Baylor University. Baylor Collections of Political Materials

Summary Information

Creator
Pickett, Thomas Augustus (1906-1980)

Extent (quantity/size)
6 document boxes.

Language
English

Abstract
The Thomas A. Pickett Papers mostly span the years 1945-1952, and were compiled during Pickett’s career as a U. S. Representative for the 7th Congressional District of Texas. They include campaign materials, legislative records, and personal papers.

Subjects
Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.) / Legislative materials. / Legislators -- United States -- Archives. / Petroleum in submerged lands -- United States. / Pickett, Thomas Augustus -- Archives. / Railroad law -- United States. / Rivers -- Law and legislation -- Texas. / Speeches.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access and Use
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The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:
Thomas A. Pickett Papers, Accession #27, Box #, Folder #, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W. R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.

Processing Information
Described by Debra Todd and released on 2015-09-23.

Scope and Content
Material is present from Pickett’s tenure as a United States Representative for the 7th Texas Congressional District. Items represent Pickett’s service in the 79th through the 82nd Congresses. In his House tenure, Pickett served on the Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Administration Committee, and the Judiciary Committee. The collection documents Pickett’s congressional campaigns, his legislative interests in the Tidelands case, public works projects on the Neches, Angelinas, and Trinity Rivers, and railroad bankruptcy and its impact on Anderson County, Texas.

Administrative/Biographical History
Thomas A. Pickett was born on August 14, 1906, in Travis, Falls County, Texas. He lived briefly in Iola and then moved to Palestine, Texas with his family in 1913. He attended public schools there and graduated from Palestine High School in 1923. Pickett then attended Conway’s Business College and worked for one year in his father’s law office. He attended the University of Texas from 1924 to 1928. While in his first year at the university, he was elected freshman class president.
Following graduation, Pickett was admitted to the state bar and began practice in Palestine in 1929. Pickett served as Anderson County Attorney from 1931 until 1935. Next, he served as district attorney for the 3rd Judicial District from 1935 to 1945.

In his last year of district attorney, Pickett turned towards politics and ran for a seat in the House of Representatives. Having successfully, unseated incumbent Nat Patton in the Democratic primary, Pickett went on to defeat Republican J. Perrin Willis in the general election. He began his term as member of Congress, representing Texas’ 7th District on January 3, 1945. Pickett’s political successes continued in the subsequent elections of 1946, 1948, and 1950. Each time, running unopposed. In Congress, Pickett served on the House Public Works, Veterans Affairs, and Administration committees.

Pickett resigned from office on June 30, 1952 and was succeeded by John Dowdy in September 1952.

After public office, Pickett served as vice-president of the National Coal Association from 1952 until 1961 and the Association of American Railroads from 1961 to 1968. Pickett later moved to Florida in 1968.

Pickett died on June 7, 1980, in Leesburg, Florida

Related Resources
Related citations

Archival Arrangement
The Thomas A. Pickett Papers came to the Baylor Collection of Political Materials through the accession of the John V. Dowdy, Sr. Papers around 1972. John V. Dowdy, Sr. took Pickett’s seat in the U. S. House of Representatives, 7th Congressional District, following Pickett’s resignation in June of 1952. The Pickett Papers were removed and processed as a separate collection.

After an addition to the collection in Fall 2012, an updated topical arrangement was devised. Currently, there are 3 series: I. Campaigns II. Legislative Papers 3. Personal Papers. Within each series, material is arranged topically.

Series 1: Campaigns. 1944-1950, undated
Administrative/Biographical History
As a member of Congress from 1945 to 1952, Pickett ran in four successful campaigns. Items in this series include speech texts, radio spots, and press material.

Item List
Box 1. Folder 1. General, 1944-1950
Box 1. Folder 2. Opposition, 1944;1948
Box 1. Folder 3. Press, 1944-1950
Box 1. Folder 4. Radio Spots, 1948; 1950
Box 1. Folder 5. Speeches, 1944; 1950
Box 1. Folder 6. Topical, Korean War and Communism, undated

Series 2: Legislative. 1945-1968
Administrative/Biographical History
The Legislative series is the most robust series in the Pickett Papers and is arranged topically. From activity reports to his voting record, items reflect Pickett’s role as a representative of Texas’ 7th Congressional district. Casework documents individuals and veterans requesting assistance in obtaining pensions increases and disability compensation. Of note is a request for a Civil War Veteran’s headstone. Foreign affairs include about foreign policy in a post-World War II era and aid to Korea. Public Works materials chronicle Pickett’s support and work on projects such as Dams along the Neches-Angelina River, the Sabine Neches Waterway, and the need for flood control along the Trinity River. Also included is a proposal for the completion of the Rusk Charcoal Blast Furnace and Chemical Plant in Rusk, Texas, and the United States Department of the Interior. Also featured is Pickett’s legislation regarding printing of briefs for House of Representatives members about the steel seizure case. Pickett’s interest in the economic effects of railroad reorganization for the International-Great Northern Railroad Company (I.-G.N.) on his home district in Anderson County is included.
### Subseries 1. General. 1944-1950

