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The Museum of Northern Arizona
Harold S. Colton Memorial Library
3101 N. Fort Valley Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928)774-5213

Title

Wetherill Family collection

Dates

1867-1964, predominantly 1906-1946

Extent

20.4 cm textual records, 222 photographic images (222 prints, 3 safety negatives), 1 blueprint, one oversized page

Biographical History

The Wetherill family first arrived in the Colorado Plateau region in 1880, when Benjamin and Marion Wetherill moved their family to a homestead in the region. For the next several years, members of the family operated trading posts throughout the Colorado Plateau in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Some Wetherills are also credited with archaeological and exploratory activity in the area, including the discovery of Rainbow Bridge.

Benjamin Kite Wetherill (1832-1898) married Marion Thompson in 1856, and together they had Richard (1858-1910), Benjamin Alfred "Al" (1861-1950), Clayton [1861-1921], Anna (1865-1935), John (1866-1944), Winslow [1870-1939], and Alice (birth date unknown, died in infancy). B.K. Wetherill relocated to Colorado in 1879, began homesteading near the Mancos River in Colorado in 1880, and was joined by the rest of the family the following year. In 1882, the family began construction of a log house, which would be called the Alamo Ranch.

John Wetherill married Louisa Wade in 1896, and in 1900, the couple moved with their two children to New Mexico. There, they operated three trading posts at Ojo Alamo, Chavez, and Chaco Canyon, and organized guided tours of the area. In 1906, the couple relocated to Oljato in southern Utah, where they built and operated their own trading post. John Wetherill is known for organizing discovery expeditions in the region, and in 1909, he explored and is often credited with discovering the Rainbow Bridge. He also led a number of expeditions throughout remains of cliff dwellings, and in Tsegi Canyon, Tsegiotsosi Canyon, Monument Valley and Navajo Mountain. In 1910, the couple moved their trading post to Kayenta, Arizona, where they remained until the 1940s. He also served as U.S. Deputy Marshall at the National Parks Service's Navajo National Monument from 1909 until 1938, for which he never collected a salary.

In 1934, John Wetherill's nephew, Milton Wetherill was selected to act as seasonal ranger at the Navajo National Monument. He continued to serve in this post for a total of five summers.

Scope and Content

Records consist of Wetherill photographic images, correspondence, and journals from Wetherill excavations in the Colorado Plateau. It contains correspondence and papers relating to the Wetherill trading posts, John Wetherill's correspondence as custodian at Navajo National Monument, and various articles and notes relating to the family's research on Navajo language and culture. Additionally, there are family portraits, one blueprint, one oversized census record, and an unidentified account ledger from Texas in 1867.

System of Arrangement

Previous system of arrangement of the material assigned item-level inventory numbers to materials, regardless of activities to which items relate. All materials, with the exception of photographs, have been rearranged and placed in appropriate series. Therefore, previous numbers that appear on documents may not be relevant.

The material is now arranged in the following series:

- Series 1: Rainbow Bridge/Navajo National Monument Expeditions
- Series 2: Navajo Research Materials
- Series 3: Wetherill Trading Post Materials
- Series 4: John Wetherill Navajo National Monument Custodial Materials
- Series 5: Wetherill Family Materials

Conditions Governing Access

This collection contains culturally sensitive images; these are identified at the item level throughout the photograph files. Advance permission is required to view restricted materials. Please contact the MNA Archivist for more information and to obtain permission for viewing these materials.

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Languages and Scripts of the Materials

Materials in English and Navajo

Finding Aids

Earlier, more detailed inventories are available upon request. Numbers written on photographs correspond to such inventories, but are no longer applicable to current arrangement.

Custodial History

Materials created by John Wetherill between 1915 and 1938 remained in the custody of Milton Wetherill until their donation in 1958, 1960, 1961, and 1964. Materials created by Ben Wetherill in 1937 remained in the custody of his granddaughters, Dorothy Leak and Johnnie Lou Duncan until their donation in 1964. Assorted family materials were donated by Helen Wetherill Zimmerman, daughter of Winthrop Wetherill, in 1973.

