

Guide to the Burton D. Sanborn Collection – 2014.53

Reference code US CoGrCGM 2014.53
Title Burton D. Sanborn Collection
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Finding aid prepared by Katalyn Lutkin

Name and location of repository Hazel E. Johnson Research Center
Greeley History Museum
714 8th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
Phone: (970) 336-4187
Email: museums@greeleygov.com
URL: <http://greeleymuseums.com/>

Collection Summary

Dates 1888-1987
Bulk dates 1907-1912
Level of description Collection
Extent .50 cubic feet
Creator(s) Burton Davis Sanborn and George Meredith Houston, et. al.

Administrative/Biographical History

Biographical note of Burton Davis Sanborn

Burton Davis Sanborn was born November 1, 1859 in Hardwick, Vermont to John Franklin and Jennie N. (Davis) Sanborn. In 1870 the Sanborn family came West with Nathan Meeker and settled in the Union Colony, where John Sanborn is credited as being the first to pitch a tent in the Union Colony. When Meeker went to work at the White River Indian Agency, Sanborn was offered a position teach the Ute Indians how to irrigate their farms according to western practices. Sanborn, however, declined to go because of his father's recent death. Sanborn married Carrie Bassett (1858-1926) and together they had three children: Gladys Phylabe (1884-1922), Carl Bassett (1887-1960), and Philo Houston (1901-1964).

Burton D. Sanborn's career greatly shaped the Northern Colorado landscape and he is credited with creating the Northern Colorado Irrigation Project and Fossil Creek Reservoir. He was also instrumental in securing land and water for irrigating Greeley and the surrounding area, including Boyd Lake in Loveland. He also helped Freelan O. Stanley purchase land in Estes Park, including the land on which the Stanley Hotel and numerous other buildings currently

stand. In 1901 Sanborn and investors from the Greeley and Fort Collins area bought what become known as the North Poudre Irrigation Company.

Burton D. Sanborn died in Greeley on July 21, 1914 shortly after a trip to see Boyd Lake with his family.

Biographical note of George Meredith Houston

George Meredith Houston was born September 23, 1872 to Mr. and Mrs. Harvey J. Houston in Troy Ohio. The Houston family moved from Ohio to Iowa then to Otis, Colorado. At the age of 17, George came to Greeley by himself on Sunday, March 22, 1890. George was the first male student of Colorado State Normal School and graduated in June of 1893. From 1893 to 1894 he taught at the school in Otis and then came back to join Burton D. Sanborn in the real estate firm Sanborn had just opened. In 1907 he married Burton Sanborn's daughter, Gladys Sanborn, and together they had one daughter, Phylabe Elizabeth. Gladys died in 1922 and George remarried Maud Harisburg on October 21, 1926.

George was mayor of Greeley from 1909 to 1910 and was on the board of trustees of Colorado State College from 1909 to 1915. In 1934 he decided to run for Senate. In the 1934 elections he ran on the Democratic ticket and won, serving as a Colorado Senator from 1935 to 1939. While in office he authored and helped pass a Colorado sales tax program. In 1936 and 1937 Houston was the first director of public welfare for Weld County. During his life he also engaged in wheat farming and became an expert in irrigation principles and land development. For a time, he worked as Secretary of the Mountain States Beet Growers Association and played an instrumental part in laying out the town of Wellington. Along with Burton D. Sanborn, Houston is credited with creating the Northern Colorado Irrigation Project and Fossil Creek Reservoir.

George Houston died on April 19, 1968 in Greeley and was a Greeley resident for 78 years.

Brief History of North Poudre Irrigation Company

The North Poudre Irrigation Company started out as an idea called the North Poudre Ditch. In June of 1878 the idea became a reality with the North Fork Irrigation Canal, started by local businessmen William C. Stover, John C. Matthews, Alfred F. Howes, and Henry C. Peterson. A few months later Ledru R. Rhodes and James Galloway joined the company, consequently renamed the North Fork Irrigation Company. A few years later the business changed again, and John Mason, John C. Abbott, and John C. Matthews filed the company as the North Poudre, Box Elder and Lone Tree Canal Company.

In 1880 Francis L. Carter-Cotton incorporated the struggling company as the North Poudre Land, Canal, and Reservoir Company. His intention was to build an irrigation ditch on the land north of Fort Collins. He acquired investors from Traveler's Insurance Company in Connecticut as well as the Colorado Mortgage and Investment Company of London. However, by 1886 Carter-Cotton defaulted on loans with the investors. Rather than pay them what he owed, he left the country along with a still-struggling company and a partially completed ditch.

In 1896, F.C. Grable and the National Land and Irrigation Company bought what was then the North Poudre Land and Canal Company. Grable and the company became an active and successful irrigation developer in Larimer County. Two years later the company went into receivership and was passed to Thomas Bradley from Philadelphia.

