

Guy Pennisi Papers, 1892 – 1995?

General Information

Repository: Lawrence History Center

Accession Number: 2011.032

Dates: 1892 – 1995?

Quantity: 3 Banker's Boxes

Processed By: Brendan Kieran

Access: Open for research.

Provenance

This collection was donated to the Lawrence History Center on December 7, 2009 by Maurice Pennisi, the son of Guy Pennisi.

Biographical Note

Guy Pennisi was a lifelong resident of Lawrence, MA. He developed a love of art at a young age, and worked with his father and brothers in the family business, the Pennisi Painting and Decorating Company, beginning as a teenager. He met Antoinette Cosentino in 1933, and married her three years later; the couple had three children: Cammy, Maurice, Eleanor, and Mary Grace. Guy and Antoinette Pennisi worked in the family business together, and eventually started their own store, called the G.R. Pennisi Company. In 1959, the two shut down their store, left the family business and founded the Pennisi Art Studio. Guy Pennisi taught over 1,000 students at the studio before closing it in 1984.

In addition to his work in the painting business and in his studio, Pennisi played a role in the foundation of the Robert Frost Festival, the Leonard Bernstein Festival, the Verdi Festival, and the first Art Festival to be held in Lawrence. He also taught art and history at various locations in the area. Pennisi was a religious man as well, and went to Holy Rosary Church. He had affiliations with the Holy Name Society and the Third Order of Saint Francis, as well as the Knights of Columbus. He died in 1996 at the age of 82.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains many programs and pamphlets that were created for events put on by the Holy Rosary Church, including parish reunions, anniversaries, and plays. There are pamphlets that relate to various societies as well; some are affiliated with Holy Rosary, but others are not. In addition, the collection includes pamphlets for various events held at several public and private schools in the area, including a Lawrence High School graduation program from 1892, the year poet Robert Frost graduated. Some of the graduation pamphlets list members of the Pennisi family as graduates. There are also notebooks and graduate lists from the Holy Rosary School. Additionally, the collection also contains pamphlets and programs for a variety of other religious and non-religious events, as well as magazines and pamphlets that relate to area businesses, regional history, cities, states, countries, and political events. Many of the pamphlets and booklets in this collection mention the participation of the Pennisi family in local events. Finally, there are various pieces of artwork, scrapbooks, books, postcards, photographs of people and events, and objects, including pins from the John F. Kennedy presidential campaign. The materials cover most of Pennisi's lifetime, and some materials precede it.

Arrangement

There are fifteen series in this collection: I. Holy Rosary Parish, 1921-1995; II. Private High Schools, 1940-1969; III. Public High Schools, 1892-1981; IV. Entertainment Event Programs, 1906?-1980?; V. Religious Pamphlets, Event Programs, and Newspaper Clippings, 1917-1994; VI. Political Events and Celebrations, 1961; VII. Regional History, 1953?-1995?; VIII. Informational Pamphlets, Booklets, and Maps for Cities, States, and Countries, 1945?-1980?; IX. Societies and Organizations, 1935-1958?; X. Technology and Business, 1942?-1972?; XI. School Supplies, 1924?-1949?; XII. Scrapbooks and Artwork, 1930?-1948?; XIII. Books, 1911-1962; XIV. Photographs, Postcards, and Drawings, 1925?-1994?; XV. Objects, 1961?-1970, undated.