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Immediate Sources of Acquisition

Milton Wetherill donated John Wetherill materials created between 1915 and 1938 in five separate donations: 1958, 1960, 1961, and two in 1964. Dorothy Leake and Johnnie Lou Duncan (granddaughters of John Wetherill) donated Ben Wetherill Materials created in 1937 in 1964. Helen Wetherill Zimmerman, daughter of Winthrop Wetherill, donated family materials in 1973.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected

Related Materials

Several family and regional archaeological records have been donated to the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado by family members in fifteen separate accessions.

Description Control

Finding aid written by Libby Coyner using *DACS*, 11 February 2009

Title

Series 1: Rainbow Bridge/Navajo National Monument Expeditions

Dates

circa 1900-1961, predominantly 1927-1937

Extent

5.5 cm of textual records, 200 photographic images (200 prints, 1 safety negative)

Scope and Content

This series contains photographs, journal pages, menu plans, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and a guest register of people taken on John Wetherill's excavations between 1927 and 1934, which took place in and around Rainbow Bridge, Navajo National Monument, and Monument Valley. It also contains manuscripts and notes on the Flattum and Stearns 1931 Rainbow Bridge Expedition, and a Frederic Stearns manuscript later published in *Plateau*.

Series 1: Rainbow Bridge/Navajo National Monument Expeditions				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-1-1-1	John Wetherill's Expedition Journals & Correspondence	1927-1934	2.5 cm textual	1.1
MS-1-1-2	Frederic Stearns' 1931 expedition	circa 1960s	1.5 cm textual, 5 prints	1.2
MS-1-1-3	Kiet Siel excavation sites	1909-1934, predominantly 1927-1934	28 prints	1.3
MS-1-1-4	Betatakin excavation site	circa 1927- 1937	10 prints	1.4
MS-1-1-5	Zion excavation site	circa 1934	33 prints	1.5
MS-1-1-6	Frijoles Canyon Ruins in New Mexico	circa 1927- 1937	5 prints	1.6

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MS-1-1-7	Kayenta excavation sites	1934	4 prints	1.7
MS-1-1-8	Marsh Pass excavation sites	circa 1927-1934	6 prints	1.8
MS-1-1-9	Rainbow Bridge, Round House Ruin, etc.	circa 1900-1934	23 prints, 1 safety negative	1.9
MS-1-1-10	Unidentified excavation sites	circa 1920-1937	40 prints	1.10
MS-1-1-11	Unidentified excavation sites	circa 1920-1937	39 prints	1.11
MS-1-1-12	Expeditions notebook copies, Zion National Park plans	1934, 1938	1 cm textual	2.8
MS-1-1-13	Archaeology newspaper clippings	1899, 1936-1963	.25 cm textual	2.12
MS-1-1-14	Benjamin "Al" Wetherill correspondences	1933, 1948	.25 cm textual	2.13
MS-1-1-15	Excavation sites, no locations	circa 1930s	7 prints	2.19

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Series 2: Navajo Research Materials

Dates

circa 1910-1930

Extent

2.1 cm of textual material

Scope and Content

Series contains handwritten sheets and note cards of Navajo language translations and symbols, a brochure on Navajo language released by Petty and Chapman's Indian Trading Post, and documents/lectures on Navajo culture. It also contains one Wetherill & Colville receipt book, which has been filled with handwritten Navajo stories.

Series 2: Navajo Research Materials				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-1-2-1	Navajo language translations, stories, notes	circa 1910-1930	2 cm textual	2.1
MS-1-2-2	Navajo witchcraft notes	circa 1939	.1 cm textual	2.9

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Series 3: Wetherill Trading Post Materials

Dates

1867, 1878, 1911-1937

Extent

11 cm textual materials, 1 oversized page

Scope and Content

Series consists of trading post account ledgers, account sheets, letter from Office of Indian Affairs Commissioner C.J. Rhoads to Senator Lynn J. Frazier, blueprint of Navajo and Zuni Reservation. Ledger and letter contained in folder 1 of the series contains no obvious connection to the Wetherill family, as it is dated 1867 and comes from King County, Texas.

