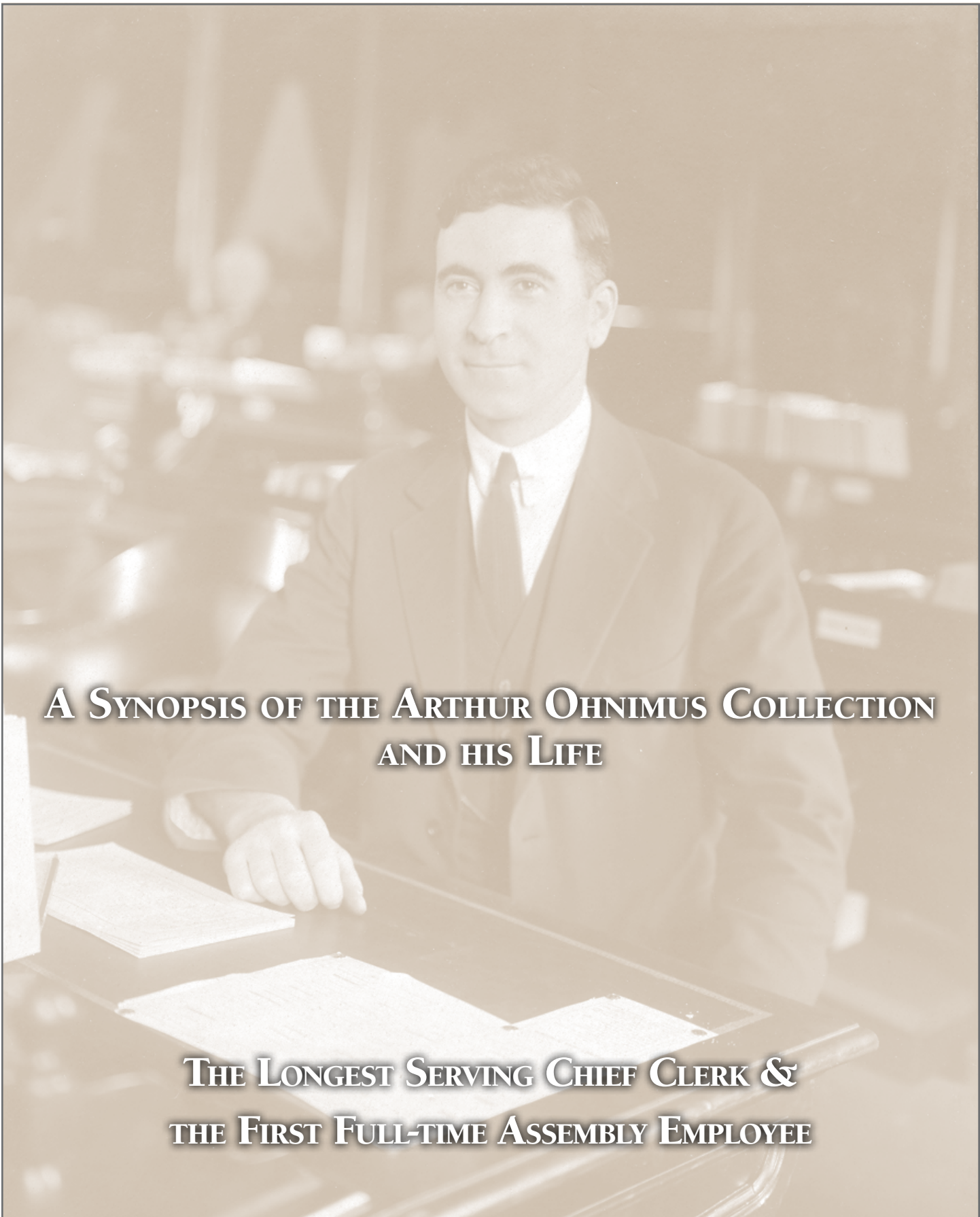




**ARTHUR A. OHNIMUS (1893-1965)**



**A SYNOPSIS OF THE ARTHUR OHNIMUS COLLECTION  
AND HIS LIFE**

**THE LONGEST SERVING CHIEF CLERK &  
THE FIRST FULL-TIME ASSEMBLY EMPLOYEE**



# California State Assembly

2007-2008 Regular Session

## THE UNVEILING OF THE ARTHUR OHNIMUS COLLECTION

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

12 noon

Assembly Chamber, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA

—  
*Hon. Fabian Núñez, Speaker of the Assembly, Presiding*

SESSION IS CALLED TO ORDER  
ADOPTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION  
INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Family Members of Bernice Wemple Ohnimus Crutcher

*Mr. Anson Crutcher, Jr. (stepson) and wife Lillian*

*Ms. Lindsay Kayser Hendricks (niece) and children Kyle and Luke*

*Dr. Dana Wemple (nephew) and wife Peggy*

*Ms. Nancy Wemple (niece) and daughter Cindy Hefrin*

*Dr. Steven Kayser (nephew) and wife Terri*

*Ms. Italene Allen (caregiver)*

Former and current Assembly members who served while  
Ohnimus was Chief Clerk / Chief Administrative Officer

*Hon. William Bagley*

*Hon. Mervyn Dymally*

*Hon. John T. Knox*

*Hon. Bob Monagan*

*Hon. Jerome Waldie*

Assembly Chief Clerk Hired by Ohnimus in 1963

*Mr. R. Brian Kidney (Chief Clerk 1988-1991)*

Assembly Fellow during the Ohnimus Era

*Hon. Ronald Robie (Assembly Fellow in 1961, Legislative staff in 1960s)*

VIEW VIDEO MONTAGE  
PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITOL MUSEUM EXHIBIT AND INTERNET WEB LINK  
ADJOURNMENT



# The Arthur Ohnimus Collection



Arthur Ohnimus graduated from St. Ignatius Law School in 1921. The school was later renamed University of San Francisco.

