

Guide to the George Meredith Houston Collection – 2014.13

Reference code US CoGrCGM 2014.13
Title George Meredith Houston Collection
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Finding aid prepared by Kaylee Miller and Annika Miller with assistance from Maddison Miller

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 1864-1989
Bulk dates 1904-1946
Level of description Subseries
Extent 13 cubic feet
Creator(s) George Meredith Houston and Phylabe Houston, et. al.

Administrative/Biographical History

Biographical note of George Meredith Houston

On September 23, 1872, George Meredith Houston was born in Troy, Ohio to Mr. and Mrs. Harvey J. Houston. George and his family moved from Ohio to Iowa in 1882 and then to Otis, Colorado in 1887. On Sunday, March 22, 1890, 17 year old George Houston arrived in Greeley by himself. Houston's first job consisted of gardening for Rosene Meeker Skews, daughter of Nathan Meeker, the founder of Greeley. Houston left the employment of the Meekers soon after and got a similar job for the Sanborn family. Houston was the first male student of Colorado State Normal School; he graduated in June of 1893. Houston then taught back in Otis for one year between 1893 to 1894. He returned to Greeley to join Burton D. Sanborn in the real estate firm Sanborn had just opened. George Houston married Gladys Sanborn, daughter of Burton Sanborn, in 1907. George and Gladys had one daughter, Phylabe Elizabeth. Gladys died in 1922 and George remarried Maud Harisburg on October 21, 1926.

George Houston was mayor of Greeley from 1909 to 1910 and was on the board of trustees of Colorado State College from 1909 to 1915. George decided to run for State Senate in 1934 on

the Democratic ticket and won. Houston served as a Colorado State 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, Houston also engaged in wheat farming and became an expert in irrigation principles and land development. He also 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 Meredith Houston died on April 19, 1968 in Greeley. Houston was a Greeley resident for 78 years.

Biographical note of Burton Davis Sanborn

On November 1, 1859, Burton Davis Sanborn was born to John and Jennie Sanborn in Hardwick, Vermont. During the early formation of the Union Colony area, the Sanborn family moved West under the leadership of Nathan Meeker. John Sanborn is given credit for being the first individual to set up his tent in the area. At the age of 11, B. D. Sanborn was granted a position under Nathan Meeker as his “printer’s devil”. Sanborn worked for \$3 a week, but eventually left his job when wages were low. Nearly 9 years later, Nathan Meeker offered the young Sanborn another position; his assignment was to teach the Ute Native American tribe the Western practice of irrigating water to various crops. Sanborn declined taking the position at the White River Indian Agency due to his father’s recent death. Sanborn later married Carrie Bassett Sanborn and had three children together: Gladys Phylabe (1884-1922), Carl Bassett (1887-1926), and Philo Houston (1901-1964).

B. D. Sanborn’s interest and work in irrigation largely impacted Northern Colorado’s terrain. Sanborn’s projects enabled him to obtain land to carry out the Northern Colorado Irrigation Project and the Fossil Creek Reservoir Project that outsourced water to Greeley and its surrounding area. At the turn of the 20th century, Sanborn and many investors from Northern Colorado bought and created the North Poudre Irrigation Company. Sanborn is also credited for his work with Freelan O. Stanley and the purchase of land in Estes Park that served as grounds for the Stanley Hotel and numerous other buildings that still stand today.

Shortly after a trip with his family to Boyd Lake, Burton D. Sanborn passed away in Greeley on July 21, 1914 at the age of 55.

Biographical note of Phylabe Elizabeth Houston

George and Gladys Houston’s only child, Phylabe Elizabeth Houston was born in 1910 in Greeley, Colorado. Phylabe was a graduate of Colorado State Teachers College (today named University of Northern Colorado). To honor her father, George Houston, and his legacy, Phylabe donated the land he had annexed while he was the Greeley mayor to the Assistance League of Greeley. The land she donated is today known as G. M. Houston Gardens and is part of the West Greeley Conservation District. Phylabe Houston passed away in 1987.

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, subsequently renamed the North Fork Irrigation Company. A few years later, the business name 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. With Grable's help, 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; 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 Great Western Sugar Factory. The North Poudre Irrigation Company is still in existence today, and as of 1993 it was irrigating a total of 35,000 acres.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of various items from the life of George Meredith Houston. This collection contains photographs, negatives, cards, newspaper articles, postcards, and correspondence from his personal life. Also included in the collection are documents pertaining to Houston's various business ventures, including the North Poudre Irrigation Company and his time in the State Senate; business documents include: leases, loans, investments, contracts, taxes, blue prints, business correspondence, ledgers, and wills

System of arrangement

No original order. Order imposed by subject and date.