Series 3: Wetherill Trading Post Materials				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-1-3-1	Trading post ledger, correspondence	1867	1.5 cm textual	2.2
MS-1-3-2	Account ledger, correspondence, blueprint	1911-1937	2 cm textual	2.3
MS-1-3-3	Census record	1937	1 oversized page	MF 1.1
MS-1-3-4	Ben Wetherill Navajo and Zuni jewelry correspondence	1940	.1 cm textual	2.10
MS-1-3-5	Wetherill and Hubbell Trading Post clippings	1903, 1930	.1 cm textual	2.14
MS-1-3-6	Winslow Wetherill trading post materials	1906-1917	.5 cm textual	2.15
MS-1-3-7	Hilda Wetherill trading post article	1928	.3 cm textual	2.16
MS-1-3-8	Trading Post Account Books – Two Gray Hills & Hyde Exploring Expedition	1900-1904	2 cm textual	3.1
MS-1-3-9	Trading Post Account Books	1878	2.5 cm textual	3.2

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Series 4: John Wetherill Navajo National Monument Custodial Materials

Dates

1915, 1931-1937

Extent

.3 cm textual records, 1 blueprint

Scope and Content

Records consist of correspondence between John Wetherill and Arno Cammerer (Director, National Parks Service), Frank Pinkley (Superintendent, Southwest Monuments branch of the NPS), and other NPS employees). The series also contains a newspaper clipping regarding transfer of land to the Navajo people, and one blue print of the Marsh Pass Project on the Navajo Reservation.

Series 4: John Wetherill Navajo National Monument Custodial Materials				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-1-4-1	Navajo National Monument correspondence, clippings, blueprint	1915, 1931-1937	.3 cm textual, 1 blueprint	2.4, MF 1.1

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Series 5: Wetherill Family Materials

Dates

circa 1870-1964

Extent

2.5 cm textual records, 22 photographic images (22 prints, 2 safety negatives)

Scope and Content

The Wetherill Family Materials series consists of family portraits, A.W. Wetherill's journey from Mancos to Dandy Crossing, newspaper clippings reporting on family events (obituaries, etc), a telegram, and various postcards.

Series 5: Wetherill Family Materials				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-1-5-1	Wetherill Family portrait	circa 1870	1 print	2.5
MS-1-5-2	A.W. Wetherill journal	circa 1897	1 cm textual	2.6
MS-1-5-3	Sara Robert Wetherill history of Wetherill Family	1964	.5 cm textual	2.7
MS-1-5-4	Ben Wetherill obituary (photocopied for preservation)	1950	.1 cm textual	2.11
MS-1-5-5	Wetherill Family newspaper clippings	1944-1954	.1 cm textual	2.17
MS-1-5-6	Wetherill Family genealogy, correspondence, etc.	1944-1956	1 cm textual	2.18
MS-1-5-7	Wetherill Family portraits/photos	circa 1914-1946	21 prints, 2 safety negatives	2.20
MS-1-5-8	Families From Village Wetheral	1948-1950	2 cm textual	3.3

LCSH Access Points

Frijoles Canyon (N.M.)
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (Ganado, Ariz.)
Kayenta (Ariz.)
Kayenta (Ariz.) -- History
Navajo Indian Reservation
Navajo Indians -- Arizona
Navajo Indians -- New Mexico
Navajo language
Navajo National Monument (Ariz.)
Navajo National Monument (Ariz.) -- History
Petroglyphs -- United States.
Petroglyphs -- Utah -- Zion National Park.
Pinkley, Frank
Rainbow Bridge-Monument Valley Expedition
Trading posts -- Arizona

Trading posts -- New Mexico
United States. National Park Service
Wetherill, Benjamin Alfred, 1861-1950
Wetherill family
Wetherill, John
Wetherill, Louisa Wade
Wetherill, Marietta, 1876-1954
Wetherill Mesa excavations
Wetherill Mesa studies