

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY  
HENRY MADDEN LIBRARY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

ROBERT CHITTENDEN  
COLLECTION, 1893, 1907-1910, 1933-1934 and undated  
(bulk 1907-1910)  
7.5 linear inches

ACQUISITION: The papers were donated by the daughter of June English.

ACCESS: The collection is open for research.

COPYRIGHT: Copyright has not been transferred to California State University, Fresno.

PROCESSED BY: Sabina Nizami, 2000.

## **Biography**

Robert D. Chittenden (1870-1938) served as Fresno's Sheriff from 1906 to 1910. Chittenden was born in Virginia in 1870. In 1887, he moved to Fresno, where he worked in the fruit business for several years. In 1902, Chittenden was nominated by the Democratic Party and served as public administrator for one term. In 1906, he was elected Sheriff of Fresno and served for four years. During his service, he dealt with some of the most notorious crimes of Fresno's early history.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Robert Chittenden collection measures 7.5 linear inches. The collection is arranged in four series: Personal, Crimes, Photographs and Miscellaneous. The materials in the collection date from 1907 to 1910 (except for the correspondence, dated 1933 to 1934 and one photograph dated 1893).

The **Personal** series (1907-1910, 1933-1934 and undated) contains personal correspondence, membership cards, promotional items for Chittenden and his office, some photographs of Chittenden and some invitations to executions, which took place in San Quentin Prison.

The **Crimes** series (1907-1910 and undated) contains information on a number of notable cases that took place during Chittenden's term as sheriff. Many of the photographs are not dated, but most likely originate from the early 1900s. The Brooks case involves a dispute between C.R. Brooks and L.C. Miller over the ownership of certain livestock. The Domengie kidnapping case file includes photographs of the victim, Edna Domengie, her residence, and where she was eventually found. The mug shots of her three kidnappers are also included, as well as photographs of their arrest. The Amado Mejia homicide file includes the photographs of the two victims, the crime scene, and the alleged murderer with his spouse and later photographs while he was in prison. The photographs contain little explanatory text. The Deputy Joe Price murder file is comprised of mug shots of the suspect, James Richardson, as well as his physical description that was included on the Wanted poster, along with a portion of the original poster. There are also several unidentified photographs in that file. The Ching Kay Sin homicide file contains a transcription of the trial originally found in the *Fresno Tribune* and photographs of the murder victim and crime scene. The Vernett homicide file contains a newspaper photograph of the alleged murderer, Charles Loper, photographs of where the victim's body was discovered, and a photograph of the victim's property. There is also a transcribed newspaper article from an unknown source describing Loper's trial and the correspondence between Loper and his parents while he awaited sentencing. The other case files are not as complete and contain little, if any, background information.

**Scope And Content** (cont.)

The **Photographs** series (1893, 1908, and undated) is mainly comprised of seven folders of mug shots. The mug shots in three of the folders include the name and the crime of the alleged perpetrator, and the photographs in four of the folders are unidentified. In addition, there are many photographs of the staff of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and a photograph of Sontag and Evans, dated June 1893.

The **Miscellaneous** series (1907-1910 and undated) contains an article on L.P Timmons, a Republican candidate who was running for the position of Sheriff of Fresno. The series also includes the report of the Public Administrator of Fresno County for the year 1906.

**Box no.   Description**

Box 1

**Personal**

Correspondence, 1907, 1933-1934  
Invitations, undated  
Executions, 1909-1910  
Membership Cards, 1907-1910, undated  
Personal Photographs, undated

**Crimes**

Famous cases  
Brooks Case, 1908-1910 and undated  
Domengie Kidnapping, 1908, 1910 and undated  
Amando Mejia Murder, undated  
Deputy Joe Price Murder, 1907 and undated  
Ching Kay Sin Murder, 1909 and undated  
Joe Vernet Murder, 1908-1909 and undated  
Newspaper clippings, 1907-1909 and undated

**Photographs**

Mug Shots  
Identified, undated (3 folders)

Box 2

Unidentified, undated (4 folders)  
Colton Train Wreck, 1907  
Fresno County Sheriff's Office, undated  
Fresno Relief and Information Bureau, undated  
Robbery, undated  
Sontag and Evans, 1893  
Miscellaneous photographs, 1905, 1908 and undated

**Miscellaneous**

General, 1907-1908, 1910 and undated  
L.P Timmons, undated