
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

949 East Second Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

Library and Archives
(520) 617-1157

ahsref@azhs.gov

MS 0065
Becker family
Papers, 1870-1959 (bulk 1886-1925)

DESCRIPTION

Correspondence, legal documents, biographical materials, ledgers and other financial records relating to the Becker family in Springerville, Arizona and its mercantile, banking and cattle businesses.

28 boxes, 47 outside volumes, 24 linear ft.

RELATED MATERIAL

Some materials were previously transferred to the Photograph Subject and Portrait files. See also Becker Photo Collection – PC 262

ACQUISITION

Donated by the Becker family in 1965.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

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PROCESSING

This collection was mostly processed by Roger Myers in 1982; Kim Frontz completed processing in April 1998.

ARRANGEMENT

Arranged in seven series: Correspondence, 1894-1959. Legal documents, 1879-1958. Manuscripts, 1905-1958. Financial, 1876-1959. Tourist registers, 1918-1931. Personal and printed material, 1901-1957. Photographs, 1870-1957.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Gustav Becker, pioneer merchant and businessman, was born in Germany in 1856; he came to the United States in 1871 and worked for his brother, John, at the Huning and Becker Store in Belen, New Mexico. In 1875, Gustav joined his brother, Julius, in Round Valley, Arizona. They established the Becker Brothers store (1876-1893) which supplied goods to military posts, farmers and ranchers. When Julius died in 1893, Gustav renamed the store the Gustav Becker Store (1893-1908); in 1908 the store was incorporated as the Becker Mercantile Company. Gustav married Louisa in 1885; they had nine children: Julius W., Lucie, Walter, Edward, Paul, Alvin, Hugo, Emma, and Arthur.

Gustav was an advocate of highway construction in Arizona. In 1881, he laid out a road from Springerville east to Quemado, New Mexico; in 1887, he developed a road from Springerville to McNary, Arizona. In addition to his business, he served as Notary Public and was U.S. Postmaster for many years. He was a school trustee, and was president of Round Valley Light and Power Company and the Round Valley Bank. He served on the Executive Committee of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, was a charter member of the Arizona Good Roads Association, and County Engineer for Apache County. He was also president, owner or partner in the Apache Tavern Hotel, Becker Motor Company, Becker-Keogh Hardware Company in El Paso, Texas, Becker-Mactavich Company in Magdalena, N.M., and Becker-Franz Co. in Socorro, N.M. Gustav died in 1940 and a monument was erected to him on the Post Office grounds in Springerville, Arizona.

Gustav's son, Julius W. Becker, was born in Springerville in 1886. He managed the Becker Mercantile Company from 1913 and became president after the death of his father in 1940. In 1935, he and his father were instrumental in securing Works Projects Administration funding to build the White Mountain Hospital. Julius owned the J. Becker Cattle Company, and the Diamond Rock Lodge Resort in the White Mountains. He was appointed to the Arizona Board of Directors for the National Trail Highways in 1932. Julius married Orabelle in 1924 and they had two sons, Robert and Richard. Julius died in 1959. Becker Mercantile was destroyed in a fire in 1964.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Correspondence, photographs, legal documents, and financial records chiefly documenting the Becker Mercantile Company and other businesses of the Becker family as well as documents relating to the family's interests in the development of Apache County, Arizona.

The correspondence mostly concerns business matters, political favors, the cattle and livestock industry, grazing law, and condolences on Gustav's death. Noted correspondents include Ralph Cameron, Barry Goldwater, Frederick H. Harvey, and Harry S. Truman.

There is also correspondence and legal documents relating to the St. John's and Springerville water litigation over use of the Little Colorado River, correspondence and photographs of the dedication of the Madonna of the Trail monument, and correspondence and financial records about building the White Mountain Hospital.

There are merchant's documents about rationing in World War II, subscription lists to pay nurses during the 1918 flu epidemic, and a Justice of the Peace docket for E.C. Bunch of Springerville for 1879 which also contains school class lists and a Great (voting) register for Apache County, 1879.