**Inventory**

- Box 1. Folder 7. Activity Reports, 1948
- Box 1. Folder 8. Civil Rights, 1949
- Box 1. Folder 9. Floor Statements, 1950
- Box 1. Folder 10. Voting Record, 1944

### Subseries 2. Bills.

**Inventory**

- Box 1. Folder 11. Communists, HR 5331, 1951
- Box 1. Folder 13. Personal Relief, HR 1264, 5347, 1951
- Box 1. Folder 15. Servicemen’s Readjustment Act Amendment, HR 5884, 5885, 1952
- Box 1. Folder 16. Steel Seizure Court Documents, 1952
- Box 1. Folder 17. Taft-Hartley Act, 1947

### Subseries 3. Foreign Affairs.

**Inventory**

- Box 1. Folder 18. Aid, 1950
- Box 1. Folder 19. Armed Forces in Foreign Countries, 1951
- Box 1. Folder 20. Korea, 1950
- Box 1. Folder 21. Speech, undated

### Subseries 4. Railroads.

**Inventory**

- Box 2. Folder 1. House Judiciary Hearings, 1943; 1945; 1947
- Box 2. Folder 2. Interstate Commerce Commission, 1941; 1948
- Box 2. Folder 3. Railroad Bankruptcy, 1945
- Box 2. Folder 4. Railroad Bankruptcy, 1946
- Box 2. Folder 5. Railroad Bankruptcy, 1947
- Box 2. Folder 6. Palestine and Anderson County, 1946-1948

### Subseries 5. Projects, Dams, and Waterways.

**Inventory**

- Box 3. Folder 1. Neches and Angelina Rivers, Blackburn Dam, Correspondence, 1945-1947
- Box 3. Folder 5. Neches and Angelina Rivers, Rockland Dam, Correspondence, 1945
- Box 3. Folder 6. Neches and Angelina Rivers, Rockland Dam, Correspondence, 1946
- Box 3. Folder 7. Neches and Angelina Rivers, Rockland Dam, Correspondence, 1947
- Box 3. Folder 10. Rusk, Texas, Charcoal Blast Furnace, 1944
- Box 3. Folder 11. Rusk, Texas, Hardwood Distillation, 1942
- Box 3. Folder 12. Rusk, Texas, Iron Ore Deposits, 1944
- Box 3. Folder 13. Sabine-Neches Waterway, General, 1939; 1949
- Box 3. Folder 14. Sabine-Neches Waterway, Correspondence, 1945-1946; 1949
- Box 3. Folder 15. Sabine-Neches Waterway, Hearings, 1938; 1941
- Box 4. Folder 2. Trinity River, General, 1951-1952
- Box 4. Folder 3. Trinity River, Benbrook Dam, 1952
- Box 4. Folder 4. Trinity River, Bills and Reports, 1951-1952
- Box 4. Folder 5. Trinity River, Correspondence, 1946-1949
- Box 4. Folder 6. Trinity River, Lower Middle Cedar Creek Watershed 1948, 1948
Series 3: Personal. 1944-1951, undated

Administrative/Biographical History
Personal material features biographical information about Pickett including a resume and photograph. Miscellaneous personal correspondence is also present. Of note is Pickett’s “Century Vault Letter,” which was published in the San Antonio Express in 1949 and written by Pickett to readers 100 years in the future.

Item List
Box 6. Folder 1. Biographical, 1951; undated
Box 6. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1944-1951
Box 6. Folder 4. News Clippings, 1951
Box 6. Folder 5. News Clippings, 1949-1951

Series 4: Tidelands. 1947-1949

Administrative/Biographical History
Material relates to issue of submerged land rights in states and the ensuing Tidelands controversy and Supreme Court case. Publications, reports, and correspondence related to California and Texas Tidelands are present.

Item List
Box 5. Folder 1. General, Bills, 1947-1948
Box 5. Folder 2. General, Map, Federally Owned Lands, undated
Box 5. Folder 3. General, News Clippings, 1952
Box 5. Folder 4. General, Poem, undated
Box 5. Folder 5. General, Speech, undated
Box 5. Folder 6. California, General, 1948
Box 5. Folder 7. California, Correspondence, 1947
Box 5. Folder 9. California, Reports, “This Can Happen to Any State!” by Fred n. Howser, Attorney General of California, undated
Box 5. Folder 10. California, Supreme Court Case, 1948
Box 5. Folder 11. Texas, General, 1949
Box 5. Folder 12. Groups, Texas School Land Board, 1947
Box 5. Folder 20. Price Daniel, Attorney General of Texas, undated