items of correspondence can be found in the papers of various contemporaries, notably those of George Wingfield and Tasker L. Oddie at the Nevada Historical Society, Reno, Nevada.

Nevada Historical Society
MSNC686 Fredrick Bennett Balzar
Finding Aid

I. DIARIES

Box 1

1. Diary, Fred Balzar, 1928

II. FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- 1 a. Check Register, Reno National Bank 1924-1933 (Fred & Idelle Balzar)
2. Canceled checks, Aug 1926
3. Canceled checks, Sep 1926
4. Canceled checks, Nov 1926
5. Canceled checks, Dec 1926
6. Canceled checks, Jan 1927
7. Canceled checks, Feb 1927
8. Canceled checks, Mar 1927
9. Canceled checks, Apr 1927
10. Canceled checks, May 1927
11. Canceled checks, Jun 1927
12. Canceled checks, Jul 1927
13. Canceled checks, Aug 1927
14. Canceled checks, Sep 1927
15. Canceled checks, Oct 1927
16. Canceled checks, Nov 1927
17. Canceled checks, Dec 1927
18. Canceled checks, Jan 1928
19. Canceled checks, Feb 1928
20. Canceled checks, Mar 1928
21. Canceled checks, Apr 1928
22. Canceled checks, May 1928
23. Canceled checks, Jun 1928
24. Canceled checks, Jul 1928
25. Canceled checks, Aug 1928
26. Canceled checks, Sep 1928
27. Canceled checks, Oct 1928
28. Canceled checks, Nov 1928
29. Canceled checks, Dec 1928
30. Canceled checks, Jan 1929
31. Canceled checks, Feb 1929
32. Canceled checks, Mar 1929
33. Canceled checks, Apr 1929
34. Canceled checks, May 1929
35. Canceled checks, Jun 1929
36. Canceled checks, Jul 1929
37. Canceled checks, Aug 1929
38. Canceled checks, Sep 1929
39. Canceled checks, Oct 1929
40. Canceled checks, Nov 1929
41. Canceled checks, Dec 1929
42. Canceled checks, Jan 1930
44. Canceled checks, Mar 1930
45. Canceled checks, Apr 1930
46. Canceled checks, May 1930
47. Canceled checks, Jun 1930
48. Canceled checks, Jul 1930
49. Canceled checks, Aug 1930
50. Canceled checks, Sep 1930
51. Canceled checks, Oct 1930
52. Canceled checks, Nov 1930
53. Canceled checks, Dec 1930
54. Canceled checks, Jan 1931
55. Canceled checks, Feb 1931
56. Canceled checks, Mar 1931
57. Canceled checks, Jun 1931
58. Canceled checks, Jul 1931

- 59 Canceled checks, Aug 1931
- 60 Canceled checks, Sep 1931
- 61 Canceled checks, Oct 1931
- 62 Canceled checks, Nov 1931
- 63 Canceled checks, Dec 1931
- 64 Canceled checks, Feb 1930

III. MISCELLANEOUS PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

BOX 2

- 1. Correspondence, stock certificates, etc.

IV. CERTIFICATES

Box 3

- 1. Certificate of Honorary Membership to Hon. F. B. Balzar from the Genealogical Foundation Certificate, National Highways Association, certifying that Balzar is a life member of the Council of Governors Portfolio for Fred Balzar regarding honorary membership in the Genealogical Foundation c. 1932
- 2. Masonic Certificate, Fred Balzar, c. 1920

V. PRINTED MATERIALS

Miscellaneous Printed Materials

- 1. Book: Grubstake, by Mark Requa (1933). Inscribed to Fred Balzar by author
- 2. Book: The Woman of It by Clare Ogden Davis (1929). Inscribed to Fred Balzar by author
- 3. Book: Reno, by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. (1929). Inscribed to Fred Balzar by author
- 4. Book: Songs of the Sage by Curley Fletcher (1931). Inscribed to Fred Balzar by author in 1931
- 5. Book: Songs of the Sage by Curley Fletcher (1931). Inscribed to Fred Balzar by author in 1932
- 6. Book: Holy Bible. Belonged to Mrs. F. B. Balzar
- 7. Book: Governors' Conference Proceedings. 1930. Balzar's copy
- 8. Book: La Reina: A History of Los Anaeles. (1931). Copy presented to Fred Balzar at 1933 Governors' Conference
- 9. Book: Funk and Wagnall College Standard Dictionary (1927). Cover imprinted "Hon. Fred B. Balzar"
- 10. Book: THE NESIKA (1930). Yearbook of Everett High School, Everett, WA. Copy presented to Balzar, one of the governors to whom it was dedicated.

