
Register of the Frederick Russell Burnham Papers, 1879-1979

Hoover Institution Archives

Stanford University
Stanford, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Frederick Russell Burnham Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1879-1979

Creator: Burnham, Frederick Russell, 1861-

Extent: 7 ms. boxes, 24 envelopes, 1 oversize box.

Repository: Hoover Institution Archives
Stanford, California 94305-6010

Abstract: Correspondence, speeches and writings, clippings, other printed matter, photographs, and memorabilia, relating to the Matabele Wars of 1893 and 1896 in Rhodesia, the Boer War, exploration expeditions in Africa, and gold mining in Alaska during the Klondike gold rush.

Language: English

Access

Collection open for research.

Publication Rights

For copyright status, please contact the Hoover Institution Archives.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Frederick Russell Burnham Papers, [Box no.], Hoover Institution Archives.

Access Points

Great Britain. Army.

Klondike gold fields.

Matabele War, 1893.

Matabele War, 1896.

South African War, 1899-1902.

Africa.

Africa--Discovery and exploration.

Alaska.

Great Britain.

Rhodesia.

South Africa.

United States.

Zimbabwe.

Introduction

Born in the USA Burnham was brought up in California. He received a limited formal education but in the course of his early working life in the Western USA he acquired a knowledge of mining, particularly gold mining. From 1893 to 1897 he was in present-day Zimbabwe and Zambia. It was he who led the Northern Territories (BSA) Exploration Co. expedition which established for the outside world that major copper deposits existed in Central Africa.

In 1897 Burnham left Africa to take up gold mining in Alaska and the Klondike but in 1900 he returned to become the chief scout of the British forces engaged in the Boer War. In 1901, having been wounded, he left South Africa for London. There he was employed by the Wa Syndicate. For the Wa Syndicate he led an expedition through Ghana and Upper Volta which was concerned both with mineral occurrences and the possibility of improving the navigability of major rivers. He also served the Wa Syndicate as their London office manager.

From 1902 to 1904 Burnham was employed by the East Africa Syndicate. For them he led a mineral prospecting expedition which travelled extensively in the area around Lake Rudolph. Thereafter he was engaged in projects in the Americas for, or in conjunction with, John Hays Hammond, the mining magnate. During the 1920s and 1930s Burnham was engaged in the management of the Dominguez oilfield in California.

The papers of Frederick Burnham are not all in one place. One stray item is in the National Archives of Zimbabwe [1](#). The remainder are split between Yale University Library [2](#) and the Hoover Institution's Archives. The papers at Yale University were gifted by Major Burnham's widow in 1951. Those at the Hoover Institution she gifted in 1978. Whilst most of those gifted to Yale are subject to a closure which renders them inaccessible until the year 2000 [3](#), those at the Hoover Institution are open. The latter contain a substantial number of transcripts, that is to say copies laboriously made by hand from diaries, letters, etc. the originals of which are (in most cases, at least) now at Yale. One file of correspondence at the Hoover Institution Archives contains both transcripts and the originals from which they were copied [4](#): the transcripts are highly accurate. That the same is true of the other transcripts at the Hoover Institution can not, however, be guaranteed. Whilst some papers are in both repositories (the originals at Yale and the transcripts at the Hoover Institution) this is by no means the whole picture. Some papers at Yale (on mines in Chile and China, for instance) are not duplicated in the papers at the Hoover Institution. Vice versa, some materials at the Hoover Institution are not duplicates of papers at Yale.

Footnotes:

1. Baxter, T.W. and Burke, E.E. *Guide to the Historical Manuscripts in the National Archives of Rhodesia*, 1970, p.67.
2. Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New Haven, Connecticut 06520.
3. A collection of writings about Burnham and working papers for his two books *Scouting on Two Continents* (1928) and *Taking Chances* (1944) are open for research use.
4. Folder *Lummis, Charles F.*, Folder 10 in Box 3.

1861, May 11	Born, Tivoli, Minnesota
1870	Family moved to Los Angeles
1878-1882	Cowboy, hunter, prospector and scout in Arizona and Texas
1884	Marriage to Blanche Blick
1893	Trooper in BSA Police, Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]
1895	Prospecting in North West Rhodesia [Western Zambia]
1896-1897	Scout for British forces in Matabele [Ndebele] wars
1897-1900	Gold mining in Alaska and Klondike
1900-1901	Chief Scout of British forces in Boer War
1901	Awarded Distinguished Service Order
1901-1902	Working for Wa Syndicate in Gold Coast [Ghana] and London
1902-1904	Working for East Africa Syndicate. Led mineral prospecting expedition to Lake Rudolph
[1908-?]	Engaged in irrigation project in Yacqui River Delta, Mexico
1912-[?]	Director of Yacqui Delta Land and Water Co.
[1917-1918]	Manager of manganese and tungsten survey of Western USA
[?]	Manager of Burnham Exploration Co. [later Dominguez Oil Fields Co.]
1923	Burnham Exploration Co. and Union Oil Co. agreed to develop Dominguez Oilfield on a 50:50 basis
1928	Author, <i>Scouting on Two Continents</i>
[?]	Director of Union Oil Co.
1939	Death of Mrs Blanche Burnham
1943	Marriage to Ilo K. Willits [or Ferrce]
1944	Author, <i>Taking Chances</i>

