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**Inventory of the Benjamin Berendt and
Anna Gelson Berendt Papers, 1866-2010**

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Descriptive Summary

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| Title: | Benjamin Berendt and Anna Gelson Berendt papers |
| Date(s) | 1866-2010 |
| Creator: | Berendt, Benjamin, 1912-2010; Berendt, Anna Gelson, 1913-2001 |
| Abstract: | Writings, newspaper clippings, poetry, plays, publications, correspondence, photographs, and other personal papers of Benjamin Berendt and Anna Gelson Berendt of Charleston, South Carolina. Materials mostly relate to the Berendt and Gelson family histories as well as Benjamin's and Anna's travels. Also included are Aleph Zadik Aleph Chapter 143 publications from the 1950s and 1960s. |
| Extent: | 3.40 linear feet (2 document boxes, 1 slim document box, 1 flat box, 1 oversize folder) |
| Repository: | Jewish Heritage Collection, Special Collections, College of Charleston Libraries 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424 Phone: (843) 953-8016 Fax: (843) 953-6319 URL: http://archives.library.cofc.edu |
| Call Number: | Mss 1089 |
| Language of Material: | Materials in English |

Biographical Note

Benjamin Berendt (1912-2010) was born in Charleston, South Carolina, to Isaac and Mary Berendt, who immigrated to New York in 1871 from Konin, Poland.

Benjamin Berendt attended Charleston High School, was an active member of AZA (Aleph Zadik Aleph) Chapter 143, and studied history at the College of Charleston, where he graduated in 1935. Berendt became a partner of Berendt Brothers, Inc. and traveled throughout the Carolinas and Georgia selling wholesale shoes, handbags, and other leather goods.

Anna Gelson (1913-2001) was born in Poughkeepsie, New York, to Louis and Zelda Gelson. The family moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and spent a brief period on Yonges Island following Louis Gelson's death. They eventually returned to Charleston and opened a grocery store at 572 Meeting Street.

Gelson and Berendt were married in 1940. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Benjamin Berendt enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served as a shore patrol officer in the South Pacific. Anna Berendt worked as a civilian employee at the North Charleston naval base, where she handled purchase requisitions for naval supplies. After the war, Benjamin Berendt continued his work as a salesman. The Berendts were members of Charleston's Brith Sholom Beth Israel, and Anna was active in the Charleston chapter of Hadassah and the National Council of Jewish Women. She also served as an advisor for B'nai B'rith Girls (sister organization to AZA) and was an avid writer.

Collection Overview

Writings, newspaper clippings, poetry, plays, publications, correspondence, photographs, and other personal papers of Benjamin Berendt and Anna Gelson Berendt of Charleston, South Carolina. Most of the writings, poetry, and plays were composed by Anna Gelson Berendt and include narrative histories of her ancestors in Russia and their immigration to the United States. Also included are materials relating to the Berendt family history and Benjamin's and Anna's travels as well as AZA Chapter 143 newsletters.

Collection Arrangement

Materials are described at the folder level.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

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Related Material

Related materials in Special Collections include a 1996 oral history interview with Benjamin Berendt (Mss 1035-076).

Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person, family, or organization, by topical subject, by place, and by types of material.

Names

- Berendt, Anna Gelson, 1913-2001
- Berendt, Benjamin, 1912-2010
- Berendt family
- Gelson family
- Aleph Zadik Aleph

Subjects

- Jews--South Carolina--Charleston--History

Places

- Charleston (S.C.)

Types of Material

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Color photographs
- Black-and-white photographs
- Plays (document genre)
- Poetry
- Publications
- Writings (document genre)

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Benjamin Berendt and Anna Gelson Berendt papers, College of Charleston Libraries, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were donated in 2011 by Gerald E. Berendt.

Processing Information

Processed by Joshua Minor and Sarah M. Dorpinghaus, April 2011.

Encoded by Joshua Minor, March 2012.

Reviewed, edited, and uploaded by Martha McTear, June 2012.

Funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources supported the processing of this collection and encoding of the finding aid.

Inventory

Benjamin Berendt, 1866-2010, undated

- Box 1 Folder 1 Family history, 1866-1999, undated
 Includes genealogical material, family trees, bow tie charts, and a brief biography of Benjamin Berendt written by his son, Gerald Berendt.
- Oversize Paper Folder 1 Berendt family tree, undated
 (Flat storage)
- Oversize Paper Folder 1 Yahrzeit calendar, undated
 (Flat storage)
 Memorial calendar for Isaac Berendt (d. 1866)
- Box 1 Folder 2 Yearbook pages, 1931-1935
 Includes photocopied pages from Berendt's high school yearbook *The Argus* and his college yearbook *The Comet*. Original copies of the yearbooks can be found in Special Collections.
- Box 1 Folder 3 Military service, 1944, undated
 Includes a small mezuzah and a prayer book from the Jewish Welfare Board.
- Box 1 Folder 4 Travel schedules, undated
 Travel schedules listing daily appointments and addresses of shoe stores, department stores, and handbag customers in South Carolina and Georgia.
- Box 1 Folder 5-6 Miniature Haftarah, undated
- Box 1 Folder 7 Miscellaneous, 2010, undated
 Includes a newspaper clipping describing the collapse of a wall at the Berendts' leather goods store on Meeting Street and a photocopy of Benjamin Berendt's obituary.

