

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the George F. Johnston Company Records

WA MSS S-2606



by Jennifer Meehan and Leigh Golden

2008

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-2606

CREATOR: George F. Johnston Company

TITLE: George F. Johnston Company records

DATES: 1901-1954

BULK DATES: 1901-1933

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 36.07 linear feet (38 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of records documenting the day-to-day administration and operation of the George F. Johnston Company of Etiwanda, California. The records date from 1901 to 1954, with the bulk dating from 1901 to 1933, and relate to the company's production, sale, and distribution of grapes, its finances, and its labor force, which was primarily Japanese American. Included are correspondence, invoices, statements, sales and expense receipts, shipping logs and manifests, claims records, ledgers, daily time reports and time books, bank documents, and related material. The collection provides documentation of the fruit trade and grape industry in California in the first half of the twentieth century, and sheds light on the work and experiences of fruit growers, viticulturists (grape growers), agricultural laborers, and vineyard laborers (grape pickers) in California during the same period.

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

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.johnston>.

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

Purchased from Charles Apfelbaum on the William Robertson Coe Fund, 2007.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The George F. Johnston Company Records is 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

George F. Johnston Company Records. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

The collection received a basic level of processing in 2007-2008. The material arrived at the library in a highly disorganized and dirty state; basic processing included rehousing all material into acid-free folders and boxes, surface cleaning of documents, and organization into files and series. Researchers should note that some material in the collection is still fairly dirty even after rehousing and surface cleaning.

George F. Johnston Company

The George F. Johnston Company was a grape growing and distributing company that operated in Etiwanda, California during the first half of the twentieth century--from circa 1905 to 1934 or later--and which supplied table grapes to many parts of the United States. The company was run by George F. Johnston. His sons, J. Spencer Johnston and Philip Johnston, also appear to have played a role in the company.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of records documenting the day-to-day administration and operation of the George F. Johnston Company of Etiwanda, California. The records date from 1901 to 1954, with the bulk dating from 1901 to 1933, and relate to the company's production, sale, and distribution of grapes, its finances, and its labor force, which was primarily Japanese American. Included are correspondence, invoices, statements, sales and expense receipts, shipping logs and manifests, claims records, ledgers, daily time reports and time books, bank documents, and related material.

The collection provides documentation of the fruit trade and grape industry in California in the first half of the twentieth century, and sheds light on the work and experiences of fruit growers, viticulturists (grape growers), agricultural laborers, and vineyard laborers (grape pickers) in California during the same period.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into five series: I. Alphabetical Files, 1912-1933. II. Other General Business Records, 1901-1954. III. Other Sales and Expense Records, 1911-1926. IV. Labor Records, 1915-1933. V. Bank Records, 1911-1950.

This organization represents an order imposed by library staff and is not meant to reflect how the records were organized by the company, but rather to provide access to material which was received by the library in a highly disorganized state. Records that lent themselves to alphabetical arrangement (ie. that could be attributed to a particular entity) were sorted into files by name. The decision to arrange this material alphabetically was based on the fact that small alphabetical groupings were found which seemed to suggest some level of alphabetical organization on the part of the creator. Other more format- or function-based records were organized into series by type.

Researchers should note that material in each series will often overlap with material found in other series, particularly amongst I. Alphabetical Files, II. Other General Business Records, and III. Other Sales and Expense Records. In order to locate all relevant or related material, researchers will likely need to consult each series.

Collection Contents

Series I: Alphabetical Files, 1912-1933

11.21 linear feet (12 boxes)

This series consists of material attributable to a particular entity, including produce, distribution, shipping, and supply companies with which the George F. Johnston Company did business and individuals who either worked for or did business with the company. Material includes correspondence, statements, invoices, receipts, manifests, shipping receipts, and other material relating to the administration and operation of the company and the sale and shipping of grapes.

Related material can found in [Other General Business Records](#) and [Other Sales and Expense Records](#).

Arranged into two subseries: Name Files and General Letter Files.

