



Guide to the Walking Box Ranch Collection

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Persistent URL for this finding aid: <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1w31k>

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Public Lands Institute
Contributor:	Bell, Dorothy
Title:	Walking Box Ranch Collection
ID:	MS-00657
Date [inclusive]:	1917 to 2011
Physical Description:	2.33 Cubic Feet (1 box, 1 framed item, 1 flat file)
Physical Description:	6.10 Linear Feet
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 maps related to the construction and operation of the ranch, 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 newsclippings pertain to the career of Rex Bell, Jr.

Preferred Citation

Walking Box Ranch Collection, 1917-2011. MS-00657. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1w31k>

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Historical Note

The Walking Box Ranch is a 160-acre ranch in Searchlight, Nevada that was owned by silent film stars Rex Bell and Clara Bow from the 1930s through the 1940s. Rex Bell (née George Francis Beldam) purchased the ranch in 1931 from the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company. The Walking Box Ranch name and cattle brand were inspired by a film making process and motif

popular at the time: a box camera mounted on a tripod. The property served as a working cattle ranch, and Bow and Bell had a 5,000 square foot Spanish Revival home built on the grounds. Rex Bell Jr. (née Rex Larbow Beldam) was born to Bell Sr. and Bow in 1934, and he grew up with his brother George (born in 1938) on the ranch until his parents separated 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 property as an executive retreat. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) purchased the property in 2005. The ranch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 for its association with cattle ranching and its architectural significance.

Sources:

"Screen test," last modified April 2013, <http://www.desertcompanion.com/article.cfm?ArticleID=552>

"Historical overview and context," last modified June 2008, https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/nepa/5201/13961/14062/06142010_WBR_Prelim_Draft_EA_Appendix_A_Hist_Overview.pdf

"Walking Box Ranch," last modified 2013, https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/pli_walking_box_ranch/

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Scope and Contents Note

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 maps related to the construction and operation of the ranch, 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 newsclippings pertain to the career of Rex Bell, Jr.

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Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

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Administrative Information

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.

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. Additional materials were donated in 2024 by Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Foundation via Laura Misajet (director); accession number 2024-084.

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. In 2018 the map was flattened and encapsulated in mylar for preservation purposes. In 2024, Sarah Jones added three additional maps from the 2024 accession.

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Related Materials

Related Collections

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

Walking Box Ranch Photograph Collection, 1880-1979. PH-00346. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Rex Bell Jr. oral history interview, 1977 March 01. OH-00181. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Rex Bell Jr. oral history interview, 2010 March 02. OH-00108. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Names and Subjects

- Walking Box Ranch (Searchlight, Nev.)
- Bell, Rex, 1903-1962
- Bell, Rex, Jr., 1934-2011

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Range and Waters of the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company, Triangulation Survey 1916: map, 1917 January 26	flat file 02
"Kholer Dual Operation with new Type D-1700 Automatic Switches" diagram map drawn for Rex Bell, 1935 July 29	flat file 02
"Map to accompany application to appropriate water for stockwatering by Karl F. Wiekkel" map, approximately 1930 to 1939	flat file 02
"U.S. Department of the Interior Grazing Service, region no. 3, Searchlight dipping vat" map, 1940 May	flat file 02
Walking Box Ranch slides, 2004 and undated	oversized box 01
Rex Bell, Jr. photographic prints, undated	oversized box 01
Rex Bell, Jr. newsclippings and memorial card, 1986, 2011	oversized box 01
Rex Bell, Sr. photographic prints, undated Physical Description: 2 Files	oversized box 01
Rex Bell, Sr. newsclippings regarding political and film career, 1929-1981	oversized box 01
Childhood chaps owned by Rex Bell, Jr. (framed), approximately 1935-1945	no container 00