**Arthur Allen Ohnimus** (1893-1965) was the first full-time employee of the Assembly\* and the longest serving Assembly Chief Clerk in the history of California. Ohnimus served 45 years as an Assembly employee, 37 of those years as Chief Clerk. His wife Bernice was the daughter of Lassen County Assembly Member N.V. Wemple (served 1925-1929). Throughout their many years of marriage, Arthur and Bernice accumulated hundreds of historic documents and memorabilia and stored

them in their personal archives until Bernice died at age 94 in September 2007.

On November 2, 2007, the Bernice Ohnimus Crutcher Estate donated nine boxes of items to the Assembly Chief Clerk's office. The objects in the collection include Ohnimus's letter advocating for full-time Assembly personnel, the first Assembly employee manual, and documentation of the modernization of the house, including the installation of the electric voting system and public address system. Documents show Ohnimus supervised some of the first Assembly Fellows. Also included are letters from many historical figures:

General Douglas MacArthur  
General George Patton  
FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover  
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
President Harry S. Truman  
Caspar Weinberger  
Lobbyist Arthur Samish  
Astronaut Alan Sheppard  
Film-maker Cecil B. deMille  
Governors Merriam, Knight, Olson,  
Warren and Edmund Brown

Many CA Assembly Members, Speakers,  
and Senators from 1923 to 1963  
U.S. Chief Justice Charles Hughes  
U.S. Chief Justice Earl Warren  
U.S. Senator Thomas Kuchel  
U.S. Senator William Knowland  
Mayors of San Francisco and  
Los Angeles from 1920s to 1960s  
Judges throughout the state,  
including Stanley Mosk  
LA Times political editor Kyle Palmer  
SF Chronicle political editor Earl Behrens



Governor Edmund (Pat) Brown  
(Courtesy of the California State Library)

Based on a review of the collection, it appears that Ohnimus had close friendships with Earl Warren, Pat Brown, Arthur Samish, William Knowland, Goodwin Knight, Walter J. Little, journalists Kyle Palmer and Earl Behrens, and other key figures in California political history.

\* Prior to 1957, the Legislature's ability to employ staff was limited by the state constitution. The Legislature was first authorized to hire full-time staff after voters approved Proposition 14 in November 1956. The Assembly hired Ohnimus as its first Chief Administrator (CAO) in 1957. Ohnimus held the dual roles of CAO and Chief Clerk for several years thereafter.

## The Ohnimus Family and San Francisco

**Arthur Ohnimus** was a native San Franciscan and served as Deputy San Francisco District Attorney from 1924 to 1944, so his connections to San Francisco politicians were extensive. These “home-town” relationships may explain why the collection contains a large quantity of correspondence and news clippings focused on San Francisco politics from 1903 to the 1950s.

Arthur was born in San Francisco’s South of Market neighborhood in 1893, a neighborhood once referred to as “south of the slot.” South of the slot was a reference to the cable car slots that used to run down Market Street. He was raised in the Western Addition and attended Hearst Grammar School and Sacred Heart College. His father died when Arthur was a child.

The family was active in San Francisco civic and cultural circles in the late 19th Century and first half of the 20th Century. Arthur Ohnimus’s father, Louis Juan Ohnimus (1857-1903), was President of the San Francisco Civil Service Commission in 1902. His father was also Superintendent of the Woodward Gardens amusement park in the 1890s, where he oversaw the “Monarch” grizzly bear exhibit, the last live grizzly bear exhibited in California.

Arthur’s mother, Grace D. Ohnimus (born Grace D. Pierce, died in 1937), was an actress, civic leader, and managed the Stowe Lake Boat House in Golden Gate Park for over 30 years. His uncle, John Ohnimus, was a famous bohemian artist, mural and sign painter, and author. San Francisco Mayor E.E. Schmitz (who would later become infamous for his “shoot-to-kill” order to quell looting after the 1906 Earthquake) was a pall bearer at Louis Ohnimus’s funeral in April 1903.



Arthur Ohnimus (middle) at age 6 in San Francisco, 1899.

*His father was at one time the superintendent of the Woodward Gardens amusement park & later a S.F. city official, and his mother was manager of the Stowe Lake Boat House in Golden Gate Park for 30 years.*



The Woodward Gardens Amusement Park, San Francisco, 1881  
(Courtesy of California State Library)

## Ohnimus, Progressivism, and Bay Area Politics



Hiram Johnson (pictured left) spearheaded the Progressive movement in California in 1912.

*(Courtesy of California State Library)*

*Like Ohnimus, Johnson's political career began in the District Attorney's office in San Francisco. Ohnimus was an admirer of Johnson and his non-partisan style.*

**Arthur Ohnimus's** first known experience in politics was around 1914, when he campaigned for Progressive Party Assemblyman Nick Prendergast, who represented the Sunset District. The collection contains Ohnimus's essays in favor of Prendergast's bill addressing cruelty to animals (AB 798, 1917 session) and a eulogy honoring the Assemblyman in 1921. Ohnimus also served on the Executive Committee for the Wilson-Marshall Progressive Democratic League of San Francisco in the 1910s.