Name Files

This subseries consists of material relating to particular companies and of sufficient quantity to warrant being arranged into files or file groupings by the name of the company.

Files are arranged alphabetically. Material within files has not been arranged in any particular order.

b. 1, f. 1	Arenz Commission Company	1913
b. 1, f. 2	Associated Fruit Co.	1924-1926
b. 1, f. 3-15	California Pine Box Distributors (formerly California Pine Box & Lumber Co.)	1912-1933
b. 1, f. 16	Consolidated Produce Co.	1932-1933
b. 1, f. 17-19	Crombie & Company	1927-1928
	Dennis, Kimball & Pope, Inc.	
b. 2, f. 20-38	1914-1918	1914-1918
b. 3, f. 39-56	1918-1922	1918-1922
b. 4, f. 57-75	1922-1924	1922-1924
b. 5, f. 76-89	1925-1926	1925-1926
b. 5, f. 90	Descalzi Fruit Company	1913
b. 5, f. 91-97	Desel-Boettcher Company	1916-1933
b. 5, f. 98	George A. Scott	1913
b. 5, f. 99-100	Hancock Brothers Fruit Company	1915-1918
b. 6, f. 101-102	Harkrider-Keith-Cooke Company	1913-1914
b. 6, f. 103	James F. Fanning Fruit Company	1913
b. 6, f. 104	John B. Cancelmo Fancy Fruits	1913
b. 6, f. 105-111	John Meyer, Inc.	1913-1932

Name Files (continued)

b. 6, f. 112-114	Kimball Fruit Company	1927-1929
b. 6, f. 115-116	Klein Simpson Fruit Company	1928
b. 6, f. 117	P. L. Cuccia Fruit Company	1914-1923
b. 6, f. 118-121	Pruitt Commission Company	1912-1933
b. 6, f. 122-126	Sgobel & Day, Inc.	1932
b. 7, f. 127-136	Sgobel & Day, Inc.	1932-1933
b. 7, f. 137-141	Sun Maid Raisin Growers (formerly California Associated Raisin Company)	1913-1934
b. 7, f. 142-143	V. T. Monteleone	1922-1925

General Letter Files

This subseries consists of material relating to particular companies and individuals arranged into general files by first letter of the company name or the individual's surname. In certain instances, Johnston would begin conducting correspondence with a company and would later carry on correspondence with an individual from the company. Researchers will likely need to look under both company and individual name to locate all related material.

Files are arranged alphabetically. Material within files has not been arranged in any particular order.

b. 8, f. 144-163	A - C	1912-1933
b. 9, f. 164-185	D - H	1913-1932
b. 10, f. 186-209	I - P	1914-1933
b. 11, f. 210-227	P - S	1914-1932
b. 12, f. 228-241	T - Z, Unidentified	1916-1925

Series II: Other General Business Records, 1901-1954*4.83 linear feet (6 boxes)*

This series consists of material relating in general to the administration and operation of the George F. Johnston Company. Found here are shipping records including shipping logs and claims records; account records including ledgers; tax records; foreman reports; notebooks; and correspondence. Other materials, which document aspects of the grape industry in general, are a fruit and produce code book dating from 1918 and an undated photograph of Japanese laborers.

Related material can be found in [Alphabetical Files](#) and [Other Sales and Expense Records](#).

Files are largely arranged in chronological order.