1947

Died, California

Box Boxes 1-2 **BIOGRAPHICAL FILE, 1890-1948.**

Scope and Content Note

Biographical data and writings, a family tree, correspondence, clippings and publications.

Box Boxes 2-3 **CORRESPONDENCE, 1890-1963.**

Additional Note

Correspondence and transcripts of correspondence of Frederick R. and Ilo K. Burnham, arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box Box 4 **CORRESPONDENCE, MISCELLANEOUS, 1893-1964.**

Additional Note

Correspondence and transcripts of correspondence of Frederick R. and Ilo K. Burnham, arranged chronologically.

Box Box 4 **CORRESPONDENCE OF ILO K. BURNHAM, 1934-58.**

Additional Note

Correspondence arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box Box 4 **CORRESPONDENCE OF J.E. ELLIOTT, 1975-1979.**

Box Boxes 4-5 **SPEECHES AND WRITINGS, 1911-1949.**

Additional Note

Notes for speeches and drafts and printed copies of books and articles by Frederick R. Burnham, with correspondence and notes, chronological order.

Box Box 6 **NOTEBOOKS, 1895-1946.**

Additional Note

Notebooks containing transcripts of correspondence, agreements, diaries and reports, arranged by provenance of documents transcribed.

Box Box 6 **SUBJECT FILE, 1899-1936.**

Box Boxes 6-7 **CLIPPINGS, 1879-1951.**

Additional Note

Clippings from African, American and British newspapers, arranged chronologically.

Memorabilia CabMEMORABILIA

78082 - 10.A-V. ~~and~~ **AUDIO-VISUAL.**
Memorabilia Cabinet
and Slide Cabinet

BIOGRAPHICAL FILE, 1890-1948

General

Box 1, Folder 1-2

Correspondence, notes and clippings re Burnham and Russell family history. Photographic materials were removed from this file and placed in envelope J, 78082-10.A-V.

Folder 3

Notes and clippings re Frederick R. Burnham

Publications and Eulogies

Folder 4

Britt, Albert, *The Boy's Own Book of Adventurers*, 1923

Folder 5

Davis, Richard Harding, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 1907. See also correspondence with Davis (Box 2 Folder 10 below)

Folder 6

Goodland, Colonel H.T., *Hail and Farewell*, 1948

Folder 7

Lang, Andrew, *The Red True Story Book*, 1921

Folder 8

Russell, Charles Edward, *A Pioneer Editor in Early Iowa*, 1941

Folder 9

West, James E. and Lamb, Peter O., *He Who Sees in the Dark*, 1932

Folder 10

West, James E. (Compiler), *The Boy Scout's Book of True Adventure*, 1931

Box 2, Folder 1

S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., *California of the South, a History*, vol. 41933

CORRESPONDENCE, 1890-1963

- Box 2, Folder 2 **Baden-Powell, Lord Robert and Lady Olave, 1900-1953.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: Boer War; Boy Scouts; British army training; Yacqui Valley, Mexico
- Folder 3 **Bent, Arthur, 1899-1929.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: Bardeen Oil Trust; Western USA irrigation and dam schemes
- Folder 4 **Boy Scouts, 1909-1958**
Folder 5 **Boy Scouts, Phoenix, Arizona, 1941-52**
Folder 6 **Brooke, Jack, 1903-1908.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: travels around Lake Rudolph, East Africa, 1903; expedition to Tibet, 1905-1908
- Folder 7 **Burnham, Mrs. Blanche B., 1890-1892. Letters to Mrs. Burnham in California from her husband in Colorado and Missouri**
- Folder 8 **Christie-Crawford, Captain Alan, 1932-1950**
- Folder 9 **City of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1946-1963. Invitations to formal occasions**
- Folder 10 **Davis, Bob, 1940-1942**
Folder 11 **Davis, Richard Harding, 1906.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include chapter on Frederick R. Burnham in Davis's book *Real Soldiers of Fortune*
- Folder 12 **Dominguez Oil Fields Co., 1944-1946.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include management of Frederick R. Burnham's shareholding
- Folder 13 **Fisher, Sir Godfrey and Lady Geraldine, 1946-1960**
- Folder 14 **Fry, Verle N., 1942-1944.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include copyright on Burnham's book *Taking Chances*
- Box 3, Folder 1 **Gifford, Lord, and members of his family, 1896-1940.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include wars in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Contains agreement between Frederick R. Burnham, Hon. Maurice Gifford and Pearl Ingram and Lord Gifford and F.I. Ricarde-Deaver for the exploitation of a concession in Rhodesia
- Folder 2 **Grant, Madison, 1928-1934.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include Redwoods Preservation League
- Folder 3 **Gross, Theodore, 1942-1947.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: possible film of Burnham's book *Scouting on Two Continents*; rifle training for Boy Scouts