In 1901 Burton D. Sanborn and investors from the Greeley and Fort Collins area bought the company and reorganized it one last time. By 1902 the company was known as the North Poudre Irrigation Company. Sanborn and his investors built reservoirs in order to keep water flowing when they needed it. Sanborn is credited with creating the Fossil Creek Reservoir, and in 1902 it was the largest storage reservoir in Northern Colorado with its ability to hold up to 350,000,000 cubic feet of water. When Sanborn bought the company he understood the need to adapt, which led to its successes at the turn of the century. Along with building reservoirs, North Poudre Irrigation Company supported the development of the Fort Collins Sugar Factory. The company is still in existence today, and as of 1993 it was irrigating a total of 35,000 acres.

Biographical note of Phylabe Elizabeth Houston

Phylabe Elizabeth Houston was born in 1910 in Greeley to George Meredith and Gladys Phylabe (Sanborn) Houston. She graduated from the University of Northern Colorado. In the 1970s she donated land that her father had annexed during his time as mayor of Greeley to the city in honor of her father. The land is currently known as G.M. Houston Gardens. Phylabe died in 1987.

Biographical note of Bruce F. Johnson

Bruce F. Johnson was born on December 13, 1834 in Henderson, New York. He graduated from Union Academy at Bellville, NY and went to Van Raenessiar Polytechnic to be a civil engineer. He was married to Alice M. Gill (1848-1935). For some time Bruce was involved with the freighting business as well as cattle ranching after he went West in 1859. In 1864 he was county commissioner. While living in Greeley he helped organize the Union (National) Bank and helped secure the site of Colorado State Normal School, now the University of Northern Colorado. Socially, he was involved with the Occidental Lodge No. 20, A.F. & A.M., Elks Lodge, was a charter member of the old Greeley Club, Greeley Ch. 13 RAM, and Commander No. 10 Knights Templar. Bruce died in Greeley on June 25, 1930 at the age of 95.

Biographical note of Carl Bassett Sanborn

Carl Bassett Sanborn was born to Burton Davis and Carrie (Bassett) Sanborn on October 23, 1887 in Colorado. From 1910-1914 he was with the Gilcrest Lumber Company of Greeley and then served as President-Manager of the Estes Park Development Company. On June 18, 1910 he married Gladys McGinnis. Starting in 1934 he became a part of the real estate business in Greeley, just like his father. During his life he was a member of the First Congregational Church, Rotary Club, Country Club, and a director of Weld County Bank. Carl died in Greeley on November 23, 1960 at the age of 73.

Biographical note of Freelan Oscar Stanley

Freelan Oscar Stanley was born on June 1, 1849 in Kingfield, Maine. Stanley and his twin brother Francis are known for inventing the Stanley Steamer automobile as well as a photographic process which they later sold to George Eastman of Kodak. In 1903 at the age of 53, Stanley contracted tuberculosis and moved to Colorado for his health. Stanley is credited with paying for and building the infamous Stanley Hotel in Estes Park and is known for being the first to drive a car up to Estes Park. In 1907 Stanley bought the land for the hotel. The building of the hotel was completed in 1909 and cost Stanley about \$500,000. Stanley intended the hotel to be a place for well-to-do vacationing Easterners to stay in the West. Burton D. Sanborn and George M. Houston helped Stanley purchase the land. Stanley is also credited with developing the sewer, power, and water companies in Estes Park as well as Estes Park's first bank. Stanley died on October 3, 1940 at the age of 91.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of correspondence to and from Burton D. Sanborn and others; newspaper articles pertaining to Sanborn and Houston's work in water and other projects; publications by North Poudre Irrigation Company; account statements; the wills of John Sanborn, the inheritance tax for Burton D. Sanborn's estate, and the will of Carrie Bassett Sanborn; reports on fish culture and housing developments; photographs; negatives; a scrapbook cover; and miscellaneous items including graduation announcements, club programs, and informational brochures on Greeley and Weld County.

System of arrangement No original order. Order imposed by material type and subject.

Conditions governing access There are no restrictions on the access of this collection.

Conditions governing reproduction and use There are no restrictions on the use or reproduction of this collection.

Languages and scripts of the materials English

Immediate source of acquisition This collection was donated by Burton D. Sanborn.

Notes Preferred citation: City of Greeley Museum's Permanent Collection, #2014.53.

Names Bell, John

Bonyngge, Robert, 1863-1939
Borris, George
Craben, Alfred
Farr, Harry W., 1888-1965
Grable, F.C.
Helm, Joseph C., 1848-1915
Houston, George Meredith, 1872-1968
Houston, Gladys Phylabe Sanborn, 1884-1922
Houston, Phylabe Elizabeth, 1910-1987
Insinger, John William, 1895-1918
Kauffman, Hattie, 1883-1962
O'Brien, W.J.
Sanborn, Burton Davis, 1859-1914
Sanborn, Carl Bassett, 1887-1960
Sanborn, Carrie Bassett, 1858-1926
Stanley, Freelan Oscar, 1849-1940

Places Estes Park (Colo.)
Fort Collins (Colo.)
Greeley (Colo.)
Loveland (Colo.)

