

Guide to the Beaver Creek Ranch Company Papers

WA MSS S-1301



by Heather L. Holeman

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P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	5
CORRESPONDENCE	5
BUSINESS AND LEGAL PAPERS	6
ADDITIONAL PAPERS	7
Selected Search Terms	8

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1301

CREATOR: Beaver Creek Ranch Company (Archulette City, Colo.)

TITLE: Beaver Creek Ranch Company papers

DATES: 1882–1915

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain correspondence, business, and legal papers documenting the history of the Beaver Creek Ranch Company. Subjects discussed include the management of the ranch, cattle drivers, and the responsibilities of ranch owners.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.beaver>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.beaver>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The papers were purchased from Whitlock Farm Booksellers in 1959 with proceeds from the William Robertson Coe Fund for Western Americana.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Beaver Creek Ranch Company Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Beaver Creek Ranch Company Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Scope and Contents

The Beaver Creek Ranch Company Papers document the organization and management of a cattle ranch in late nineteenth-century Colorado. They include chronologically arranged correspondence, business papers, legal documents, and printed material. The papers date from 1882 to 1915 with the bulk of material spanning the years 1884 to 1892.

The Beaver Creek Ranch Company was incorporated on May 21, 1884, in Washington, Litchfield County, Connecticut. According to its bylaws, the board of directors annually elected a president, treasurer, secretary, and superintendent. The superintendent, responsible for the management of the ranch, was the only officer required to live on the premises. The ranch was established in Ignacio, Colorado, on land acquired under terms of the 1862 Homestead Act. Ignacio had strong ties with the nearby boomtown of Durango, Colorado. The company remained in strong financial condition from 1884 to 1890, but, during the harsh winter of 1890-91, the ranch lost many cattle, forcing the stockholders to authorize the directors to dissolve the company in 1892.

The papers cover subjects relating to the development of southern Colorado, the lifestyles of the settlers, the financial management of cattle ranches, and the responsibilities of ranch owners. The correspondence contains several letters describing cattle drives. Expense reports, inventories, and accounts add to the detailed picture of how cattle drives were managed and organized. Scattered through the correspondence are references to the Indian Affairs Commission, local Indians, and Mexican sheep runners. Major correspondents include Alpheus G. Baker, William J. Ford, and A. S. Swords.

The legal documents include papers of incorporation, homestead documentation, annual stockholder reports, and papers concerning cattle sales and brands. There are also two undated versions of the bylaws.

Accounts include ledger books, monthly and yearly statements, cash accounts, and miscellaneous daily records, which provide documentation of the ranch's management. The financial standing of the company can be traced monthly between 1884 and 1892. The bank records, tax records, inventories, and expense reports complement the accounts. The bills and receipts trace the company's needs and practices. Bills from merchants in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado are present.

Printed material includes an Indian Affairs Commission proposal for contracts to supply Indians with food. Among the miscellaneous papers are an undated phrenological description of Helen R. Allen by Professor Hinnan and a genealogy of the Logan, Ford, and Leavett families.

Collection Contents

CORRESPONDENCE

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1884-85
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1886
b. 1, f. 3-4	Correspondence	1887
b. 1, f. 5-6	Correspondence	1888
b. 1, f. 7-8	Correspondence	1889
b. 1, f. 9	Correspondence	1890-91
b. 1, f. 10	Correspondence	1892
b. 1, f. 11	Correspondence	1893
b. 1, f. 12	Correspondence	1894
b. 1, f. 13	Correspondence	1896-1916
b. 1, f. 14-15	Correspondence	n.d.
b. 1, f. 16	Correspondence	n.d.

BUSINESS AND LEGAL PAPERS

b. 1, f. 17-25	Accounts	1884-92, n.d.
b. 2, f. 26-32	Bank records	1884-1901, n.d.
b. 2, f. 33-55	Bills and receipts	1884-93, n.d.
b. 3, f. 56	Expense reports	1885-89, n.d.
b. 3, f. 57	Inventories	1887-91
b. 3, f. 58-65	Legal papers	1882-92, n.d.
b. 3, f. 66-68	Ledgers	1884-86
b. 3, f. 69-71	Tax records	1885-93

ADDITIONAL PAPERS

b. 3, f. 72	Printed: Indian Affairs Proposal, Keenen & Sons livestock sale	1888
b. 3, f. 73	Genealogical chart	n.d.
b. 3, f. 74	Phrenological description	n.d.
b. 3, f. 75	Miscellaneous papers	n.d.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Cattle trade -- Colorado
Cattle trails
Farm corporations -- Colorado
Ranches -- Colorado

Genres / Formats

Accounts -- United States

Occupations

Ranchers -- Colorado

Names

Baker, Alpheus G.
Ford, W. J. (William J.), active 1882-1915
Swords, A. S.

Corporate Body

Beaver Creek Ranch Company (Archulette City,
Colo.)