Folder 4	Haggard, Sir H. Rider, 1922-1924. Scope and Content Note Subjects include Frederick R. Burnham's activities on behalf of J.H. Hammond in Mexico and the USA
Folder 5	Hammond, John Hays, 1905-1936. Scope and Content Note Subjects include: Burnham Exploration Co.; Colorado River Valley Development; development of the <i>gas lift</i> method of oil extraction; Dominguez Oil Field; land dealings; Hammond's campaign to become Secretary for the Interior; Union Oil Co.; Yacqui Delta Land and Water Co., Mexico
Folder 6 Folder 7	Henry, Bill, 1943-1947 Holder, Frederick, 1909-1917. Scope and Content Note Subjects include: preservation of California's wildlife; public relations aspects of Yacqui Delta developments; publishing propositions
Folder 8	Hunter-Weston, General Sir Aylmer, 1911-1937. Scope and Content Note Subjects include: American and British politics; World War One
Folder 9	Kennedy, William P., 1945-1953. Scope and Content Note Subjects include publication of Burnham's book <i>Taking Chances</i>
Folder 10	Lummis, Charles F., 1908-1927. Scope and Content Note Subjects include Southwest Society (of the) Archaeological Society of America. See also Box 3 Folder 6 below
Folder 11	Mackie, W.W., 1916-1945. Scope and Content Note Subjects include development of irrigation crops
Folder 12	Macomber, A.K. and H.J., 1910-1946. Scope and Content Note Subjects include gift of the Macomber collection of artefacts from Africa and Oceania to Arizona State Museum. Contains report on Black Bear gold mine prepared by Frederick R. Burnham, 1915. See also Box 3 Folder 19 below
Folder 13 Folder 14	<i>The Outpost</i> (Regimental Magazine of the British South Africa Police), 1941-1947 Paddon, Major Cecil, 1945-1953. Scope and Content Note Subjects include Society of Members of the 1893 Columns, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)
Folder 15	Pinchot, Gifford, 1910-1939. Scope and Content Note Subjects include Republican Party politics
Folder 16 Folder 17	Posselt, E. Harry, 1946-1952 Roosevelt, Theodore, and Roosevelt Memorial Association, 1917-1949. Scope and Content Note Subjects include proposal to form an American volunteer force to fight against Germany, 1917. See also Box 4 Folder 1 below

Folder 18

Schlegal, Oswald, 1936-1954

Folder 19

Stauffer, Charles A., 1946-1949.

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include Arizona State Museum. See also Box 3 Folder 12 above

Folder 20

Wright, Howell, 1940-1954.

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include gift of papers of Frederick R. Burnham to Yale University's Howell Wright Collection of Rhodesiana and South Africana

CORRESPONDENCE, MISCELLANEOUS

Box 4, Folder 1

1893-1927

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include: Frederick R. Burnham's South California manganese mine interests, 1916-1917; journey on East African coast, 1893; mineral prospecting in the vicinity of Lake Rudolph, East Africa, 1904; proposal to form an American volunteer force to fight against Germany, 1917; Republican Party politics, 1908-1912; Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1896-1902; US policy towards Mexico, 1915; Wa Syndicate, Gold Coast (Ghana), 1901. Contains agreement for payment of Frederick R. Burnham as selling agent for Tehama timber lands, 1917.

Folder 2

1930-1964

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include reminiscences of Frederick R. Burnham and of his former colleagues and comrades.

CORRESPONDENCE OF ILO. K. BURNHAM

Box 4, Folder 3

Crook, Colonel W.J., and (?), George, 1934-1944.