Series I: Holy Rosary Parish, 1921-1995

Box 1

This series includes many pamphlets and booklets relating to events affiliated with the Holy Rosary Parish and its school. There are programs for several performances that were held in locations such as the Holy Rosary Auditorium and the school; some of these were put on by societies within the Holy Rosary Parish, including the Newman Fraternity, the Holy Name Society, and the Holy Rosary Altar Society. Most of these items were created in the 1930s, 1940s, or 1950s, but some are from as late as the 1980s. The series also contains pamphlets created for parish reunions; there are pamphlets for each of the annual reunions held between the first reunion in 1964 and the fifteenth reunion held in 1978. In addition, there are pamphlets for the fiftieth, seventy-fifth, and ninetieth anniversaries, which were held in 1954, 1979, and 1994, respectively. Other pamphlets describe events held in honor of priests as well as various worship services held at the Holy Rosary Church. The materials related to the school include graduation pamphlets, which are dated between 1949 and 1961, as well as notebooks listing the graduates of the Holy Rosary School from 1921-1950. In addition, there are materials related to the Holy Rosary Alumni Association and pamphlets for school performances, as well as a booklet for the eightieth anniversary of the Holy Rosary School; this took place in 1990. There is also a pamphlet for the Golden Anniversary of the Sisters of Notre Dame in this series. Guy Pennisi and his family members are mentioned in many of these pamphlets as members of the organizations, participants in performances, and sponsors of various events.

Series II: Private High Schools, 1940-1969

Box 2

This series consists of materials related to Central Catholic High School and Saint Mary's High School. There are pamphlets from Central Catholic commencement events that were held between 1940 and 1969. There are also pamphlets for performances and ceremonies held at the high schools, including a 1955 Saint Mary's graduation ceremony. The series also includes two Central Catholic handbooks from the mid-1950s and a Saint Mary's yearbook from 1955. Many members of the Pennisi family are mentioned as graduates of the high schools and participants in the performances.

Series III: Public High Schools, 1892-1981

Box 2

This series is comprised of graduation pamphlets from Lawrence High School, Lawrence Evening High School, Methuen Junior High School, and Methuen High School. The pamphlets for Lawrence High School range from 1892, 1955, and 1967, while the pamphlets for Lawrence Evening High School date from 1934 and 1936. The pamphlets for the Methuen schools are from 1975, 1979, and 1981. Several

Pennisi family members are mentioned as graduates.

Series IV: Entertainment Event Programs, 1906?-1980?

Box 2

This series consists of programs created for events such as plays and other stage performances, dances, lectures, concerts and musical performances, and art exhibits. There is also a program for a football game between Holy Cross and Boston College, a brochure for a zoo, and a booklet for an event called the Carnival of Nations. The materials cover a wide range of dates, but many are from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Many of the events were held in Lawrence, but some were held in other locations in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Series V: Religious Pamphlets, Event Programs, and Newspaper Clippings, 1917-1994

Box 2

The materials in this series relate to churches, religious groups, or other aspects of religion. There are pamphlets and event programs for parishes (not including Holy Rosary, as it has its own series), a pamphlet for a seminary, a prayer book, and pamphlets for the Campion Hall Jesuit retreat center. In addition, there are materials that relate to events held by various religious societies; these items date from the 1940s and 1950s. The series also includes items that relate to the Bon Secours Hospital, as well as others that relate to the Religious Venerini Sisters. Guy Pennisi is mentioned as writing a history of the Venerini sisters, and he and his family also bought space in one of the programs to congratulate the Venerini Sisters on their anniversary. Additionally, there are religious stories. Most of the items in this series date from the 1940s and the 1950s, but there are items from as early as 1917 and as late as 1994.

Series VI: Political Events and Celebrations, 1961

Box 2

The materials in this series are all related to John F. Kennedy. There is a Life Magazine issue that describes the inauguration of Kennedy in 1961, as well as two pamphlets and a booklet that were created for a birthday celebration for the president in 1961.

Series VII: Regional History, 1953?-1995?

Box 2

The materials in this series concern various aspects of the history of Lawrence and the surrounding region. Pamphlets, booklets, and a brochure contain information about Lawrence, and its mills in particular; there is also a calendar that includes images related to the history of the city. In addition, the series contains booklets about notable figures from the area, as well as booklets about the city of Methuen and the town of Plymouth, Massachusetts. The materials date from various years, with the earliest from 1953 and the latest from 1995.