VI. PHOTOGRAPHS

Box 4

Official Functions as Governor

- 1. Split shot of Balzar with horse/horse race (1929), presented by the Silver State Jockey Club
- 2. Balzar at racetrack with William Graham, Jack Dempsey and James McKay
- 3. Balzar and unidentified persons at dog sled race.
- 4. Balzar and unidentified persons at winter event (both 3 & 4 are at same event, probably winter carnival at Truckee, 1928)
- 5. Fred Balzar, wife and daughter, Alturas, CA, Nov. 1927
- Photo of group event, "Carving the beef at Portola, 1928" inscribed on back
- 6. Balzar and others at unidentified ceremony, photo by B.W. Hellings
- 7. Balzar and group of 21 men on steps in front of brick building
- 8. Balzar and unidentified man inscribed "To a Governor that I think should be president — Monte"
- 9. Balzar and two unidentified men on steps of state capitol, c. 1928
- 10. Balzar, Gov. Jim Rolph of CA, and Lt. Gov. Morley Griswold c. 1930
- 11. Balzar and Gov Jim Rolph of CA shaking hands
- 12. Fred Balzar and others holding pigeons at dedication of Carqueniz Bridge, 1927
- 13. Balzar and others shaking hands at dedication of Carqueniz Bridge
- 14. Balzar and others posing at dedication of Carqueniz Bridge, 1927
- 15. Balzar standing before stone wall (1928)

16. Balzar and two men, inscribed "To Governor Balzar by J. A. McCarthy of Los Angeles, Cal." (Dec. 1930)
17. Wide format photo of group of children and adults, "1930 Woodford Sagebrush Club" inscribed on back
18. Fred Balzar with four American Legion officers, 1931
19. Political poster, F. B. Balzar (incumbent) Republican for Governor, with large photograph of Fred Balzar
20. Wide format photo of Chief Special Agents Association Luncheon, Los Angeles, 1931 (Balzar is seen on left side of photo)
21. Panoramic photo, Governors Conference 1930, Salt Lake City
22. Small Photographs, Snapshots
23. Proof sheet of photographs, c. 1920's, Balzar family at governor's mansion and playing in snow
24. Snapshots, (15 each) of family, friends, and Boulder Junction celebration, 1930
25. Fred Balzar portrait inscribed "To Paralta Studio from F. B. Balzar, Governor of Nevada"

Photographs Box 5

1. Balzar c. 1910's (photo attached to inside of convex oval glass)
2. Phylis Balzar at a young age, sitting in chair
3. Phylis Balzar at a young age, leaning on table
4. Portrait of year-old child by Goodner (possibly Phylis Balzar)
5. Portrait of Phylis Balzar, by Goodner
6. Portrait of Phylis Balzar, by Goodner
7. Portrait, tinted, Phylis Balzar, by Goodner
8. Portrait, tinted, Phylis Balzar, by Goodner
9. Portrait of woman, signed "Sincerely, Bess Winding"
10. Portrait of Balzar (damage on right side) by Moore
11. Portrait of Balzar, by Moore
12. Portrait of Idelle Balzar by Goodner
13. Portrait of Idelle Balzar c. 1910's by Amundsen, Salt Lake City
14. Portrait of Fred Balzar by Harris & Ewing, Wash. D. C.
15. Fred Balzar in easy chair, by Chas. Redmond
16. Similar to above
17. Similar to above
18. Early portrait of Idelle Balzar by Hartsook
19. Portrait of Balzar by Goodner (1926)
20. Portrait of Balzar, tinted
21. Portrait of Balzar by Majestic
22. George Bancroft c. 1930 signed by Bancroft
23. George Bancroft c. 1930, signed by Bancroft to "Miss Balzar," photo by Richee
24. Fred Balzar studio proof by Strauss-Peyton Studios (damage to photo)
25. Fred Balzar studio proof by Strauss-Peyton
26. Portrait of daughter Phylis at Governor's mansion, 1928 by Majestic
27. Portrait of Idelle Balzar and daughter Phylis at Governor's mansion by Majestic

Scenic Photographs

28. Cave Rock, Lake Tahoe
29. Walker Lake and roadway scene
30. Walker Lake and roadway scene
31. Walker Lake and roadway scene

VII. ARTWORK

Box 6

1. Photo of drawing of Balzar c. 1930 by "R.C." (Robert Caples, NV Artist, 1930's)
2. Charcoal drawing of Fred Balzar by Boyd Moore
3. Larger charcoal drawing of Fred Balzar by Boyd Moore