
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MS 71**Benton, Jesse James, 1864-1946
Papers, 1907-1943****DESCRIPTION**

The bulk of the collection is the handwritten manuscript of Benton's autobiography. Also includes various agreements, deeds, bills of sale and contracts in Spanish with English transcripts, and land edict by Porfirio Díaz concerning the Overlook Copper Company in the Montezuma District, Sonora.

2 Boxes, 1.75 linear ft.

ACQUISITION

Provenance is unknown.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

COPYRIGHT

Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

Riva Dean processed this collection in May 2002.

ARRANGEMENT

Collection is arranged by format.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jesse James Benton, cowboy and rancher, was born in Kentucky in 1864. His family moved to Texas in 1872. He moved to Arizona in 1879 and first settled in Holbrook and Winslow and moving to a ranch near Pearce in 1885. In 1898 he moved to a ranch in the Sam Simon valley and moved again to Douglas in 1909. He finally settled in Tucson in 1916. In 1943, he published his autobiography *Cow by the Tail*. He died in Tucson in 1946.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the collection is the handwritten manuscript which was later turned into the published book, *Cow by the Tail*. In the introduction to the book, Richard Summers of the University of Arizona says that he did not make many changes, but this does not seem to be the case. The handwritten manuscript (in pencil) is full of original spelling and grammar. It is interesting for Benton's colorful language and description. There are two folders that seem to be disconnected from the main manuscript; one begins "The rout we traveled with cattle..." and the other begins "Who Were the Pioneers of Arizona."

Benton begins the manuscript with the family trip from Kentucky to Texas and describes the journey including the towns along the way. He also gives careful attention to the songs that were sung around the camps. He describes outlaws, the Indians, the settlers in Texas. His mother died in 1876 and he decided to leave home and become a cowboy. He describes cowboy lore, hunting buffalo, life among the Comanches. He arrived in Arizona in 1882 and first went to Tombstone, which he describes but decided to go north and worked on ranches around Show Low. He ran a dairy in Pearce, Arizona and describes ranching in Texas Canyon.

MS 71 Benton
Box and Folder List

Box 1

- f. 1-9 Autobiography, Vol. 1-9
- f. 10 Manuscript: "The Rout (sic) we traveled with cattle...."
- f. 11 Manuscript: "Who were the Pioneers of Arizona...."
- f. 12 Mining Documents, 1907-1916 (In Spanish)
- f. 13 Mining Documents, 1907-1916 (translations)

Box 2

Six land edicts by Porfirio Díaz concerning the Overlook Copper Company in the Montezuma District, Sonora.