b. 13, f. 242	Land Title	1901
b. 13, f. 243-248	Ledgers See also Ledger (from Series II) , Ledger (from Series II) , and Ledger (from Series II)	1901-1927
b. 13, f. 249	Shipments Sent and Received, Assets and Liabilities Season 1912	1905, 1912
b. 13, f. 250	Grape Shipments by Wells Fargo & Co. Express	1908-1909
b. 13, f. 251	Car Record	1911
b. 14, f. 252	Shipping Claims	1911
b. 14, f. 253	Grape Accounts, P. L. Cuccia	1911
b. 14, f. 254-257	Income Taxes	1914-1938
b. 14, f. 258-260	County Taxes	1914-1927
b. 14, f. 261	Notebook	1915, undated
b. 15, f. 262-263	Shipping and Related Material	1916
b. 15, f. 264	Correspondence	1916
b. 15, f. 265	J. C. Jones	1916-1918
b. 15, f. 266-267	Miscellaneous	1916-1922
b. 15, f. 268	Notebook	1918
b. 15, f. 269	Fruit and Produce Code Book	1918
b. 15, f. 270	1918 Season	1918
b. 15, f. 271	Phillip W. Brooks	1918-1921
b. 15, f. 272	Notebook	1919-1921
b. 15, f. 273	Correspondence with J. Spencer Johnston	1920-1925
b. 15, f. 274	Telegrams to Mrs. George F. Johnston	1920-1925
b. 15, f. 275	New Purchase Journal	1920-1927
b. 15, f. 276-277	Pacific Fruit Express Co.	1921

b. 15, f. 278-281	Miscellaneous	1923-1924
b. 15, f. 282	Fire Insurance Policy	circa 1924
b. 15, f. 283	Railroad Claims	1924
b. 15, f. 284	Relating to Drainage Canal through New Purchase	1924
b. 15, f. 285	Relating to 1924 Grape Crop	1924
	Shipping Log See: Shipping Log (from Series II)	1925
b. 15, f. 286	Printed Material	1925-1926
b. 16, f. 287	Claims Records	1926-1933
b. 16, f. 288	Correspondence	1927
b. 16, f. 289	California Vinyardist Association	1927-1928
b. 16, f. 290	Foreman Reports, etc.	1927-1928
b. 16, f. 291	Schmidt Lithograph Co.	1928
b. 16, f. 292	"Misc File"	1928
b. 16, f. 293	"Phoenix, Ariz. - John T. Barker Produce Co."	1928
b. 16, f. 294	Miscellaneous	1930-1933
b. 16, f. 295	State Compensation Insurance Fund	1931-1933
b. 16, f. 296	"Cal. Grape Control - Legal Descriptions of Vineyards and Remittance Records"	1931
b. 16, f. 297	"Oakland Fruit and Prod. - Rickett Prod. Co."	1932
b. 16, f. 298	Claims	1932
b. 16, f. 299	Rootings	1932
b. 16, f. 300-301	Foreman Reports, etc.	1932-1933
b. 16, f. 302	California Vinyardists Association	1932-1933
b. 16, f. 303	Printed Material	1932
b. 16, f. 304	"L.C.L."	1933
b. 16, f. 305	Grape Contract / Certificates of Weight and Measure	1933
b. 16, f. 306-307	Shipments Etiwanda	1933
b. 16, f. 308-309	Shipments Mecca	1933
b. 16, f. 310	"Personal and Important Letters"	1933
b. 16, f. 311	Federal State Marketing Service, Grape Report No. 86	1933
b. 16, f. 312	"Net and Ribbons"	1933

b. 16, f. 313	Schmidt Lithograph Co.	1933
b. 16, f. 314	Shipping Claims	1933-1934
b. 16, f. 315	Account Book	1944-1954
b. 16, f. 316	Photographs of Japanese Laborers Photographs of Japanese laborers	undated
	Forms (mostly blank)	
b. 16, f. 317	Confirmation Sheet	undated
b. 16, f. 318-319	Daily Insurance Report	1917, undated
b. 17, f. 320	Detailed Weight Manifest	undated
b. 17, f. 321	Stemmer Report	undated
b. 17, f. 322	Transfer Report	undated
b. 17, f. 323-325	Public Weighmaster's Certificate of Weight and Measure	undated
	Car Manifest See: Form, Car Manifest (from Series II)	undated
b. 18	Company Stamps	undated

Series III: Other Sales and Expense Records, 1911-1926*2.42 linear feet (3 boxes)*

This series consists of receipts, statements, and other material relating to grape sales and operation expenses of the George F. Johnston Company.