Series VIII: Informational Pamphlets, Booklets, and Maps for Cities, States, and Countries, 1945?-1980?

Box 2

This series includes several different types of materials that serve the purpose of informing people about various aspects of cities, states, or countries. There are pamphlets and booklets that include information about Boston and Methuen, as well as a booklet featuring transportation laws for

Massachusetts and two packets of bus tickets. There are also maps of Lawrence and Methuen. In addition, there are booklets about Italy and Maine.

Series IX: Societies and Organizations, 1935-1958?

Box 2

This series consists of pamphlets, booklets, and a newspaper clipping related to various societies and organizations. The three groups represented by these items are the Boy Scouts, the Knights of Columbus, and the Sons of Italy. The Boy Scouts materials date to the 1930s and 1940s. A booklet of laws for the Knights of Columbus and a Sons of Italy Magazine issue date from the 1940s.

Series X: Technology and Business, 1942?-1972?

Box 2

This series consists of various items, including pamphlets, booklets, calendars, and a magazine; all of the materials relate to technology or business, and some relate to both. There are several calendars that feature advertisements for local businesses. There are also booklets featuring addresses of many Lawrence businesses; a map of Lawrence accompanies each of these booklets. There are additional items relating to small businesses in and around Lawrence. In addition, there are booklets relating to Western Electric's Merrimack Valley Works and General Electric. The Merrimack Valley Works items date from the late 1950s and 1960. The materials in this series date from various years between 1942 and 1972.

Series XI: School Supplies, 1924?-1949?

Box 2

This series includes several school notebooks, as well as a book cover. Three of the notebooks, as well as the book cover, do not have dates. Two of the notebooks have notes in them on the subjects of plane geometry and algebra. There are also two other notebooks with dates on them. The first has dates ranging from 1924 to 1926, and the other contains entries from 1948 and 1949. They have vocabulary words and dictations within them.

Series XII: Scrapbooks and Artwork, 1930?-1948?

Box 2

This series consists of two scrapbooks and various pieces of artwork. The artwork includes mostly religious images, and one appears to be a homemade Christmas card; a 1948 calendar is attached to this card. One of the scrapbooks is titled *Giubileo 1907-1932*, and has a picture of Christ on the cover. Within it are words in Italian next to cut-out images of flowers, children, mill workers, etc. The second scrapbook is called *My Duty* and contains artwork and images as well as sentences that seem to focus on healthy living.

Series XIII: Books, 1911-1962

This series consists of five books. One of the books was written in Italian. Two of the books are children's books; one of these two is religious in nature. In addition, there is a book about the seals of municipalities in Massachusetts, and another about Italian-Americans in the Commonwealth. The earliest book is from 1911, and the latest is from 1962. The books are now in the Lawrence History Center Library, as they have been taken out of the collection.

Series XIV: Photographs, Postcards, and Drawings, 1925?-1994?

This series consists of various types of images, including photographs, postcards, and drawings. Several of the photographs were taken at a large church or society events; these mostly date from the 1950s, but one is from 1961. Other photographs show groups of school graduates. In addition, there are a few photographs of Lawrence store fronts from 1968, an image of a priest, and a photograph of a drawing by Guy Pennisi. The postcards feature images of various locations, most of which are in the New England area, and feature correspondence among various people; several, but not all, of the correspondents are members of the Pennisi family. The series also includes an image of a drawing that was created to depict a new church building that was being proposed at the time. The original photographs, postcards, and drawings are in the Lawrence History Center Photograph Collection, as they have been taken out of the collection; however, photocopies can be found in box two of the collection.

Series XV: Objects, 1961?-1970, undated

Box 3

This series includes various objects. There are four pins in this series; three of these are John F. Kennedy campaign pins. Three unique objects include advertisements for local businesses; one includes a thermometer, another is a mirror, and the third is a calendar. The series also contains a small banner and a small white crucifix inside a brown case.