Subjects Fish Hatcheries
Irrigation
Real Estate Business
Water Supply
Water Use

Document forms Accounts
Correspondence
Ephemera
Legal Documents
Negatives
Newspapers
Photographs
Publications
Reports
Scrapbooks

Contents

Series I: Correspondence

Subseries A: Burton Sanborn

Consists of letters to Burton Sanborn from various people between 1888 and 1912. The letters talk of buying land, fish for the lakes he is credited with creating, and other issues related to the real estate business he started in Greeley.

Subseries B: George Houston

Consists of letters to George Houston from various people between 1907 and 1967. The letters include his membership to the Greeley Elks Lodge, various letters while he was in the Senate, and a letter thanking him for his donation to “Eyes for the Navy.”

Subseries C: Freelan O. Stanley

Consists of letters to Freelan O. Stanley from Burton Sanborn and George Houston in 1911 pertaining to the land bought by Stanley in Estes Park and matters of settling an account, as well as other matters in the area.

Subseries D: Benkelman Fisheries

Consists of correspondence between Burton Sanborn and Benkelman Fisheries between 1908 and 1910. The letters talk of buying fish for lakes in Colorado.

Subseries E: Commissioner of Fisheries

Consists of a letter to the Commissioner of Fisheries in 1907 regarding the type of fish that would be acceptable for Boyd Lake.

Subseries F: John Bell

Consists of one letter to John Bell from 1891 regarding patents of interest to Burton Sanborn.

Subseries G: Robert Bonyng

Consists of letters to Robert Bonyng from 1907 to 1908 regarding an application for fish in the lakes Burton Sanborn was interested in.

Subseries H: George Borris

Consists of one letter to George Borris from 1907 regarding information received about fish.

Subseries I: George Carter

Consists of one letter to George Carter from 1908 requesting information on fish suitable for an unknown lake.

Subseries J: Alfred Craben

Consists of one envelope for Alfred Craben that at one point contained vouchers.

Subseries K: F.C. Grable

Consists of one letter to F.C. Grable from 1902 regarding matters of the North Poudre Irrigation Company.

Subseries L: Joseph Helm

Consists of letters to Joseph Helm from 1912 regarding Boyd Lake and various loans and companies in relation to it.

Subseries M: W.J. O'Brien

Consists of one letter to W.J. O'Brien from 1908 regarding information received on fish and a possible company to help supply the fish.

Series II: Newspapers

Subseries A: George Houston

Consists of newspaper articles from 1906-1970 regarding the various events from George Houston's life. The articles include George Houston's trip of the Northwest, his marriage to Gladys Sanborn, his life as a Greeley resident, and his obituary.

Subseries B: Water

Consists of newspaper articles from 1910-1977 regarding the successes of Burton Sanborn's ventures in water, especially with Boyd Lake.

Subseries C: Carl Sanborn

Consists of one newspaper from 1960 which contains the obituary of Carl Sanborn, son of Burton D. Sanborn.

Subseries D: F.O. Stanley

Consists of newspaper articles from 1972-1980 regarding F.O. Stanley and his role in helping develop the tourist center Estes Park became after building his infamous hotel.

Subseries E: Miscellaneous

Consists of newspaper articles from 1967 to 1971 regarding the Union Pacific Railroad, Pioneer Day celebrations in 1910, Bruce F. Johnson, and the Morning Glory Gardening Club.

Series III: Publications

Consists of two publications from 1903 regarding the North Poudre Irrigation Company and information regarding the location where the company works. The titles of the publications are "The North Poudre Irrigation Company" and "Illustrations of an Irrigated District".

Series IV: Accounts

Consists of five account statements for F.O. Stanley from 1911 regarding account balances presumably for the land bought in Estes Park.

Series V: Legal Documents

Consists of two wills and inheritance tax information. One will from 1890 regards John F. Sanborn, Burton D. Sanborn's father. The other regards inheritance tax on Burton D. Sanborn's estate from 1947. The will of Carrie Bassett Sanborn is from 1935.

Series VI: Reports

Consists of two reports. One regards the Culture of Fish in Germany and the other regards various housing developments around Greeley in 1987 with some related to Houston.

Series VII: Photographs

Consists of 34 photos. The photos include areas of the North and South Thompson River, four photos of Carl Sanborn, at least one photo of Phylabe (Gladys) Sanborn, and numerous other people and places.

Series VIII: Negatives

Consists of 15 negatives of various sizes depicting a variety of people and places.

Series IX: Scrapbook

Consists of one scrapbook cover that reads, "Scrap Book of Doings of Phylabe." The cover includes a picture of a group of people in front of a building as well as to whom the scrapbook was presented.

Series X: Ephemera

Consists of 12 various items from 1899 to 1916, including high school graduation announcements, brochures about Greeley, and various club programs.

Container List

Series I: Correspondence

Subseries A: Burton Sanborn

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Subseries B: George Houston

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Subseries C: Freelan O. Stanley

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Subseries E: Commissioner of Fisheries

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Series III: Publications

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Series X: Ephemera

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