
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PC 078

Mathews, Rena, 1874-1962
Photograph collection, 1900-1962

DESCRIPTION

Photograph albums and loose photographs depicting the travels of the Mathews family due to J.D. Mathews' work with various railroad companies, mostly from the 1920s to the 1940s, throughout California, Tucson, Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. The collection includes photographs of many tourist destinations including historic ruins, national parks and monuments, and small towns. The photographs also show geologic formations and erosion found along the way.

13 boxes, 12.5 linear ft.

ACQUISITION

Gift of daughter, Mabel Weadock, in March 1961, February 1963, and August 11, 1970.

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

Kim Frontz prepared this finding aid in March 2002.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Active in various women's organizations and charities, Rena Mathews accompanied her husband, John D. Mathews, throughout his career. J. D. Mathews was a civil engineer involved with railroad construction in California, Arizona and Mexico. In 1901, he worked on the railroad from Naco to Cananea in Mexico and became division engineer of the Sonora railroad from 1902 to 1906, then became construction engineer for Southern Pacific of Mexico headquartered at Empalme, Sonora, Mexico. The railroad was constructed through Yaqui country. The Mathews family lived in a railroad car with their two children. In 1907, he returned to California and, in 1909, he transferred to Tucson and was division engineer for the Southern Pacific's Tucson Division until 1918. He then worked in Mexico until 1920, then worked in San Francisco until his retirement in 1931. After retirement they settled in San Bernadino, California. John and Rena had four children: Mabel (Weadock), John, Chester, and A. Donald.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Chiefly photograph albums compiled by Rena Mathews throughout her life and containing images of travels both due to her husband's work in railroad construction and their pleasure trips. Many of the photographs are annotated with her comments. Highlights include Mabel and Jack Weadock's ranch in the Tanque Verde Valley, Cienega-Pantano Creek, Summerhaven on Mount Lemmon, and an excavation of the presidio wall in downtown Tucson.

Highlights of images of towns and places visited include Mascot Camp in the Dos Cabezas Mountains, the Yuma prison and cemetery, and photographs of quarries in the Patagonia Mountains, a cotton gin at Rillito, and the Arizona Marble Company operations in the Chiricahua Mountains. There are photographs of the old plank road to Yuma and of their automobiles.

Also present are images of national parks and monuments and historic ruins including ruins at Fort Bowie, Fort Lowell, and Fort Crittenden; people climbing at Montezuma's Castle; pictographs; Colossal Cave; and Oak Creek Canyon.

There are many photographs of Mexico, some of Yaqui Indians, and views of the Sonora Railway. There are also photographs of buildings in Nogales in 1903. Many photographs are also present of California scenes.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1

Album #54471 - 1926-1932

Includes Arizona travel scenes such as Fort Lowell, Baboquivari Peak, Tohono O'odham homes near San Xavier Mission, the border crossing at Sasabe, a Brownie troop, the Weadock's Tucson ranch (probably near 9150 E. Tanque Verde Road), Fort Huachuca, Weadock family, Montezuma's Castle with visitors, Walnut Canyon, and other Arizona tourist scenes. Also included are California scenes and various national parks.

Box 2

Album #54472 - 1912-1925

Highlights include southern Arizona scenes including Oracle Road, Robles Pass, Silverbell Road and the town of Silverbell, Fort Lowell (1913), Fort Bowie ruins (1913), Cienega-Pantano Creek, buildings at Old Fort Grant (the State Reform School), changing a tire on a Studebaker car (1912), Sabino Canyon, a Yaqui dance at San Xavier (1912), the Nogales border including Mexican rebels (1913), the Arizona Marble Company in the Chiricahua Mountains (1913), Santa Cruz River flooding near towns of Lirin and Maricopa, Fort Crittenden ruins, and El Paso to Phoenix auto race (1913), OCA Ranch near Happy Valley, Empire Ranch headquarters, the Tohono O'odham burial ground near San Xavier, Roosevelt Dam, Yuma prison buildings and cemetery (1917), a Gila River crossing, White House Canyon, Bear Canyon, Mount Lemmon road on the north side, Summerhaven, something (not a cross) labeled a KKK cross between Nogales and Patagonia, Tombstone (1924), Grand Canyon lodges, and a cotton gin at Rillito (1924).

Box 3

Album #54473 - Nogales border and Mexico

Includes the Arizona-Mexico border at Nogales (1913), Guaymas, Hermosillo, Matzalan, Sinaloa, Cananea, the Carranza revolt (1913), Yaqui Indians in Mexico, and Imuris

Box 4

Album #54474

Highlights include El Paso, Texas, Morenci, Ariz., Apache Trail, San Carlos Reservation (1925), Ajo, Wellton, Tonto Basin cliff dwellings, San Pedro River, New Mexico, White River Apache Reservation, San Pedro River along the railroad track, and the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad, pictographs, Picacho Peak, quarries in the Patagonia Mountains, Fort Huachuca, Bisbee, Stein's Pass, Mule Mountains, Gila River, erosion scenes, and Utah canyons.

Box 5

Album #54479 - Travel

Includes New York and Washington D.C. scenes.

Box 6

Album #54475 - California

Includes scenic travel in California.

Box 7

Album #54476 - Family

Mostly images of family, particularly grandchildren

Box 8

Album #54477 - Tucson, Nogales, Mexico, Vancouver, California, ca. 1903

Includes the Santa Rita Hotel and Congress Street in Tucson; the State Reform School in Benson; the school and a view of Nogales, Arizona; as well as Imuris, Magdalena, Guaymas, Vancouver and California.

Album #J - Guaymas - 1902

Photographs of Guaymas, Mexico

Album #K - Nogales - 1903

Includes the Nogales schoolhouse, courthouse, Mexican custom house, washday in an arroyo, and the international line.

Album #N - Sonora Railway - 1905

Highlights include Sonora Railway track construction and washout, hanging of a Yaqui Indian Colgado.

Box 9

Album #54480 - California - San Clemente, San Bernadino, various missions

Box 10

Album #54481 - Family, California and Arizona and Utah travel

Includes family, San Bermadino, Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, Hoover Dam, and Utah canyons

Box 11

Album #54482 - Arizona and California

Includes Mount Lemmon Road, Mabel and Jack Weadock's ranch, Yuma prison and cemetery, the old plank road to Yuma, Tanque Verde creek, Tanque Verde Mission church building, Tombstone tourist sites, the opening of the Queen Creek underpass (1952), and the excavated presidio wall in downtown Tucson.

Box 12

Album #55136 - Arizona and North Carolina travel

Includes old plank road, Yuma prison and graveyard, Colossal Cave, Grand Canyon, Oak Creek Canyon, and Utah canyons and Reidsville, North Carolina

Box 13

- f.1 John D. Mathews
- f.2 John Mathews school pictures
- f.3 Mathews family
- f.4 Shearer, Tillie

- f.5 University of Arizona
- f.6 Fort Lowell
- f.7 Tucson
- f.8 Nogales
- f.9 Arizona
- f.10 Casa Grande ruins
- f.11 Pioneering days, 1902-1931 - photograph album
- f.12 Out-of-State
- f.13 Mexico

- f.14 San Xavier Mission
- f.15 Missions - Tumacacori
- f.16 Missions - Arizona and Sonora, Mexico
- f.17 Missions - accompanying text by Rena Mathews
- f.18 Indian homes - Apache, Navajo and Tohono O'odham

- f.19 Railroad employees
- f.20 Railroad scenes
- f.21 Railroad engineers
- f.22 Dam building
- f.23 Miscellaneous