Overview of the Collection

Creator  Withycombe, James, 1854-1919.
Title  Withycombe Family Collection
Dates  1844-1918 (inclusive)
       1844 1918
       1897-1911 (bulk)
       1897 1911
Quantity  1.00 cubic feet, including 12 photographs, (2 boxes, including 1 oversize box)
Collection Number  MSS Withycombe
Summary  The Withycombe Family Collection consists of agriculture publications assembled by James Withycombe and his son Robert Withycombe and photographs of James Withycombe and the Withycombe House in Corvallis. James Withycombe was appointed Professor of Agriculture at Oregon Agricultural College in 1898 and the Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station in 1908 and held these positions until he became Governor of Oregon in 1915. Robert Withycombe earned an agriculture degree from Oregon Agricultural College in 1901 and was Superintendent of the Eastern Oregon Experiment Station in Union in 1906-1931. Items from this collection have been digitized and are available in Oregon Digital.
Repository  Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives Research Center
Special Collections and Archives Research Center
121 The Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR
97331-4501
Telephone: 541-737-2075
Fax: 541-737-8674
scarc@oregonstate.edu
Access Restrictions  Collection is open for research.
Languages  English

Biographical Note

James Withycombe was born in Tavistock, England on March 21st, 1854 to parents Thomas and Mary Ann Withycombe. Withycombe grew up with five siblings on their parents' farm. In 1871, he immigrated to the United States with his family. He and his family settled outside of Hillsboro, Oregon. In 1875, he purchased a 100-acre wheat field for fifteen dollars an acre. After purchasing this land, he decided to move away from wheat and plant multiple different crops on his piece of land. This decision made him
the first farmer in the area to practice diversified farming. On June of the same year, he married Isabel Carpenter.

In 1889, James Withycombe became the state veterinarian for Oregon. He was offered this position, even though he had only taken one veterinary class while he lived in England. He held this position until 1898, when he became a professor of agriculture at Oregon Agricultural College. In 1908, Withycombe was appointed Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station; he also served as Head of the Dairy Husbandry Department. Withycombe was never formally trained in agriculture, but his experience as an innovative farmer influenced his appointment to these positions which he held for 16 years until he became governor on January 23rd, 1915. He remained the Governor of Oregon until his death on March 3rd, 1919.

James’ son Thomas Robert Withycombe (known as Robert) graduated from Oregon Agricultural College in 1901 with an undergraduate degree in agriculture; he served as Superintendent of the Eastern Oregon Experiment Station in Union from 1906 to 1931.

The Withycombe House on Monroe Avenue in Corvallis was purchased by Oregon Agricultural College from the Withycombe family in about 1917 and served as a Home Management House for several decades.

Withycombe Hall on the Corvallis campus was named for James Withycombe at the time of its construction in 1952.

Content Description

The Withycombe Family Collection consists of agriculture publications assembled by James Withycombe and his son Robert Withycombe and photographs of James Withycombe and the Withycombe House in Corvallis.

The bulk of the collection is comprised of books on agricultural topics that were assembled by James and Robert Withycombe, many of which were required texts at Oregon Agricultural College in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and may be have been used by James as an instructor and/or Robert as a student. The family may have also used these texts to inform themselves about farming practices. Topics include keeping livestock, soil health and maintenance, dry farming, and farming business tools.

Of special note is a book on farm accounting written by John A. Bexell, Professor of Commerce at Oregon Agricultural College. The collection also includes one publication written by Withycombe during his time as a faculty member at Oregon Agricultural College on the profitability of small poultry flocks.

The photographic component of this collection includes many images depicting James Withycombe; several of these show Withycombe on horseback. Other photographs depict the 1911 Farming Demonstration Train tour of Oregon. An image of Withycombe in front of Agriculture Hall (currently Furman Hall) and a photograph of the family’s home (known as Withycombe House) on Monroe Avenue in Corvallis, Oregon are also part of the collection.

Items from this collection have been digitized and are available in Oregon Digital.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

Withycombe Family Collection, 1844-1918
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv750762
Administrative Information

Arrangement


Acquisition Information

The materials were donated to the Oregon State University Animal Sciences Department by James Withycombe's grandson, Thomas Withycombe, in 2005, and were transferred to the former University Archives from the Animal Sciences Department shortly thereafter.

Processing Note

Preliminary information about this collection was placed online in 2012; the collection was fully processed and described in 2019-2020.

