Guide to the Robert B. Griffith Collection

This finding aid was created by Christina Lamoureux on July 06, 2018.
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Summary Information

Creator: Griffith, Robert B.
Title: Robert B. Griffith Collection
ID: MS-00315
Date [inclusive]: 1928-1975
Physical Description: 2.40 Cubic Feet (4 boxes)
Physical Description: 2.05 Linear Feet
Language of the Material: English
Abstract: The Robert B. Griffith Collection (1928-1975) documents the work of Robert B. Griffith, an instrumental figure in the development of water resources in Las Vegas, Nevada, as well as the creation of McCarran International Airport and Nellis Air Force Base. The collection consists of Colorado River Commission papers, 1928 International Air Race documents, general correspondence, a feasibility study, an airport guide, American Legion papers, the memoirs of Alfred Merritt Smith, and death and burial records belonging to his father. The collection also includes slides from various countries, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Preferred Citation


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Biographical Note

Robert B. Griffith was born in 1899 in California and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada with his father E.W. Griffith, a Las Vegas contractor and pioneer, in 1905. He attended the University of Nevada in Reno, graduating in 1923 with a degree in civil engineering. That same year he married Ruth Atcheson and returned to Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1925, upon his appointment as postmaster, the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce assigned him the task of determining if the city could accommodate airmail service. As part of this task, Griffith helped the city lease Anderson Field, which was renamed Rockwell Field as part of the lease agreement. Upon the expiration of the lease, the owners of Rockwell Field sold the land and Griffith
selected a new site that later became Nellis Air Force Base. Griffith retired as postmaster in 1930, but continued to serve as an aviation expert for the community. He was instrumental in the development of both the Nellis Air Force Base and McCarran International Airport.

During World War II, Griffith began working towards securing water for Southern Nevada. Starting in 1957, Griffith served on the Colorado River Commission and served as chair in 1966. Griffith, along with other community leaders, convinced the federal government to assist in the building of a water pipeline that went from Lake Mead to the Las Vegas Valley. The project, initially named the Southern Nevada Water Project, supplies water to Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City, and Nellis Air Force Base. Griffith passed away in 1979. Three years later in 1982, the city renamed the project the Robert B. Griffith Water Project.

Sources:

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Scope and Contents Note

The Robert B. Griffith Collection (1928-1975) documents the work of Robert B. Griffith, an instrumental figure in the development of water resources in Las Vegas, Nevada, as well as the creation of McCarran International Airport and Nellis Air Force Base. The collection consists of Colorado River Commission papers, 1928 International Air Race documents, general correspondence, a feasibility study of a mechanical system for Griffith Phytotronics Laboratories at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a 1928 Oakland Municipal Airport guide, American Legion papers, the memoirs of Alfred Merritt Smith, and death and burial records belonging to his father. The collection also includes slides from various countries, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

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Arrangement

Materials remain as they were received.

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Administrative Information

Access Note
Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
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Acquisition Note
Materials were received periodically from 1980 to 1990; accession numbers 80-134 and 90-48.

Processing Note
In 2018, as part of an archival backlog project, Christina Lamoureux rehoused the materials, wrote the finding aid and entered the data into ArchivesSpace.

Related Materials

Related Collections
The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:


Names and Subjects

• Colorado River Commission of Nevada
• Southern Nevada
- American Legion
- Photographs
- Water rights

## Collection Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Containers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado River Commission papers, International Air Race correspondence and documents, Griffith Phytotronics Laboratories feasibility study, assorted water resource papers, Alfred Merritt Smith memoir, Oakland Municipal Airport guide, American Legion papers, and E.W. Griffith death and burial records, 1928-1975</td>
<td>box 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographic slides of the United States and Canada, 1950-1975</td>
<td>box 02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographic slides of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and other foreign countries, 1950-1975</td>
<td>box 03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographic slides of assorted landscapes, people, and objects, 1950-1975</td>
<td>box 04</td>
</tr>
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</table>