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include: California Arabian Standard Oil (Corporation?), Bahrien; Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois

Folder 4

Knowland, Senator William F., 1950-1958

Folder 5

Millikan, Robert A., 1948-1952

Folder 6

Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, 1946-1948. See also Box 3 Folder 6 above

Folder 7

Stiles, John A., 1948-1958

CORRESPONDENCE OF J.E. ELLIOT

Box 4, Folder 8

Burnham, Ilo. K., 1975-1979.

Scope and Content Note

Subjects include gift of Burnham papers to Hoover Institution Archives

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

Box 4, Folder 9	<p>Speeches, 1911-1939. Scope and Content Note Subjects include: Arizona State Museum's Macomber Collection; Frederick R. Burnham's early life in California and other Western states; game ranching; State Parks. Most speeches delivered to Sunsetters Club, Los Angeles</p>
Folder 10 Folder 11	<p>Scouting on Two Continents, 1928 <i>Fra Alaska Til Kap</i> (Danish edition) Manuscript and typescript drafts, including substantial amount of unpublished material</p>
Box 5 Folder 1	<p>Taking Chances, 1944 Burnham, Frederick R., <i>Taking Chances</i>, Haynes Corporation, 1944, a copy as published</p>
Folder 2-3	<p>Copies of inscriptions written in presentation copies of <i>Taking Chances</i>. The recipients are named and numbered to 464</p>
Folder 4	<p>Letters of thanks from recipients and requests for copies</p>
Folder 5	<p>Drafts of chapter on Winston Churchill with related papers</p>
Folder 6	<p>Haynes Corporation, printers. Correspondence and invoices</p>
Folder 7	<p>Historical Society of Southern California <i>Quarterly</i>, 1942 March (containing article apparently used by Frederick R. Burnham)</p>
	<p>Miscellaneous writings</p>
Folder 8	<p>Rhodes, Cecil. Drafts of an article with related papers, 1902-1944</p>
Folder 9	<p>Selous, Frederick C. Drafts of an article for the Boone and Crockett Club <i>Annual Report</i>, 1929</p>
Folder 10	<p>Wholly miscellaneous writings. Scope and Content Note Subjects include: hunting, mining, prospecting and scouting in the USA and Africa; proposal to form an American volunteer force to fight against Germany; Theodore Roosevelt, 1920s-1940s</p>

NOTEBOOKS

- Box 6, Folder 1 **Transcripts of agreements, correspondence and reports.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: East African Syndicate, 1902-1909; Matabele (Ndebele) War, 1896-1897; Northern Territories (BSA) Exploration Co. 1895-1899; Wa Syndicate, 1901-1902
- Folder 2 **Transcripts of letters sent by Frederick R. Burnham to Northern Territories (BSA) Exploration Co., H. Greene and Lord Gifford re business transactions including land deals, mineral developments and Northern Rhodesian (Zambian) concessions, 1897**
- Folder 3 **Transcripts of correspondence, orders and reports, 1900-1905.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: Boer War; East Africa Syndicate
- Folder 4 **Transcripts of correspondence and memoirs, 1917-1946.**
Scope and Content Note
The memoirs concern Earl Grey, Sir H. Rider Haggard and E.H. Harriman. Subjects of the correspondence include the oil extraction industry in California
- Folder 5 **Transcripts of diaries kept by A. King Macomber, John Blick (?) Gillfillan and (?) Stewart whilst mineral prospecting in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) for the Northern Territories (BSA) Exploration Co., 1895. Minerals mentioned include copper, gold and salt**
- Folder 6 **Transcripts of diary kept by John Blick whilst on Wa Syndicate expedition in Gold Coast (Ghana), 1901.**
Scope and Content Note
Subjects include: gold deposits; possibility of improving the navigability of inland waterways. Contains an account of North Eastern Hausaland taken down in writing by John Blick from one of his porters

SUBJECT FILE

Box 6, Folder 7-9

Alaska and Klondike, 1899-1936. Transcripts of correspondence, working papers for a publication and printed ephemera. Photographic materials were removed from this file and placed in envelope G, 78082-10.A-V.

CLIPPINGS

- Box 6, Folder 10 **1879-1944**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include Rhodesia.
- Folder 11 **1893-1901**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include: Rhodesia; South Africa; West Africa.
- Folder 12 **1896-1918**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include: Rhodesia; South Africa.
- Box 7, Folder 1 **1900-1909**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include: Boer War; East Africa; Mexico; West Africa.
- Folder 2 **1910-1919**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include: game ranching; mineral surveying in North America; World War One.
- Folder 3 **1910-1946 Miscellaneous.**
Folder 4 **1920-1929.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include: California State Park Commission; Frederick R. Burnham's travels in Australasia; publication of *Scouting on Two Continents*; Save the Redwoods League
- Folder 5 **1930-1939. Miscellaneous**
Folder 6 **1931-1935.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Subjects include Major G.H. Schoof
- Folder 7 **1940-1951.**
 Scope and Content Note
 Contains obituaries of Frederick R. Burnham