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 Community Foundation Serving Greeley and Weld County.
Notes	Preferred citation: City of Greeley Museums' Permanent Collection, #2014.13.
Names	<p>Alford, H.M.A. Blood, B.F. Brownell, L.T. Collins, J.M. Davis, E.C. Fink, Jessie Alice Hartsburg, Maud Florence Haynes, H.N. Haynes, Charles E. Heath, Herbert G. Houston, Charles E. Houston, Frank Houston, George Meredith, 1872-1968 Houston, Gladys Phylabe Sanborn, 1884-1922 Houston, Harvy J. Houston, Harry J. Houston, M.A. Houston, Phylabe Elizabeth, 1910-1987 Kelly, William R. Knoop, Hattie M. Mason, Fred McClenanahan, A.M. McKean, F.M. McKinley, William (President of the United States) Meeker Gilliland, Maude</p>

Meeker, Nathan
Noris, Frank
Page, Jessie
Perre, James B.
Sanborn, Burton Davis, 1859-1914
Sanborn, Carl
Sanborn, Carrie Bassett, 1858-1926
Sanborn, Jane
Sanborn, Nee
Sanborn, Philo
Scott, Jessup W.
Sherman, N.H.
Simmons , J.T.
Smyder, Edward
Voris, Mary A.
Vowes, F.P.
Wheeler, Charles H.
Wousley, E. B.

Places

Estes Park (Colo.)
Denver (Colo.)
Greeley (Colo.)
Loveland (Colo.)

Subjects

Accounting
Blueprints
Business & finance
City & town life
City council members
Contract negotiations
Contracts
Correspondence
Deeds
Irrigation
Legislation
Maps
Negative prints
Neighborhoods
Newspapers
Photographs
Political activity
Political campaign funds
Political organizations
Political participation
Political parties

Political representation
Political strategies
Politics & government
Postal cards
Public schools
Publicity photographs
Real estate business
Scrapbooks
Taxes
Universities & colleges
Water
Water supply
Water use
Wills
Document forms
Accounts
Correspondence
Ephemera
Legal Documents
Negatives
Newspapers
Photographs
Publications
Reports
Scrapbooks

Contents

Series I: Photos and Negatives

Consists of photographs, negatives, and a photo album from Houston's personal (non-business) life.

Series II: Miscellaneous Documents

Subseries A: Miscellaneous

Consists of various items from Houston's life and his time in Greeley

Subseries B: Car Title

Consists of a car title from one of Houston's cars

Subseries C: Essays and Poems

Consists of essays and poems written by Houston during his time in school and while teaching.

Subseries D: Newspaper Articles

Consists of newspaper articles Houston kept pertaining to issues relevant to his life and Greeley.

Subseries E: Certificates

Consists of various certificates Houston earned during his life in Greeley.

Subseries F: Currency

Consists of several different currencies from the early United States.

Subseries G: War Rations

Consists of war rations distributed to Houston and his family during World War II.

Subseries H: School

Consists of documents and papers from Houston's time in school and teaching.

Subseries I: Colorado State College of Education

Consists of papers Houston collected during his time in attendance at Colorado State College of Education.

Series III: Postcards

Consists of standard 3x5 manila post cards sent in the mail from Houston's parents to Houston called "postal cards".

Series IV: Personal Correspondence

Consists of various letters between Houston and loved ones.

Series V: Business and Legal Correspondence**Subseries A: Miscellaneous**

Consists of letters of correspondence between Houston and individuals with whom he did business.

Subseries B: J.T. Simmons

Consists of letters of business correspondence between George M. Houston and J.T. Simmons.

Subseries C: Haynes

Consists of letters of business correspondence between George M. Houston and Charles E. Haynes.

Subseries D: Hayden Brothers

Consists of letters between the Hayden Brothers and Houston regarding business ventures.

Subseries E: Southard

Consists of letters to and from the Houstons and Southards concerning estate business.

Subseries F: Bound Letters

Consists of letters bound in several books, both to and from Sanborn and Houston, from their time as business partners.

Series VI: Ledgers

Consists of 26 ledgers containing information surrounding the business of Sanborn and Houston, as well as information related to Houston's later business ventures.

Series VII: Legal Documents

Subseries A: Wills of Burton D. Sanborn

Consists of several versions of Burton D. Sanborn's wills.

Subseries B: Carrie Bassett Estate

Consists of the wills of Carrie Bassett.

Subseries C: Gladys Houston Estate

Consists of documents about Gladys Houston's Estate.

Subseries D: Lawsuits

Consists of documents surrounding lawsuits in which Sanborn and Houston were involved.

