

MAIN ENTRY: John Arthur Hutchinson 1870- 1950
TITLE: Diary and Letters 1914-1947
COLLECTION NUMBER: 336
SIZE: .25 Cubic feet, one manuscript box

INTRODUCTION

This collection is one of several diaries belonging to John Arthur Hutchinson. This particular diary dates from December 21, 1914 to February 21, 1917. It is a daily record of the Hutchinson Ranch, which is on the National Historic Register and a working Colorado Centennial Ranch, located two miles east of Poncha Springs, Colorado.

The ranch that ranged livestock throughout the entire upper Arkansas valley was established in the early 1870's on the South Fork of the Arkansas River by Joseph Sykes Hutchinson. He was a former Civil War Captain who moved to the Arkansas Valley near Leadville during the mining boom of that era. He was superintendent of the Cache Creek Mining Company at Granite during the last half of the 1860's before starting the ranching operations. Joseph S. also served in the first Colorado State Legislature and as a Chaffee County Commissioner before his death in 1880.

John Arthur Hutchinson was the eldest son of Joseph S. Hutchinson. His diary reflects the life of a rancher near the turn of the century, the crops they planted, livestock raised, the machines and methods used in daily ranch life as well as mention of family and neighbors they worked and socialized with. The diary was put into typescript in 1967 by a nephew, Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson. It is 85 pages long and includes handdrawn maps of the ranch and outbuildings.

The second part of the papers are letters written by John Arthur Hutchinson to Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson, a nephew and an airline pilot who began his flying career in the 1930's. There are sixty four letters dating from 1932 until 1947. The topic of each letter varies, all include everyday family exchanges, however intermingled are recollections of local and Colorado history.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Arthur Hutchinson was born November 16, 1870. He was the eldest son of Joseph Sykes Hutchinson, founder of the Hutchinson Ranch near present day Salida, Colorado. Joseph died in 1882, leaving behind his wife, Anabelle, John Arthur and three other sons Bailey, Harold and Joseph Mills. The family continued to operate the cattle ranch as a family business. He was renowned locally as a historian and mentions in one of the letters that the Colorado Historical Society had referred a woman with some question about Arkansas Valley History to him (Letter #10, dated March 25, 1939).

An excerpt from a portion of the diary (taken from page 9 of the notes inserted near the middle) recorded by Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson, gives an example of events that John Arthur Hutchinson witnessed as he grew up on the ranch. This excerpt is based on oral histories that John Arthur told of his youth to the up and coming generations of Hutchinsons.

"He remembered as a small child playing in front of the fire in the McPherson store in Poncha as the stage coaches came and went, the excitement, and the coming and going of the men. At the ranch as a small boy he would hide in his mother's room when the Indians came to visit his father. He would peak (sic) out of the window at the braves holding horses in back of the house while the chiefs talked inside. The Utes would sometime come to the front porch where Mrs. McPherson would shoo them away with a broom, calling them heathen. (The Grandmother McPherson who had come in 1860 to the West with her Children Annabel and Jack.)

He said Colorow had atrocious table manners. He would throw the bones over his shouder in the dining room of the ranch home. Shavano, Arthur said, had a violent temper. He had killed one of his wives. Always emptied the salt cellars. On their way to the buffalo plains to hunt the Utes stopped to ask Arthur's Father if they could use one fo his rifles on the hunt. It was returned in good order on their return. They would stand silently in the kitchen until noticed, then would beg for a little salt."

John Arthur never married. He died January 18, 1950 and is buried in the Hutchinson family plot at Poncha Springs, Colorado.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The first part of the papers in this collection are a typescript of a diary of John Arthur Hutchinson, rancher and historian of Salida, Colorado. The diary was put into typescript by a nephew and family historian, Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson. It dates from December 21, 1914 to February 21, 1917. It is one of a series of dairies kept by John Arthur Hutchinson, the remainder of which are still in the family collection at the Hutchinson Ranch in Salida, Colorado. They may be reviewed upon request.

The second part of the papers are letters written by John Arthur Hutchinson to his nephew Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson. They contain the usual family chit chat, however contained within each letter is some historical account. The history within the letters pertains for the most part to the Arkansas River Valley and Chaffee County. The stories are readable and provide a picture of early pioneer and rural life set against the backdrop of Colorado history. John Arthur Hutchinson prided himself as a historian and demonstrates in his dairies an ability to record accurate preceptions of events around him.

There is an insert between pages 20 and 21 in the diary. Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson added 9 pages of notes and maps as reference to clarify the family, people and buildings Arthur talks about in the diary.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

1. Diary of John Arthur Hutchinson
78 typewritten pages
Dates: December 21, 1914 to February 21, 1917
Material arranged chronologically, daily entries
Description of daily ranch life duties as well as names of many other early Chaffee County residents.

2. Notes. Written by Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson expanding on material in the diary.
9 typewritten pages between pages 20 and 21 in the diary, 4 pages inserted at the end of the diary.
Notes were written in 1967 when J. D. Hutchinson transcribed the diary. They include family history as well as maps of the ranch buildings and surrounding area, including Poncha Springs.

3. Letters
64 pages of letters, typewritten.
Dates: October 23, 1932 - January 29, 1947
Letters written by John Arthur Hutchinson to Joseph Durhsen Hutchinson exchanging family news and describing historical events in Colorado.