Anna Gelson Berendt, 1908-2001, undated

- Box 1 Folder 8 Family history, 1910, 1992, undated
 Includes biographical writings, family trees and census documents.
- Oversize Paper Folder 1 Passenger manifest from Ellis Island, 1908
 (Flat storage)
 Photocopy of passenger manifest listing her parents, Louis and Zelda Gelson.
- Box 1 Folder 9 Newspaper clippings, 1980-1985, undated
 Includes newspaper clippings regarding the Rosen family and Leon Gelson.

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| Box 1 Folder 10 | Education, 1975-1986, undated |
| | Includes school essays and papers, handwritten notes, and tests. |
| | Writings, 1974-1991, undated |
| Box 1 Folder 11 | <i>A Family Story</i> , 1974 |
| | Unpublished manuscript recounting the lives of the Gelson and Rosen families in Russia and America as well as Anna's life as a young girl growing up on Yonges Island, South Carolina, and in Charleston, South Carolina. |
| Box 2 Folder 1 | <i>A Family Story</i> rough drafts, 1974, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 2 | Poetry, 1981, undated |
| | Includes a 1981 issue of the College of Charleston's literary and art journal <i>Miscellany</i> . |
| Box 2 Folder 3 | Plays, undated |
| | Includes the plays <i>Ellen and Eddie</i> , <i>572 Meeting Street</i> , and stage diagrams. |
| Box 2 Folder 4 | Travel writings, 1975, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 5 | Diary, 1991 |
| Box 2 Folder 6 | Others' writings, 1988, undated |
| | Includes writings by members of a writing workshop in which Berendt participated. |
| Box 2 Folder 7 | Miscellaneous writings, 1991, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 8 | Miscellaneous, 1948-2001, undated |
| | Includes newspaper clippings, correspondence, a Brith Sholom Congregation seating card, a Blue Book of telephone numbers, a silhouette portrait of Anna by Frances Bennett, and Anna's obituary. |
| | Correspondence, 1940-1991, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 9 | Bar and bat mitzvah invitations, 1981-1989, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 10 | Wedding invitations, 1975-1987, undated |
| Box 2 Folder 11 | General correspondence, 1940-1991, undated |
| | Includes postcards, letters from family members, birth announcements, invitations, and thank you notes. |
| Box 3 Folder 1 | New England group tour, 1979 |
| | Pamphlets, postcards, and travel writings from the Berendt's trip to New England. |

Photographs, circa early 1900s -2004

- Box 3 Folder 2 Benjamin Berendt and Berendt family, circa early 1900s-2004
- Box 3 Folder 3 Anna Gelson Berendt and Gelson family, circa early 1900s-1980s
- Oversize Paper Folder 1 Isaac Berendt, undated
 (Flat storage)
- Oversize Paper Folder 1 Tau Epsilon Phi members, 1934
 (Flat storage)
 Original paste up for TEP page in the 1934 volume of the College of Charleston yearbook *The Comet*. Includes a photograph of Benjamin Berendt.
- Box 3 Folder 4 Miscellaneous, circa early 1900s-2000s
- Box 4 Louis Gelson, circa 1917
- Box 4 Anna and Leon Gelson, circa 1917
- Box 3 Folder 5 Gerald Berendt, 1970-1978, undated
 Includes newspaper clippings, handwritten notes, and other papers of Gerald Berendt, son of Benjamin and Anna Berendt. Materials relate to Gerald Berendt's position as assistant professor at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois. Contains photocopies and original documents.
- Box 3 Folder 6 AZA Chapter 143 publications, 1956-1966, undated
 Includes eight issues of *Chaza*, the AZA (Aleph Zadik Aleph) Chapter 143 newsletter, as well as two other AZA newsletters: *Five Folder* and *Jewish Star and Harold Koslow Pledge Class*. Benjamin Berendt served as vice president and later as president of AZA Chapter 143 in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Gerald Berendt served as editor, advisor, and president in the mid-1960s.
- Box 3 Folder 7 Miscellaneous, 1940, 1971-1983, undated
 Includes newspaper clippings and printed material, such as a Barton's Kosher Confectioners pamphlet and a 1971 Manischewitz eight-day menu planner and recipe guide for Passover. *Workbook for Children's History of Israel, Part 1* by Sulamith Ish-Kishor is also included.