Based on correspondence spanning several decades, Ohnimus appears to have made many close friends in Bay Area political circles (e.g., Earl Warren, William Knowland, Pat Brown, etc.). Based upon letters in the collection, it appears Ohnimus may have played a role in the nomination of William Knowland (publisher of the Oakland Tribune) for the U.S. Senate when Senator Hiram Johnson died in 1945. Although Ohnimus was a registered Republican, he stressed his Progressive roots and nonpartisan leanings in a Sacramento Bee interview as he retired from the Assembly in 1963. He cited the iconic Progressive Hiram Johnson as his political hero and defended the cross-filing system as a cure to the ills of partisan politics.



Call Building in San Francisco, c. 1900  
*(Courtesy of California State Library)*



San Francisco City and Bay  
*(Courtesy of California State Library)*

## Ohnimus's Rise from Legislative Attaché to Chief Clerk

**Items in the collection** reveal that Ohnimus worked as a reporter for various newspapers in San Francisco during his younger years. He also wrote for the newsletter of the California Retail Grocers and Merchants Association. In 1915, Ohnimus was hired as the Assembly Insurance committee clerk. Working as a legislative attaché in Sacramento in that era was a part-time proposition, usually lasting a month or two. During this time, Ohnimus worked alongside fellow Assembly clerks Arthur Samish and Earl Warren; Samish would become arguably the most powerful lobbyist in California history; and Warren would become one of the most influential U.S. Chief Justices. Ohnimus apparently enjoyed legislative work, as he returned to the clerk's office the following session (1917), serving as a stenographer and as a bookkeeper. It was during this time that he also studied law at Saint Ignatius College in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Ohnimus continued moving up in the clerk hierarchy in Sacramento, serving as the Assistant Minute Clerk from 1919 to 1921. On January 3, 1921, the Assembly elected its first female Minute Clerk, Hattie Jewell Anderson. The following month, Ohnimus was elected Minute Clerk. It was during this session that the infamous "King Tax Bill" fight was waged, perhaps the fiercest legislative battle in California history. (This was an effort by Senator King to impose taxes on public utilities. This measure was vehemently opposed by corporations and the State Railroad Commission, which at the time regulated utilities.) As he was retiring in October 1963, Ohnimus cited the King Tax Bill episode as the most contentious session he had ever seen, even more contentious than the legendary "Unruh lockup" during the budget battle of July 1963.

On June 10, 1921, Ohnimus earned his law degree from Saint Ignatius. He was admitted to the State Bar on March 7, 1922 and by December 1922, he opened his law office at 530 Mills Building at Bush and Montgomery Streets in San Francisco. The Collection contains Ohnimus' diploma, law school year book, 1921 commencement program, and his law practice grand opening announcement. In January 1923, Ohnimus was elected Chief Clerk of the Assembly.



Ohnimus shown during the 1925 Session

*Earl Warren got his start as an Assembly clerk in the post-World War I era, alongside fellow clerks Arthur Ohnimus and Arthur Samish.*



Governor Earl Warren  
(Courtesy of California State Library)

## San Francisco District Attorney's Office (1924-1944)

**In 1924**, Ohnimus was hired by District Attorney Matthew Brady to work as a Warrant and Bond Clerk in the San Francisco Legal Department. In 1936, Ohnimus became a Criminal Attorney in the D.A.'s office (Ohnimus spent a total of 20 years in the D.A.'s office). When the legislature was in session, he would take a leave of absence to tend to legislative affairs in Sacramento. Several letters from Matthew Brady are contained in the collection. Ohnimus's legal career in San Francisco's District Attorney's office ended in late 1943, when he chose to move to Sacramento to accept a new legal job and to marry Bernice Wemple. Arthur married Bernice on December 27, 1943 in Santa Monica.



Assistant District Attorney Ohnimus (on left) in S.F. courtroom, circa 1930s.

*Prior to 1957, the Chief Clerk's job was part-time, so Ohnimus maintained full-time employment as Assistant D.A. of San Francisco from 1924-1944, and as Deputy Attorney General from 1944-1957.*

## Deputy Attorney General (1944-1957)

**In January 1944**, Democratic Attorney General Robert W. Kenny appointed Arthur Ohnimus as a Deputy Attorney General. Kenny was an early advocate of civil rights in California. Ohnimus served as a deputy under Attorneys General Robert W. Kenny (1943-47), Frederick Howser (1947-51), and Edmund G. "Pat" Brown (1951-59). The Collection contains numerous letters from each of these men.



Caspar Weinberger and Arthur Ohnimus, 1954.  
(Courtesy of Sacramento Bee)

*Assembly Member Caspar Weinberger introducing a bill in 1954. Ohnimus (on right) and Weinberger (on left) were both San Francisco attorneys. Weinberger became U.S. Secretary of Defense in 1981.*

## Ohnimus as Chief Clerk & Chief Administrative Officer

**The collection** offers an insider's view of Ohnimus's role as a legislative officer during a time of great change in the legislature. During his 37 years as Chief Clerk, Arthur Ohnimus oversaw the transition of the legislature from a weak, part-time institution often beholden to the Governor and lobbyists, with a few temporary clerks and stenographers, to a more independent, modern, hybrid body with thousands of bill introductions, increasingly complex legislation, and expanding staff levels (reaching over 500 session-related staff in the late 1950s).