MEMORABILIA

memorabilia-cabinet Memorabilia
cabinet

- 1 Child's sherrif badge, 1905
- 1 Conker (Horse Chestnut nut)
- 1 *Cut-throat* razor
- 1 Cycle padlock
- 1 Decorated card with message in (Arabic?)
- 1 Facsimile of a small stone inscribed with (Egyptian?) hieroglyphs
- 10 Glass negatives depicting East Africa, 1902-1903
- 1 Gollywog lapel pin
- 1 Greek medallion, modern
- 1 Gunpowder can, small
- 1 Indigenous worked copper artefact, Central African, late Nineteenth Century
- 1 Lock of hair, Mrs. William Russell
- 1 Medallion inscribed *Courage, Loyalty, Honor*
- 6 Mineral samples
- 3 North American Indian pouches
- 1 Printing block, Frederick R. Burnham
- 1 Sample book depicting Spanish tiles, 1930s or 1940s
- 1 Sea horse
- 1 Sea shell
- 1 Sheath for a knife
- 1 Snake skin
- 1 Southern Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) crown (coin), 1953
- 1 (Stirrup?)
- 1 Token issued by J. Lawley, Cape Town, (1900?)

78082 - 10.A-V **PHOTOGRAPHS.**

Slide Cabinet

Memorabilia Cabinet

Envelope A	164 prints depicting East African scenes, people and mineral occurrences, mostly Nairobi and vicinity of lake Rudolph 1902-1903
Envelope B	18 prints depicting Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) scenes, including Great Zimbabwe undated
Envelope C	23 prints depicting South African and Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) scenes, including commemoration ceremonies for the 1893 pioneer columns in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). 1890s-1940s.
Envelope D	7 prints depicting an exhibition of the Howell Wright Collection of Rhodesiana and South Africana in Cleveland public library prior to its presentation to Yale University Library. 1950?
Envelope E	145 prints depicting scenes, people, mineral occurrences and military forces in Golf Coast (Ghana) and Upper Volta, including Kintampo market women and villages destroyed by Samori. 1901
Envelope F	28 prints depicting miscellaneous African subjects undated
Envelope G	14 prints depicting houses, street scenes and local scenery in and around Skagway, Alaska 1899?
Envelope H	3 prints with one related press clipping depicting Tibet and/or Western China, taken by Jack Brooke. 1909?
Envelope I	24 prints and 1 sketch depicting Frederick R. Burnham. 1900s-1940s
Envelope J	20 prints depicting members of the Burnham and Russell families and their automobiles. 1861-1904
Envelope K	35 prints depicting members of Frederick R. Burnham's family in Alaska, Britain, California and East Africa. 1880s-1940s
Envelope L	15 prints depicting Frederick R. Burnham's early homes in California 1880s-?
Envelope M	53 prints depicting Frederick R. Burnham's Hollywood homes, including trophies and other memorabilia collected whilst travelling. 1930s-1940s
Envelope N	17 prints depicting Frederick R. Burnham's homes and grave. ?-1940s
Envelope O	39 prints depicting Frederick R. Burnham's personal friends and their homes. 1890s-1940s
Envelope P	10 prints, no common factor, 1870s-1940s, including 1870 lynching in Los Angeles, 190? inscribed stone, Yacqui Valley, Mexico, 1938 Dominguez Oilfield.
Envelope Q	61 negatives depicting East Africa 1902-1903
Envelope R	53 negatives depicting West Africa 1901
Envelope S	25 negatives depicting Frederick R. Burnham's Hollywood homes 1930s-1940s
Envelope T	3 negatives depicting a group including W. Glenn Campbell outside Stanford University Faculty Club. 1972
Envelope U	61 postcards and 1 Christmas card depicting Alaska Rhodesia and other subjects.
mV-mW	31 prints depicting one of Frederick R. Burnham's Hollywood homes. 1940s
mX	4 prints, no common factor undated
m*Y	9 prints depicting Alaska 1930s
m*Z	3 prints and 2 cartoons, no common factor, 1900-1939, including , 1938-1939 Sunset Club Christmas dinner parties, 1939 Kofa Mountain Game Range, Arizona.
fAA	album containing 20 prints depicting one of Frederick R. Burnham's California Homes 1930s or 1940s
Slides	23 slides depicting Frederick R. Burnham, one of his homes and a Boy Scout memorial to him 1940s-1950s
Memorabilia Cabinet	10 glass negatives depicting East Africa 1902-1903