Related material can be found in [Alphabetical Files](#) and [Other General Business Records](#).

Files are arranged by type in chronological order.

Sales Records		
b. 19, f. 326-333	Grape Receipts	1911-1912
b. 19, f. 334	Sales Agreements (unsigned copies)	1912
b. 19, f. 335	Statement of Grapes	1913
b. 19, f. 336	Grape Contract and Receipts	1920
b. 19, f. 337-338	Grape Receipts	1921
b. 19, f. 339-341	Grape Receipts	1922
b. 20, f. 342	Grape Receipts	1922-1923
b. 20, f. 343	Grape Receipts / Certificates of Weight and Measure	1923
b. 20, f. 344	Grape Receipts	1924
b. 20, f. 345	Grape Receipts and Related Material	1925
b. 20, f. 346	Grape Receipts	1926
Expense Records		
b. 21, f. 347	Expenses	1911-1913
b. 21, f. 348-364	Statements and Receipts	1912-1923, 1933
b. 21, f. 365	Accounts Payable and Receivable	1919-1923

Series IV: Labor Records, 1915-1933

0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)

This series consists of daily time reports, statements, and time books for day laborers, many of Japanese descent, who worked picking grapes for the George F. Johnston Company.

Related material can be found filed under the name of individuals in [General Letter Files](#).

Files are largely arranged in chronological order.

b. 22, f. 366-375	Daily Time Reports	1915-1923
b. 23, f. 376-378	Daily Time Reports	1923-1927
b. 23, f. 379	Statements for Japanese Labor	1916
b. 23, f. 380	Picking Labor	1917-1921
b. 23, f. 381	Time Books	1919-1920
b. 23, f. 382	Monthly Time Book	1929-1940
b. 23, f. 383-384	Picking Labor	1932-1933

Series V: Bank Records, 1911-1950*11.42 linear feet (12 boxes)*

This series consists of returned checks, deposit slips, and statements, as well as checkbooks and promissary notes relating to the banking activities of the George F. Johnston Company.

Files are arranged by type.

b. 24, f. 385-388	Checkbooks	1912-1914
b. 24, f. 389-391	Promissary Notes and Related Material	1917-1929
b. 24, f. 392-403	Deposit Slips	1911-1923
b. 25, f. 404-413	Deposit Slips	1924-1932
b. 25, f. 414-419	Statements	1917-1925
b. 26, f. 420-421	Statements	1926-1927
	Statements See: Statements (from Series V)	1934
b. 26, f. 422	Checks	1926
b. 27, f. 423-426	Checks	1912-1916
b. 28, f. 427-430	Checks	1917-1920
b. 29, f. 431-434	Checks	1920-1922
b. 30, f. 435-438	Checks	1922-1925
b. 31, f. 439-442	Checks	1925-1928
b. 32, f. 443-446	Checks	1928-1930
b. 33, f. 447-450	Checks	1930-1932
b. 34, f. 451-453	Checks	1932-1950

Oversize

5.36 linear feet (4 boxes)

b. 35, f. 454	Ledger (from Series II)
b. 36, f. 455	Ledger (from Series II)
b. 37, f. 456	Ledger (from Series II)
b. 38, f. 457	Shipping Log (from Series II)
b. 38, f. 458	Form, Car Manifest (from Series II)
b. 38, f. 459	Statements (from Series V)

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

Agricultural laborers -- California
Agriculture -- California -- San Bernardino
County
Fruit growers -- California
Fruit trade -- California
Grape industry -- California
Japanese Americans -- California
Vineyard laborers
Viticulturists

Geographic Names

Etiwanda (Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.)

Genres / Formats

Account books
Logs (records)
Sales records
Shipping records
Time books
Time sheets

Names

Johnston, George F.
Johnston, J. Spencer
Johnston, Philip, Etiwanda (Calif.)

Corporate Body

George F. Johnston Company