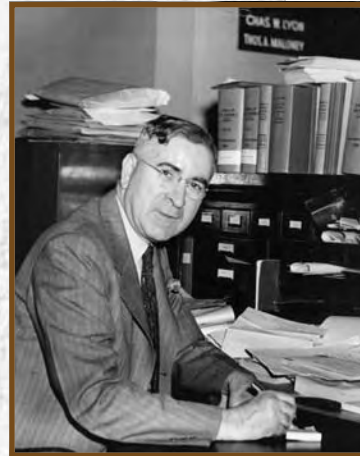
Ohnimus oversaw the modernization of the legislative process, including the Assembly's first electronic voting system in 1935 and the first public address system. He supervised some of the house's first Assembly Fellows and saw the addition of the Capitol Annex 1948-52. Numerous articles in the collection highlight the changes the legislature underwent during Ohnimus's administration of the house.

During his career, Ohnimus managed all Assembly employees and was appointed as the first Chief Administrative Officer of the Rules Committee in 1957. It was at this time that he resigned as Deputy Attorney General to take on the full-time duties as Chief Clerk and Chief Administrator. As the house's parliamentary expert, he managed the Assembly's transition from *Robert's Rules of Order* to Mason's *Manual of Legislative Procedure*. In a November 1958 report entitled *The Necessity for a More Permanent Organization*, Ohnimus argued for a full-time legislative staff to cope with the expanding population of the state. This was 9 years before Proposition 1a was placed on the ballot to make California the first state to employ a full-time legislature.

As Chief Administrator, he organized the staff of the house for the first time in history. He created job classifications, personnel manuals, and a secretarial pool. Ohnimus also supervised some of the first Assembly Fellows, including James Driscoll and Stuart Hall. Many of the Assembly Fellows in the early years were assigned to Ohnimus's staff at the Assembly Desk. Driscoll would remain on the Chief Clerk's staff and, 6 years later, would be selected as Chief Clerk when Ohnimus retired.

Ohnimus at his desk in the Assembly Chamber, circa 1943.

*Prior to construction of the Capitol Annex, the desk of the Chief Clerk was located in the Chamber.*



Retiring clerk Ohnimus reviewing rules with incoming clerk Driscoll in 1963. (Courtesy of Sacramento Bee) Driscoll was a member of the first class of Assembly Fellows in 1957.



## Ohnimus as Chief Clerk (Cont.)



Ohnimus in front of vote tally board, circa 1955.

*Ohnimus oversaw the modernization of the legislative process, including the Assembly's first electric voting device in 1935.*

In the Fall of 1963, Speaker Unruh and former Speaker Lincoln coordinated a surprise “vacation fund” for Arthur Ohnimus as a retirement gift, asking current and former legislators, friends, and co-workers, to contribute \$10 each. The Collection contains a stack of letters from the scores of people that replied to Unruh’s call for donations.

Although Ohnimus retired in 1963, his expertise was still needed to revise the Assembly Rules. So, in 1964, the Assembly Rules Committee contracted with Ohnimus for \$1,500 to re-write the Assembly Rules. He fell ill shortly after he completed his report in March 1964. He died one year later, on March 13, 1965.



Ohnimus at the Assembly Desk in the late 1940s.

## Ohnimus and “The San Francisco School of Politics”

**The San Francisco Bay Area** political “machines” of the early 20th Century were dubbed by pundits as “The San Francisco School of Politics.” As mentioned previously, these Bay Area political dynamics produced such notable officials like Hiram Johnson, Pat Brown, Earl Warren, and William Knowland. Upon Ohnimus’s retirement in 1963, a newspaper columnist noted that this “School of Politics” never graduated Ohnimus to higher office. Instead, Ohnimus quietly served as a confidante, mentor, and sometimes tutor to many of the great -and not so great- political figures in California history. In the end, he was not unlike the violet he wrote of in a poem: “They bud alone, in solitude they fade unseen.”

Arthur and Bernice Ohnimus, circa 1960.  
Bernice was 20 years younger than Arthur  
and lived 42 years after Arthur’s death in 1965.



### *The Violet* -by Arthur Ohnimus

Buried in foliage green  
The sweetest flowers are seldom seen,  
Hidden far from human sight  
They live their simple, perfumed life.  
Rarely seen, even by the prying sunbeam  
They bud alone, in solitude they fade unseen.

## Events of Interest Documented in the Collection



Assembly in Session, c. 1920s.  
(Courtesy of the  
California State Library)

### ***Events of 1925***

In 1925, the legislature was the subject of California newspaper headlines. Several legislators and two legislative officers were implicated in a scheme to defeat a bill that would have regulated Chinese herbal medicine. An investigation was held and the legislative officers were censured. The Assembly later reversed the action and cleared both men of any wrongdoing.

### ***Ohnimus's Career Aspirations***

Like many attorneys, Arthur Ohnimus hoped to serve as a judge. In 1943, 92 legislators signed a petition asking the Governor to appoint Ohnimus to fill a judicial vacancy in San Francisco, but the appointment had already been made. Despite his numerous political connections, his legal experience, and his expertise in legislative matters, Ohnimus never attained a judicial appointment.



Ohnimus presiding over session, c. 1940s.