Manuscripts by Julius Becker concern a proposal for U.S. Highway 64 and U.S. Highway 270 and a history of Springerville. In addition to daybooks and financial ledgers, Becker Mercantile records include an apothecary record, 1876-1882, an explosives sale record, 1944-1945, and employee efficiency reports, ca. 1940. There are also registers signed by tourists stopping at Becker Garage between 1918 and 1925 which list name, home state, type of automobile, and destination, and a register for Beckers Tourist Court, Springerville's first auto court, 1930-1931.

Photographs are mostly of Gustav and Julius Becker and other family members. A few show Springerville streets and Becker family businesses. There is also one photograph each of Harry Truman and Barry Goldwater.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

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SERIES 1: CORRESPONDENCE, 1894-1959

Gustav Becker Correspondence:

f. 1-15 A – Z 1928-1940

Box 2

Julius Becker Correspondence:

f. 16-17 A – B 1920-1951

f. 18-25 Becker family 1915-1942

Box 3

f. 26-39 C – M (Includes Barry Goldwater and Carl Hayden) 1926-1956

Box 4

f. 40-49 N – T (Includes Harry S. Truman) 1926-1959

Box 5

f. 50-52 U – Z 1926-1957

Becker Mercantile Correspondence:

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Box 6

f. 65-67 S – Z 1929-1957

Other Correspondence:

f. 68 St. Johns/Springerville Water Litigation 1894-1919

f. 69 Becker Mercantile Cash shortages 1954-1955

f. 70 Springerville Community Church A – R 1918-1933

f. 71 Springerville Community Church, Bd. of Trustees 1919-1930

f. 72 Springerville Community Church, T – Z 1919-1930

f. 73 Springerville Community Church, Webb, B. Wrenn 1929-1932

f. 74 Pioneer Mothers Monument, A - Z 1928

f. 75 Pioneer Mothers Monument, Natl Old Trails Road Assn. 1926-1928

f. 76 Pioneer Mothers Monument, D.A.R. Natl Old Trails 1928

f. 77 Round Valley Bank 1928-1938

f. 78 White Mountain Hospital, A – F 1935-1939

f. 79 White Mountain Hospital, G – L 1936-1938

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SERIES 2: LEGAL DOCUMENTS, 1879-1958

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f. 82 Gustav Becker Cattle Co. 1900-1939

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f. 84	Julius Becker	1942-1958
f. 85	J. Becker Cattle Co.	1933-1942
f. 86	Claire V. Peery Estate	1916-1936
f. 87	National Sanitorium for Tuberculous Children	1927
f. 88	Apache County Livestock Assn.	1931-1940
f. 89	Becker Mercantile, Board of Directors, Minutes	1927-1953
f. 90	Becker Mercantile, Resolutions, Agreements, etc.	1927-1952
f. 91	Becker Mercantile, Diamond Rock Lodge	1944
f. 92	Becker Trust Co.	1953
f. 93	Round Valley Bank insolvency	1933
f. 94-97	St. Johns/Springerville Water Litigation (Round Valley Water Storage, Prior Rights Water Co.)	1885-1913

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Legal documents:

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f. 99	World War II Rationing	1942-1944
f.100	Misc. deeds, pensions	1917-1924

SERIES 3: MANUSCRIPTS, 1905-1958

f.101	Gustav Becker (by and about)	1937-1940
f.102	Julius Becker school papers re: U.S. history	1905
f.103	Julius Becker – U.S. 66, U.S. 270, and Springerville history	1935-1958
f.104	Julius Becker – stories by Evans Coleman	n.d.
f.105	JWB – Truman: an appraisal, by Stewart Udall	1952

SERIES 4: FINANCIAL, 1876-1959

f.106	Becker Mactavish Co. (N.M.)	1933-1938
f.107-109	Becker – Keogh Financial statements	1926-1939
f.110	White Mountain Hospital – Building Fund ledger	1936-1937
f.111	Apache County Bd. of Supervisors – check register	1916-1923

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Financial

f.112	Springerville Community Church checkbook register	1918-1931
f.113	Round Valley Power & Light statement	1932
f.114	J. Becker Cattle Co. accounts	1941-1942

