
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

949 East Second Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

Library and Archives Department
(520) 617-1157

ahsref@azhs.gov

MS 0261

Forbes, Robert Humphrey, 1867-1968
Papers, 1869-1966 (bulk 1915-1950)

DESCRIPTION

Correspondence, scientific reports, research notes, project diaries, publications, and legislative bills and resolutions relating to Forbes' agricultural career, 1915-1966, and to his service on the Arizona State Legislature, 1938-1952.

105 boxes, 52.5 linear ft.

RELATED MATERIAL

Related material is available in the Robert Forbes Photograph Collection; and The Century of Robert H. Forbes, by Charles C. Colley, Arizona Historical Society, 1977.

ACQUISITION

Gift of Robert Forbes.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

COPYRIGHT

Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society - Tucson, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

The collection was processed and a item level calendar created by Charles Colley in 1975 and a finding aid prepared by Kim Frontz in December 1997.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Educator, researcher and legislator; Robert Forbes arrived in Tucson in 1894 to teach chemistry at the University of Arizona. He was appointed director of the Agricultural Experiment Station and, by 1915, was director of the College of Agriculture. In 1918, Forbes left the University of Arizona to become an agricultural consultant for the British government in Egypt, later working on crop research in Africa and the Caribbean. He returned to Arizona in 1931; from 1938 to 1952, he served in the Arizona state legislature. He was involved in legislation pertaining to the University of Arizona and Colorado River water allocations. He was also an active member of the Board of Directors of the Arizona Historical Society.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Biographical material, research correspondence, observation diaries, notebooks, manuscripts, publications, speeches and reports from Forbe's career particularly in relation to agriculture, irrigation, and education. This collection is especially significant in several areas: agricultural research in the Southwest, politics and development of the University of Arizona, Colorado River water rights, and his correspondence with key individuals involved in the development of Arizona.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This collection is arranged into seven series: Personal and family materials, 1869-1959. Southwestern history research, 1907-1955. Agriculture education and research, 1892-1966. Egypt, 1917-1942. Africa, 1921-1944. Business records and correspondence, 1931-1964. Legislature, 1933-1966.

Series 1: Personal and family materials, [Boxes 1-3] include genealogy, an autobiography, and research on the Pennington family, early Arizona pioneers. The Pennington family research includes information about Indian depredations and related Scott and Pennington court claims. Forbe's wife, Georgie Scott, was the daughter of Larcena Pennington Scott.

Series 2: Southwestern history research, [Boxes 4-5] includes research on the Crabbe Expedition; notes from interviews of early Arizona residents including Sam Hughes, Tom Jeffords, and Nabor Pacheco; and correspondence about Tucson and University of Arizona history. Crabbe Expedition correspondence includes letters to and from W.J. McGee.

Series 3: Agriculture education and research, [Boxes 6-29]

Subseries 1: U.S. Dept of Agriculture Record Groups (National Archives) and Agricultural Experiment Station [Boxes 6-10]

General correspondence regarding cotton, date palms, mesquite, olives, pistache nut, Boyce Thomson arboretum, and early operations of the Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station.

Subseries 2: University of Arizona Agriculture Administration, 1890-1917 [Box 11-13]

Correspondence, supply orders, weather reports, requests for information chiefly concerning the Agricultural Experiment Station, personnel matters, operations, and other business. Includes correspondence with R.W. Clothier, 1902-1914, concerning his work at the Experiment Station.

Subseries 3: Southwestern agriculture research, 1904-1966

[Boxes 14-29]

Research cards, observation and experiment diaries, dissertation, southwestern publications and experiment station bulletins. Includes Forbes' dissertation on copper pollution, articles about date palms, agricultural experiments stations, irrigation and Arizona crops. Research and observations on Arizona crops and irrigation includes notes on a wagon trip to northern Arizona about 1895, and interviews of Sam Hughes regarding the changing Arizona environment, 1898.

Series 4: Egypt, 1917-1942, [Boxes 30-40] includes correspondence concerning conditions in Egypt, personal and business matters in Arizona, the University of Arizona and his agricultural work. Also contains meteorological and climate studies. Correspondents include George W.P. Hunt, A.E. Vinson, Byron Cummings, and Thomas F. Hunt. Letters from Arizona keep him informed of state and local issues.

Series 5: Africa, 1921-1944 [Boxes 41-50] includes correspondence, field notes, and publications from his work in French Nigeria and Haiti, and from a Sahara trip. Correspondence concerns living conditions, his research, University of Arizona politics, and cotton. Letters from Arizona keep him informed of state and local issues.

Series 6: Business records and correspondence, 1931-1964 [Boxes 52-63] includes correspondence roughly arranged by date group then alphabetically by correspondent. Includes correspondence relating to his legislative service except correspondence relating to Colorado River and groundwater legislation is part of the legislative series. Also bank and business records.

Series 7: Legislature, 1933-1966 [Boxes 64-105] includes campaign literature, political certificates, lobby material, memorials and resolutions, and bills concerning issues such as the State Hospital, Teachers Retirement Act, Agriculture and Irrigation Committee, Regional Zoning Plan, grazing law, highway regulation, and Colorado River water rights and groundwater. Contains ten boxes of correspondence relating to Colorado River water rights and groundwater (Boxes 79-89). Major correspondents include G.E.P. Smith, Carl Hayden, and Sidney P. Osborn.

Item level calendar available in the library.