### ***Chief Clerk's Nonpartisan Status Established***

In 1936, a new majority was elected to the California Assembly. It was proposed that Ohnimus would remain as Chief Clerk but his staff would be replaced. Ohnimus withdrew his name for consideration as Chief Clerk and returned to San Francisco to focus on his job as Assistant District Attorney. Ohnimus's steadfast opinion that the office should be nonpartisan guided his decision. In 1941, Speaker Gordon Garland reinstated Ohnimus as Chief Clerk. Today, the Chief Clerk's office continues to be a nonpartisan office.

### ***1949 Artie Samish Article***

In August 1949, *Colliers Weekly* magazine published an article highlighting the career of powerful California lobbyist (and former assistant Assembly clerk) Artie Samish. In response to the public outcry, the Assembly adopted a resolution to ban Samish from the Capitol and passed a law requiring lobbyists to register and report their financial activities.

# Ohnimus Collection: Historical Treasures

**The legislature** is the major theme that runs through most of this collection. Rare items include:

- Memos** and documents re: legislative operations, need for full-time legislative staff
- Parliamentary** manuals, legislative documents, and books dating to 1896
- Handwritten** Assembly payroll ledgers
- Complete** collection of Legislative Handbooks dating 1913 to 1960s
- Campaign** flyers dating to 1903
- Assembly** personnel manual for secretaries, 1957
- Personal** correspondence related to politics
- Photographs of** members, legislative offices and chamber dating to 1920s
- "Legislative Ball"** dance cards from 1920s to 1940s
- Inaugural** ceremony programs
- Hand-sewn** dress and jacket made from the drapes hanging in the Assembly Chamber (hand made by Nadene Kayser)
- Hundreds of** clippings from San Francisco and other California newspapers and Native Sons of the Golden West newsletters

The Ohnimus Collection also includes magazines, books, photos, telegrams, postcards, holiday cards, etc. The bulk of the Collection consists of hundreds of pieces of correspondence from 1911 to 1964. Most of the letters are legislative business, some are personal, and some are a mix of both. Some of the correspondence is intriguing and insightful.

Ohnimus also created his own political scrapbooks that cover the 1920s through the 1950s. These scrapbooks contain news clippings, campaign materials, dance cards, etc. relating to the legislature, politics, and Native Sons of the Golden West (he was President of the San Francisco chapter). Additionally, the Collection contains a reel-to-reel audio tape of Ohnimus being interviewed by Assemblyman Jack Beaver on KCAL radio in the late 1950s. In the interview, Ohnimus discusses the customs of the Assembly, the history of women in the Assembly, how legislators have changed over time, and his job as Chief Clerk.

*The contents of the Collection have only been briefly examined at this time. Plans are underway to ensure that the materials are thoroughly studied, preserved, and shared with researchers.*

*Note: all photos in this pamphlet were scanned from the Ohnimus Collection, except where noted. This pamphlet is for educational purposes.*



Capitol Building, c. 1890s.  
(Courtesy of the California State Library)

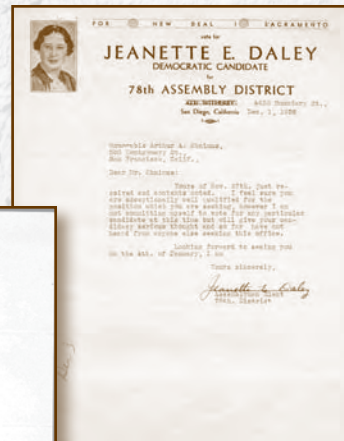
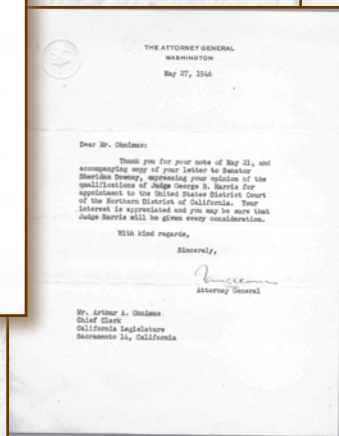
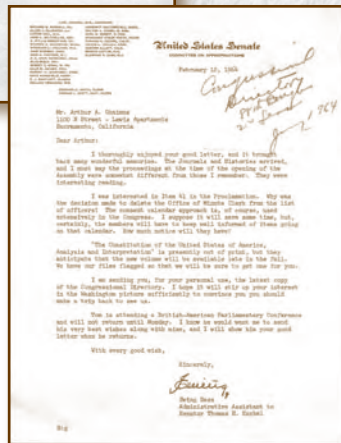
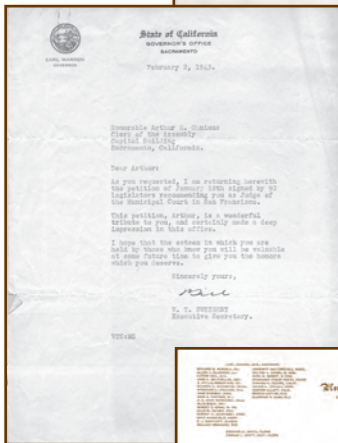
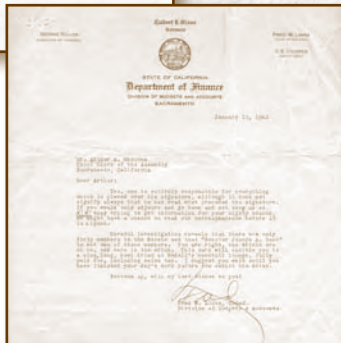
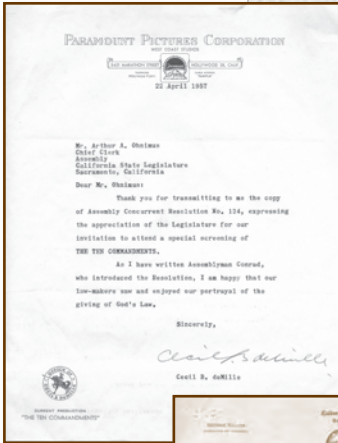


Sacramento in early 1900s.  
(Courtesy of the California State Library)

# Samples from the Ohnimus Collection

The Collection contains hundreds of letters, telegrams, and cards from important state and national figures.