Related Materials

The Special Collections and Archives Research Center's holdings include hundreds of collections pertaining to agriculture and farming, agricultural research, and the agricultural extension and outreach programs in Oregon. Of particular note are the Agricultural Experiment Station Records (RG 025). More information about farm demonstration trains in Oregon is available in the Extension Service Records (RG 111) and Photographs (P 062). Photographs of James Withycombe, Withycombe House, and Withycombe Hall are available in Harriet's Photograph Collection. The Oregon Historical Society has materials documenting Withycombe's role as a farmer, Director of the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, and Oregon Governor in the James Withycombe Papers.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series 1: Agriculture and Farming Books, 1844-1918

Series 1 consists of agriculture and farming books that were assembled by James Withycombe and his son Robert Withycombe. These publications may have been used by James as an instructor and/or Robert as a student at Oregon Agricultural Collection. The Withycombe family may have used these to inform and develop their farming practices. The books address a variety of topics including draining of farm land, soil health and maintenance, dry land farming, animal care, and farm accounting and business practices. Of special note is the 1911 book Farm Accounting and Business Methods by Oregon Agricultural College professor J.A. Bexell. The publications are arranged chronologically.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1.01        | The Book of the Farm, Volume 1  
Author: Henry Stephens                                               | 1844  |
| 1.02        | Gray's Lessons in Botany: The Elements of Botany for Beginners and for Schools  
Author: Asa Gray                                                  | 1887  |
| 1.03        | Land Draining: A Handbook for Farmers on the Principles and Practice of Farm Draining  
Author: Manly Miles                                                  | 1897  |
| 1.04        | Experimental Plant Physiology  
Author: D.T. MacDougal                                                  | 1898  |
| 1.05        | The Rural Science Series: The Care of Animals  
Author: Nelson Mayo                                                  | 1903  |
| 1.06        | The Rural Science Series: The Farmer's Business Handbook  
Author: Isaac Roberts                                                 | 1903  |
| 1.07        | The Rural Science Series: How to Choose a Farm  
Author: Thomas Hunt                                                  | 1906  |
| 1.08        | How to Keep Farm Accounts: A Practical Book for the Practical Farmer  
Author: H.L. Steiner                                                  | 1908  |
| 1.09        | The Elements of the Science of Nutrition  
Author: Graham Lusk                                                   | 1909  |
| 1.10        | Short Stories About Famous Saddle Horses  
Author: Herbert Krum                                                   | 1910  |
| 1.11        | Farm Accounting and Business Methods  
Author: J.A. Bexell                                                    | 1911  |
| 1.12        | Dry Land Farming  
Author: Thomas Shaw                                                   | 1911  |
| 1.13        | Farm Science: A Foundation Textbook on Agriculture  
Author: W.J. Spillman                                                 | 1918  |

**Series 2: Publication by Withycombe, 1905**

Withycombe Family Collection, 1844-1918  
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Series 2 consists of Station Bulletin 84, *Poultry Under Confinement*, by James Withycombe published by the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station in 1905. This bulletin reports on research regarding the profitability of small poultry flocks. The publication is available [online](http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv750762).

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| 1.14         | *Poultry Under Confinement*  
Station Bulletin 84 by James Withycombe. | 1905 |

### Series 3: Photographs, circa 1910-1911

Series 3 consists of 12 photographic prints featuring James Withycombe, the 1911 Farming Demonstration Train in central Oregon, and the Withycombe House in Corvallis, Oregon. Many of the images of Withycombe show him on horseback. Several of the images have been digitized and are available in [Oregon Digital](http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv750762).

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<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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| 1.15         | Farming Demonstration Train  
6 prints. This train was sponsored by the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company (O-W R&N); includes an image of the Culver (Oregon) station in Jefferson County (central Oregon). | 1911 |
| 1.16         | Equestrian Poses  
3 images of Withycombe on horseback. | undated |
| 1.17         | Corvallis Photographs  
Includes a clipping of a published photograph of the Withycombe House and a photographic print of Withycombe standing at the entrance to Agriculture Hall (now Furman Hall). | undated |

### Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**

Withycombe Family Collection, 1844-1918  
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv750762
Agriculture--Accounting.
Agriculture--Oregon.
Dry farming.
Farm management--Oregon.

Personal Names:
Withycombe, James, 1854-1919.

Corporate Names:
Oregon Agricultural College
Oregon Agricultural College. Experiment Station.

Form or Genre Terms:
Photographic prints.

Other Creators:
Personal Names:
Bexell, J. A. (John Andrew), 1867-1938.
(creator)

Corporate Names:
Oregon Agricultural College. Experiment Station.
(creator)

Finding Aid Authors: Maya Bergmann and Elizabeth Nielsen.
2020

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