Subseries E: Legal business

Consists of various abstracts, deeds, and documents regarding new neighborhoods, installment contracts, tax returns, contracts, and land patents in relation to Houston and Sanborn's business ventures. Some materials relate to Houston's various businesses after Sanborn and Houston were no longer in business together.

Subseries F: Court Documents

Consists of documents from an appearance and settlement from a court date involving Houston.

Series VIII: Business Documents

Subseries A: Blueprints

Consists of blueprints of Houston's properties and projects for building neighborhoods and building irrigation lines in Greeley.

Subseries B: Maps

Consists of maps of Houston's properties and projects for building neighborhoods and building irrigation lines in Greeley.

Subseries C: Warranty Deeds

Consists of Warranty Deeds issued by George M. Houston.

Subseries D: Seven Lakes

Consists of documents pertaining to the Seven Lakes development in which Houston was involved.

Subseries E: Miami Water

Consists of documents pertaining to Houston's involvement with Miami Water.

Subseries F: High Pines

Consists of documents pertaining to Houston's land in the High Pines area of Larimer County.

Subseries G: Miscellaneous Documents

Consists of documents pertaining to Sanborn and Houston's business dealings around Greeley.

Series IX: Business Relations

Subseries A: North Poudre Irrigation

Contains documents relating to Houston's business in North Poudre Irrigation.

Subseries B: Consumer Oil Company

Consists of documents pertaining to Houston's interactions with the Consumer Oil Company.

Series X: Journals

Consists of 23 daily journals Houston kept intermittently from 1916 through 1953.

Series XI: Reports

Consists of reports conducted on several properties held by Houston, and of work being done on Miami Farms.

Series XII: Accounts

Consists of leases, loans and investments, checks, bills, and bank papers.

Series XIII: Politics

Consists of Colorado State Senate papers from Houston's time in office.

Container List

Series I: Photos and Negatives

Box	Folder
1	1-3
16	NA

Series II: Miscellaneous Documents

Subseries A: Miscellaneous

Box	Folder
1	4-8

Rehoused with oversize books

Subseries B: Car Title

Box	Folder
1	9

Subseries C: Essays and Poems

Box	Folder
1	10

Subseries D: Newspaper Articles

Box	Folder
1	11-13

Subseries E: Certificates

Box	Folder
2	1

Subseries F: Currency

Box	Folder
2	2

Subseries G: War Rations

Box	Folder
2	3

Subseries H: School

Box	Folder
2	4

Subseries I: Colorado State College of Education

Box	Folder
2	5

Series III: Postcards

Box	Folder
2	6-11

Series IV: Personal Correspondence

Box	Folder
2	12-16
3	1-13
4	1-4

Series V: Business and Legal Correspondence

Subseries A: Miscellaneous

Box	Folder
4	5-11

Subseries B: J.T. Symonds

Box	Folder
5	1-13
6	1-3

Subseries C: Haynes

Box	Folder
6	4-13

Subseries D: Hayden Brothers

Box	Folder
6	14-16

Subseries E: Southard

Box	Folder
7	1

Subseries F: Bound Letters

Box	Folder
Rehoused with oversized books	

Series VI: Ledgers

Box	Folder
7	2
20	NA

Rehoused with oversized ledgers

Series VII: Legal Documents

Subseries A: Wills of Burton D. Sanborn

Box	Folder
7	3-4

Subseries B: Carrie Bassett Estate

Box	Folder
7	5

Subseries C: Gladys Houston Estate

Box	Folder
7	6

Subseries D: Lawsuits

Box	Folder
7	7

Subseries E: Legal business

Box	Folder
7	8-12
8	1-13
9	1-8
17	NA
18	1-2

Subseries F: Court Documents

Box	Folder
9	9

Series VIII: Business Documents

Subseries A: Blueprints

Box	Folder
9	10

Subseries B: Maps

Box	Folder
9	11-12
19	NA
22	NA

Subseries C: Warranty Deeds

Box	Folder
10	1-5

Subseries D: Seven Lakes

Box	Folder
10	6

Subseries E: Miami Water

Box	Folder
10	7-8
11	1-2

Subseries F: High Pines

Box	Folder
11	3

Subseries G: Miscellaneous

Box	Folder
6	17
11	4-10
22	NA

Series IX: Business Relations

Subseries A: North Poudre Irrigation

Box	Folder
11	11

Subseries B: Consumer Oil Company

Box	Folder
12	1-5

Series X: Journals

Box	Folder
12	6-18
21	NA
24	NA
25	NA

Rehoused with oversize books

Series XI: Reports

Box	Folder
12	19
26	NA

Series XII: Accounts

Box	Folder
12	20
13	1-16
14	1-14
22	NA
23	NA

Series XIII: Politics

Box	Folder
14	15-17
15	1-10