What follows is a small sampling of letters sent to Arthur Ohnimus during his long career.



## Letter from U.S. General Douglas MacArthur

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

9 March 1945

Dear Mr. Ohnimus:

I cannot tell you how deeply moved I was to receive a copy of the Resolution passed by the Assembly of the State of California on my birthday.

I think of all days of a man's life, no matter however humble or however great he may be, that one holds for him the most poignant memories of his entire existence. It is redolent with reverent thoughts of Mother, of Father, and of home. My connection with California has been of such a nature that I can truly say that that great State falls within the third of these categories. To hear from home in such a way and on such a day fills me with a fullness of gratitude that comes to few men. It will tend to comfort and assist me in future hours of lonely night vigil which always precede moments of momentous tactical decisions on which depend not only countless human lives but on occasions even the life of a nation.

With deepest and most respectful thanks to the Assembly,

Faithfully yours,

  
DOUGLAS MacARTHUR

Mr. Arthur A. Ohnimus,  
Chief Clerk,  
California Legislature Assembly,  
Sacramento 14, California

*Letter from director Cecil B. DeMille*

PARAMOUNT PICTURES CORPORATION

WEST COAST STUDIOS



22 April 1957

Mr. Arthur A. Ohnimus  
Chief Clerk  
Assembly  
California State Legislature  
Sacramento, California

Dear Mr. Ohnimus:

Thank you for transmitting to me the copy of Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 124, expressing the appreciation of the Legislature for our invitation to attend a special screening of THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

As I have written Assemblyman Conrad, who introduced the Resolution, I am happy that our law-makers saw and enjoyed our portrayal of the giving of God's Law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cecil B. deMille".

Cecil B. deMille



CURRENT PRODUCTION  
"THE TEN COMMANDMENTS"

CBdM/plk

*Letter from U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 8, 1943

My dear Mr. Ohnimus:

Please accept my thanks for your kindness in sending to me a copy of House Resolution No. 77 adopted by the Assembly of the State of California. I shall be greatly obliged if you will tell the members of the Assembly how deeply grateful I am for the loyal attitude manifested by them.

Very sincerely yours,



Honorable Arthur A. Ohnimus,  
Chief Clerk,  
California State Legislature,  
Assembly Chamber,  
Sacramento, California.



*Letter from U.S. President Harry Truman*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

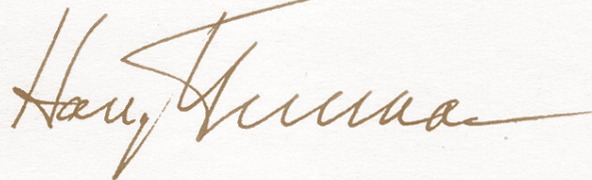
January 25, 1949

Dear Mr. Ohnimus:

Please accept my thanks for your telegram of January twenty-first embodying House Resolution No. 55 adopted by the Assembly of the State of California.

I should like the members of the Assembly to know that I appreciate immeasurably their tribute in honor of Inauguration Day. It gives me profound satisfaction to realize that this body of legislators is supporting me with confidence and good will. Such an assurance is a tremendous help in meeting the responsibilities entrusted to me by the American people.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Harry Truman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Honorable Arthur H. Ohnimus,  
Chief Clerk of the Assembly,  
California Legislature,  
Sacramento 14,  
California.

## Letter from Artie Samish

ARTHUR H. SAMISH • 400 MONTGOMERY STREET • SAN FRANCISCO 4

MARCH 25, 1958.

Mr. Arthur H. Ohnimus,  
California Assembly,  
3196 State Capitol,  
Sacramento, California.

Dear Arthur:

It's good to be home again. It's even better to be able to renew a friendship which was so sadly disrupted some months ago.

One of the nicest feelings of all is the knowledge that you remained loyal while I was away. My deepest appreciation to you for your "welcome home" message.

Life doesn't stand still. It didn't for you, I am sure. Perhaps it didn't stand still for me either, even though it seemed that it did. Of course it will take a little time for me to get my thoughts in order and determine exactly what I want to do in the weeks and months to come.

In the meantime I am looking forward to the time when I can greet you in person and grasp your hand in affectionate regard. That day will truly be a wonderful one.

My health is excellent; my spirits have never been more exuberant; my ambition is unbounded; and my affection for you has never been warmer.

Again my thanks to you, my friend, for having stood by so steadfastly in the face of adversity. .

Most sincerely,

  
ARTHUR H. SAMISH

AHS:r

TELEPHONE  
EXBROOK  
2 - 1390

Letter from U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren

Supreme Court of the United States  
Washington 25, D. C.

October 16, 1963

CHAMBERS OF  
THE CHIEF JUSTICE

Honorable Arthur A. Ohnimus,  
Chief Clerk,  
Assembly, California Legislature,  
3165 State Capitol,  
Sacramento 14, California.

