

Guide to the Fort Mojave Industrial School Records

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Title:	Fort Mojave Industrial School Records
ID:	MS-00034
Date [inclusive]:	1890-1923
Physical Description:	0.37 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Physical Description:	0.42 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Fort Mojave Industrial School Records (1890-1923) consist of correspondence, documents of the school's finances and administrative operations, blueprints for a pump station, as well as policy implementation and fact finding. The information is contained in two bound volumes.

Preferred Citation

Fort Mojave Industrial School Records, 1890-1923. MS-00034. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Historical Note

Following the American Civil War, abolitionists broadened their fight for equality to include Native Americans. They argued that Indians could be saved from extinction only by providing them with the same rights and protections afforded to other Americans. Under President Grant, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to consolidate Indian tribes onto large reservations where they could be protected and provided with cultural and vocational education.

In 1889 President Harrison selected Thomas J. Morgan to oversee the reformulation of Indian education policy as his new Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In 1890 Congress allocated funds to establish the Fort Mojave Industrial School to serve the Hualapai and Mojave Indians. On August 22, 1890 Morgan formally turned the fort over to his choice for superintendent, Samuel M. McCowan. McCowan oversaw the opening of the school and remained its supervisor for six years.

While at the school, McCowan used the guidelines already in use in nearby schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Grand Junction, Colorado. McCowan hired teachers to instruct students in rudimentary English, mathematics, geography, and American history. He received funding to hire a farmer, blacksmith,

and carpenter to teach males vocational skills, and a matron to guide females in domestic skills such as sewing and cooking. With limited funds, McCowan found himself placing more emphasis on the vocational curriculum in an effort to provide students with necessities such as food and clothing.

In the mid-1890s problems associated with the removal of Native American children from their homes were becoming evident as runaways became a major problem at all schools. Reformers highlighted the hardships placed on both children and their families who were caught between two cultures.

A movement to reform educational policy began when Theodore Roosevelt appointed Francis Leupp Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1905. Between 1905 and 1920 Leupp worked to build a case against off-reservation boarding schools. In 1926 Secretary of the Interior Herbert Work commissioned the Institute of Government Research to complete a thorough study of reservation conditions throughout the country. Presented to Congress in 1928, the report, titled "The Problem of Indian Administration," known as the Meriam Report, found United States Indian policy to be a failure and was especially critical of education efforts.

Utilizing the social momentum of the Meriam Report, Indian policy shifted back toward the expansion of reservation schools and worked to close the remaining off-reservation institutions. It was under their authority that the Fort Mojave Industrial School closed in 1931.

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Scope and Contents Note

Fort Mojave Industrial School Records (1890-1923) consist of correspondence, documents regarding the school's finances and administrative operations, blueprints for a pump station, as well as policy implementation and fact finding documents. The school served the Hualapai and Mojave Indians at a site near present-day Kingman, Arizona. The correspondence is between the school's superintendent Samuel M. McCowan, and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan and Assistant Commissioner R. V. Belt.

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Arrangement of the Records

Collection remains in two books.

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Administrative Information

Access

This collection is open for research.

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Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 1968 by Carol Pierce; accession number 1968-02.

Processing Note

Collection originally processed by Sondra Cosgrove. In 2017 Joyce Moore edited the collection description and created an ArchivesSpace finding aid.

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Names and Subjects

- Indians of North America
- Off-reservation boarding schools -- Southwest, New -- History -- 19th century
- Indians, Treatment of -- United States
- School superintendents -- Arizona -- Biography
- Hualapai Indians -- Education -- History
- Indians of North America -- Cultural assimilation
- Mojave Indians -- Education-- History
- McCowan, Samuel M.
- Morgan, Thomas J.
- Belt, R.V.
- United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Pipa Aha Macav

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
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Book 1: correspondence and a blueprint design of the Fort Mojave Pump Station, 1890 box 01

Book 2: correspondence, administrative and financial information, 1891-1923 box 01