Financial : Becker Mercantile

f.115	Reports	1933-1953
f.116-118	Income Tax financial statements	1918-1957
f.119	Taxable wages reports	1945-1952

f.120 State Sales Tax 1945-1949

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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.121 State Sales Tax 1950-1954
f.122 Property Taxes 1941-1954
f.123 Balance Sheets 1923-1954
f.124 Audit reports, 1931, 1938, 1953 1931-1953
f.125 Notes payable 1917-1920
f.126-127 Payroll time books 1917-1949
f.128 Bank book 1927-1928
f.129 Daybook 1876-1878

Box 11

Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.130-133 Daybooks 1880-1884

Box 12

Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.134-135 Daybooks 1885-1886

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v. 137 Daybook 1887-1887
v. 138 Daybook 1887-1888
v. 139 Daybook 1888-1888
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v. 142 Daybook 1890-1891
v. 143 Daybook 1891-1891
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v. 160	Daybook	1902-1902
v. 161	Daybook	1902-1903
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v. 164	Daybook	1906-1906
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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

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f.193	Purchases ledger	1882-1884
f.194-195	Trial Balance Ledgers	1936-1948

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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.196	Trial Balance	1949-1953
f.197	Doubtful Accounts	1897-1900
f.198	Employee ledger	1945
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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.201-202	Cash Register Statements	1908-1912
f.203-204	Daily Cash Statements	1945-1947

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Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)

f.205-209	Daily Cash Statements	1947-1952
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Box 18**Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)**

f.210-212	Daily Cash Statements	1954-1957
f.213	Apothecary record	1876-1882

Box 19**Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)**

f.214	Receipts	1906-1907
f.215	Warehouse receipts	1950-1951
f.216	Accounts Receivable	1943-1954
f.217	Accounts Payable	1921-1953
f.218-221	Notary record	1940-1959
f.222	Price book	1940

Box 20**Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)**

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f.227	Stock certificate book	1955-1962

Box 21**Financial : Becker Mercantile (Continued)**

f.228	Explosives record	1944-1945
f.229	Employee Efficiency Reports	1940
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f.234	Inventory	1931
f.235	Inventory – Apache Tavern	1925

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Box 21 (Continued)**Financial : U.S. Post Office (Continued)**

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Box 22**Financial : U.S. Post Office (Continued)**

f.242	Money Order Cash Book	1900-1904
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v. 243 Registered Matter Log 1897-1901

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f.244-245 Postal Account book 1892-1898

f.246 Employee oaths 1893

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f.248 Nurses subscriptions – Flu epidemic 1918-1919

f.249 Cattle pedigrees, permits, inspections 1925-1938

Financial : Julius Becker

f.250 Income tax returns 1940-1949

f.251 Properties inventory 1930-1934

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f.253 Time book 1948

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f.254 Ledger 1896-1899

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SERIES 5: TOURIST REGISTERS, 1918-1931

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Tourist material

f.256-258 Becker Garage Tourist Registers 1918-1920

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Tourist material (Continued)

f.259-260 Becker Garage Tourist Registers 1921-1922

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Tourist material

f.264 Auto Court, Springerville, Ariz. 1930-1931

SERIES 6 : PERSONAL AND PRINTED MATERIAL, 1901-1957

Personal material

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f.266 Julius Becker – biographical 1901-1943

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f.267	Julius Becker – address books	1950
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f.269	Julius Becker – Truman memorabilia	1955

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f.279	Unidentified family and friends	1890,1950s
f.280	Becker family	1870-1950
f.281	Cattle	1940s
f.282	“Madonna of the Trail” dedication	1928
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f.286	Politicians (Harry Truman, Barry Goldwater)	1940-1950

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f.287	Photographs – Richard Becker	1950s
f.288	Land certificates – Apache County	1880-1903
f.289	Township plat map, probably Springerville	n.d.
f.290	Julius Becker certificates	1886-1952

Outside Rolls

Blueprint plans for Becker Mercantile Store