Dear Arthur:

I have your letter of October 3rd, and appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing me about my remarks at the convention of the State Bar of California.

I would have been negligent, indeed, if I had not mentioned you amongst those with whom I was associated with in the Government of California. I recall with much satisfaction our association during those years, and welcomed the opportunity to pay a just tribute to you.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

*Earl*

*Arthur:  
and please pardon the delay.  
Crisis after crisis have made me  
sidetrack my personal correspondence  
for official business.*

U.S. Department of Justice letter during World War II

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL"  
AND REFER TO  
INITIALS AND NUMBER

CTL-JMM

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

June 17, 1943

3357-  
312  
a g 5/5

The Clerk  
California State Assembly  
Sacramento, California

Dear Sir:

I would appreciate your cooperation in obtaining any hearings on legislation recently passed by the California Legislature, concerning the filing of translations of news stories by California newspapers, printed in the language of an enemy nation. I noticed in the New York Times of June 15, 1943, that a bill providing for the filing of translations with the district attorney of the county of publication has been approved by Governor Warren. It is stated in the New York Times that at committee hearings on the bill "it was charged that some foreign-language papers in the State followed the enemy propaganda 'line' even after Pearl Harbor".

Your cooperation in making available copies of any hearings on this matter will be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Jesse A. MacKnight  
Chief, Organizations and Propaganda  
Analysis Section  
Special War Policies Unit-War Division



Page from a Native Sons of the Golden West newsletter in the 1920s, highlighting Ohnimus's life.

# The El Dorado



OFFICIAL ORGAN OF EL DORADO PARLOR No. 52, N. S. G. W.

VOL. II.

AUGUST, 1927

No. 8

## WHO'S WHO IN THE PARLOR

### Arthur A. Ohnimus

It wouldn't do for us to go any farther with these little biographies on the parlor's members without including our illustrious brother, Arthur Ohnimus. Arthur happened into our confines the other night and we seized the opportunity of interviewing him.

He tells us that he was born in this city, down "south o' the slot," and raised in the Western Addition. He attended Hearst Grammar and Sacred Heart College, and also is a graduate of St. Ignatius College, where he studied law and later passed the bar examination. Before taking up the study of law, Arthur had quite a varied experience such as starting out by selling newspapers and later being a clerk in an office. Having a desire for the newspaper profession, we find that he spent quite a few years in reporting for mostly all the papers in San Francisco. It was during the latter part of his newspaper experience that he studied law. He is now an Assistant District Attorney under Matthew Brady. Arthur also enjoys the distinguished position of Chief Clerk of the Assembly of the State of California. This position he has held for quite a few years, having started as a minute clerk.

Brother Ohnimus has always been an active member of the parlor until the past two years, in which he found his outside duties kept him out of town for long periods. He is Past President and has been a delegate to several Grand Parlors. While going through the chairs Arthur brought in a great many new members, some of whom have been some of the parlor's most active members. He is better remembered by a lot of the boys of a few years ago as being one who could keep the parlor a-buzz with action.

His hobby, as far as we can judge, is doing favors for friends.

You may be next!

Mail your Post Card now.

## SANTA CRUZ CELEBRATION

As the Ninth of September draws near, El Dorado Parlor's plans for the Celebration at Santa Cruz are about complete. All that is necessary to insure the success of the plans as worked out by the committee is the presence of each and every Brother in the Parlor at Santa Cruz. You, as a loyal Native Son, owe it to your state to turn out and celebrate her anniversary. It is a duty not one of us should shirk.

The parade, as usual, will be the most colorful part of the Celebration. El Dorado Parlor will participate in this parade. The uniform we have selected is neat and inexpensive. It consists of dark pants, white shirt, a straw or Panama hat and a Gold necktie. The neckties will be purchased by the committee and sold to the members at a very small cost. We are having hat bands printed with the name of the Parlor on them. These bands can be pinned over the present one on your straw or Panama hat. We will also carry canes which will be furnished by the Parlor. The very small cost of this uniform leaves you no excuse for not parading. We expect to see you in the line of march. El Dorado Parlor has always made a good showing, let us not fall down this year.

Immediately following the parade we will meet in the Swiss Hotel where a lunch will be served. Another article in this issue contains full details about this luncheon.

Our headquarters will be in the Casino, where we will all meet and join in an evening of dance and entertainment. Seventeen other San Francisco Parlors will also have their headquarters here, so there will be plenty of excitement. Don't go home after the parade, stay and participate in the fun at the Casino.

We are enclosing a return postcard asking whether you will be in the parade or not and also whether you will attend the luncheon after the parade. Fill it in now and drop it in the mail box. The time is short.

We will meet in front of the Swiss Hotel at 10 a. m.

Don't forget to mail Postal.

**First page of a petition signed by 92 legislators, asking Governor Warren to appoint Ohnimus as a judge.**

2927

Sacramento, California.  
January 18th, 1943.

Hon Earl Warren,  
Governor,  
State Capitol,  
Sacramento, Calif.

RECEIVED  
JAN 18 1943  
REGISTERED

Dear Governor Warren:-

The death of Judge Hugh L. Smith of the Municipal Court of the City and County of San Francisco on Saturday January 16th, 1943 leaves a vacancy in that office which will give to the Governor the appointment of a Judge to that Court.

