

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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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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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