Walking Box Ranch Collection

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Summary Information

Creator: University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Public Lands Institute
Contributor: Bell, Dorothy
Title: Walking Box Ranch Collection
ID: MS-00657
Date [inclusive]: 1917-2011
Physical Description: 3.2 Linear Feet 1 box, 1 framed item
Language of the Material: English
Abstract: The Walking Box Ranch Collection (1917-2011) includes material collected by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Public Lands Institute on the Searchlight, Nevada ranch. Materials include a map from the Rock and Springs Land and Cattle Company, a pair of chaps owned by Rex Bell, Jr., and color slides of the ranch. Also included are photographic prints of Rex Bell and Rex Bell, Jr., and newsclippings related to the film and political career of Rex Bell.

Preferred Citation


Historical Note

The Walking Box Ranch is a 160-acre ranch in Searchlight, Nevada which was once owned by silent film stars Rex Bell and Clara Bow from the 1930s through the 1940s. Rex Bell purchased the ranch in 1931 from the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company. Walking Box Ranch got its name from the ranch brand: a movie camera on a tripod. Bow and Bell had a 5,000 square foot Spanish Revival home built on the property that also served as a working cattle ranch. Rex Bell, Jr. was born to Bell and Bow in 1934, and he grew up with his brother George on the ranch until his parents divorced in the mid-1940s. Bell, Sr. sold the ranch to Karl "Cap" Weikal in 1951. Rex Bell, Sr. went on to serve as Lieutenant Governor.
of Nevada from 1955 until his death in 1962. Rex Bell, Jr. served as the Clark County Deputy District Attorney and also held one term as Lieutenant Governor. He died in 2011.

Weikal continued to use Walking Box as a ranch until he sold the property in 1989 to Viceroy Gold Corporation, which used the ranch as an executive retreat. Shortly thereafter, the Nature Conservancy acquired the property as well as 150,000 acres in its vicinity. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) purchased the ranch in 2004 and still owns the buildings as of 2015. BLM works in partnership with the UNLV Public Lands Institute, which manages the buildings. Together they are developing the ranch as an academic site for desert studies and an interpretive center. The Nature Conservancy continues to own and preserve the surrounding land which operates as a desert tortoise habitat. The ranch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 for its association with cattle ranching and its architectural significance.

Sources:

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Scope and Contents

The Walking Box Ranch Collection (1917-2011) includes material collected by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Public Lands Institute on the Searchlight, Nevada ranch. Materials include a map from the Rock and Springs Land and Cattle Company, a pair of chaps owned by Rex Bell, Jr., and color slides of the ranch. Also included are photographic prints of Rex Bell and Rex Bell, Jr., and newsclippings related to the film and political career of Rex Bell. A small number of newscollings pertain to the career of Rex Bell, Jr.

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Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections Division.

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special.collections@unlv.edu

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publications Note

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See Reproductions and Use on the UNLV Special Collections website for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish.

Processing Note

The collection was minimally processed by Karla Irwin in 2014 at the time of accessioning. To prepare the inventory, the described materials were reviewed to create a contents list, estimate dates, and identify material types. No other work has been performed on the materials.

Acquisition Note

Material was donated by Dorothy Bell to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Public Lands Institute. The collection was transferred to UNLV Special Collections in 2014 as two separate accessions. Accession numbers: 2014-055 and 2014-062.

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### Related Materials

**PH-00346, Walking Box Ranch Photograph Collection**  
**OH-00181, Rex Bell, Jr. oral history interview, Ralph Roske Interviews**  
**OH-00108, Rex Bell, Jr. oral history interview, The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project**

### Controlled Access Headings

- Walking Box Ranch (Searchlight, Nev.)  
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Public Lands Institute  
- Bell, Dorothy  
- Bell, Rex  
- Bell, Rex, Jr.

### Collection Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range and Waters of the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company, Triangulation Survey 1916: map, 1917 January 26</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking Box Ranch slides, 2004 and undated</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Bell, Jr. photographic prints, undated</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Bell, Jr. newscclippings and memorial card, 1986, 2011</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Bell, Sr. photographic prints, undated</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Description: 2 Files</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Bell, Sr. newscclippings regarding political and film career, 1929-1981</td>
<td>Oversized box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood chaps owned by Rex Bell, Jr. (framed), approximately 1935-1945</td>
<td>frame 01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>