We the undersigned submit the name of Arthur A. Ohnimus, to the Governor for appointment to the office of Judge of the Municipal Court of the City and County of San Francisco. Arthur A. Ohnimus has occupied the position of Assistant District Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco for the past 20 years; has for over a period of 25 years been identified with the Assembly, being its Chief Clerk for 8 sessions, and having by his uniform courtesy and fairness endeared himself to all its members.

Charles W. Lyon.  
Lee & Barber

Harrison W. Cole

John W. Evans

Clayton A. Hills

Ernest E. Davis

R. Fred Pencil

Frederic Weyher

L. Don Field

Jacob M. Leonard

Prof. J. Kelly

W. M. Colchist

J. S. Crichton

Lawrence O'Connell

Nelson Dilworth

Sam Collins

Arthur W. Robertson

*Letter from U.S. General George S. Patton during World War II*

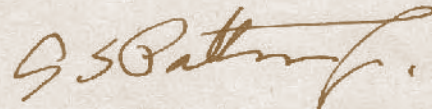
Green Meadows  
Hamilton, Massachusetts  
27 June 1945

Honorable Arthur A. Ohnimus  
Chief Clerk, California Legislature  
Sacramento 14, California

My dear Ohnimus:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 4th, which, owing to my rapid movements, only reached me today. Naturally I am unable to accept your generous offer.

Truly yours,



G. S. PATTON, Jr.  
General, USA

*Letter of recommendation from  
Assembly Speaker Frank Merriam in 1926*

FRANK F. MERRIAM  
SPEAKER

HOME ADDRESS:  
P. O. BOX 344  
LONG BEACH, CAL.



**Assembly**  
**California Legislature**

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

1925

December 15th, 1926

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. Arthur A. Ohnimus served most acceptably as Chief Clerk of the California Assembly during the fourth-fifth and forty sixth Sessions, and it is a pleasure to commend him and his work.

As Speaker of the Assembly during these two Sessions, I had occasion to observe his work and to know intimately of his service. He was industrious, always having his work well in hand, thoroughly acquainted with the details of his office, most helpful and willing at all times. I am glad to set forth these facts in the hope that they may be beneficial to a loyal public servant.

Very sincerely,



Frank F. Merriam  
Speaker of the Assembly



*Letter and pass from the City and County of San Francisco, inviting Ohnimus to the founding meetings of the United Nations in 1945*

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DONALD W. CLEARY  
LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

HOTEL SENATOR  
SACRAMENTO *CA*, CALIFORNIA 9

April 23, 1945

Mr. Arthur A. Ohnimus  
Chief Clerk  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California

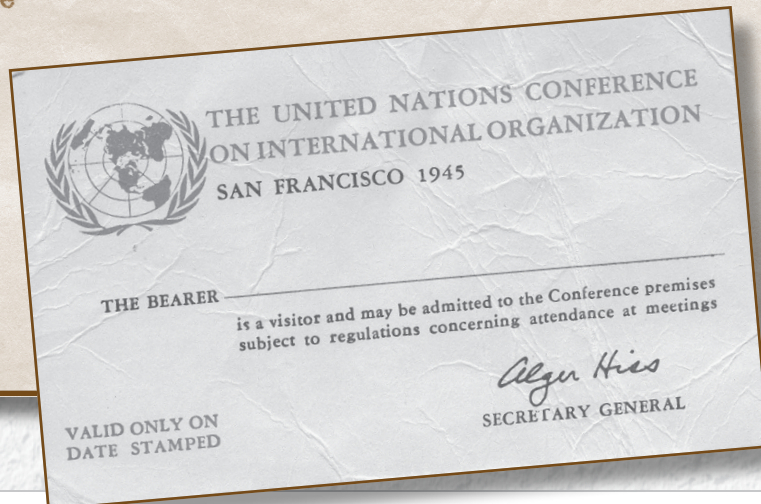
I am enclosing two tickets and 2 police passes for the Fourth Plenary Session of the United Nations Conference on International Organization scheduled to be conducted Friday, April 27 at 3 p.m. in the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco.

Those in charge of the Conference request that you be seated by 2:30 p.m. if possible. They have informed me that no person not having a police pass will be admitted through the police lines. Conference officials further state that the time and date of the Fourth Plenary Session is subject to change. If any change is made you will be advised.

Cordially,

*Donald W. Cleary*  
Donald W. Cleary

Enclosure  
DWC :mw



Letter from Ohnmius's mentor/teacher in 1917, encouraging Arthur to pursue his law degree

St. Joseph's Academy

JUNIOR DEPARTMENT OF  
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE  
PERALTA PARK  
TELEPHONE BERKELEY 1133

Berkeley, Cal., Aug 29, 1917

My Dear Arthur,

Your letter addressed to me at St. Vincents was forwarded to me here where I have been located for the past year.

I, surely, am pleased to learn of your success and to know that you are ambitious for greater things. Stay with it, and you will certainly reach the goal you are striving for. It is pleasant to know that one so young has so much earnestness and determination in his make-up.

You have by your good showing in your studies helped me also as my name attached to your recommendations is now good to help others. Your good mother must be delighted with her boy also.

I shall take pleasure in hearing of your triumphs each year and when you graduate and become a link of the Law I hope to be there to extend congratulations in person.

In the meantime continue to study hard and

BE GOOD.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Triumph

N. B. My Address



*Designed and Printed by Assembly Reprographics  
Photographs courtesy of Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center, Sacramento Bee,  
the California State Library–California History Room, and the Ohnimus Collection.*