

Furnas, Robert Wilkinson

RG1 Furnas, Robert Wilkinson, 1824-1905
SG10 Papers, 1844-1905
Brownville, Nebr.; state governor, agriculturist
Linear ft.: 20.7
Approx. no. of items: 22,300

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Furnas was one of the early territorial pioneers, who came to Nebraska from Ohio on April 6, 1856. Very shortly after his arrival he began the publication of the Brownville Nebraska Advertiser, one of the most influential of the early newspapers, continuing as editor and publisher until 1867.

Formerly a Whig, Furnas joined the newly formed Republican Party. He was particularly active in political affairs, and served four terms in the territorial Legislature.

During the Civil War he was a colonel in the Army, commanding three regiments of Indian troops in the Indian Territory. He resigned his command and returned to Nebraska to organize the Second Nebraska Cavalry, which saw service against the Sioux on the Western frontier. After his regiment was mustered out of service, Furnas was appointed agent of the Omaha Indian Agency and held that position from 1861-1868.

Furnas' one term as governor, 1873-75, was not particularly successful, and feeling that he didn't have a chance at re-election, he withdrew from active participation in politics at the end of his term, spending the rest of his life in the nursery business and as a proponent of better agricultural methods in Nebraska.

He was instrumental in creating the State Board of Agriculture and served as its first president and later as its secretary for approximately two decades. The latter position consisted almost entirely of planning and arranging for the Nebraska State Fair held annually in September. In addition, he served as a commissioner to several national and international expositions. He was an active participant in several agricultural, horticultural and other related organizations and served as president of the International Fairs and Expositions and the American Fair Association. Furnas was one of the organizers of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and for many years served as president.

He is the author of numerous agricultural pamphlets several articles in the Proceedings and Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society and editor of Arbor Day, a collection of articles published in 1886. He married Mary Elizabeth McComas on October 29, 1845, and they were the parents of eight children. Mrs. Furnas died on April 1, 1897, and Furnas was married for a second time on December 25, 1899, to Susannah Emswiler Jameson.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of forty-one manuscript boxes and three shelved volumes of material which is arranged in eight subgroups. Subgroup one through four consists of the papers of Robert W. Furnas as they were microfilmed by the Nebraska State Historical Society under the auspices of the National Historical Publications Commission during the period, 1965 to 1967. Researchers are encouraged to utilize the microfilm edition of the papers located in the Newspaper Room and to consult with the Archivist on use of the original material. The Subgroups are divided in the following manner: Subgroup 1, incoming correspondence, 1844-1906, Rolls 1-10; Subgroup 2, outgoing correspondence, 1845-1904, Roll 11; Subgroup 3, bound volumes, 1849-1882, Roll 12; Subgroup 4, documents, 1844-1905, Roll 13. Subgroups five through eight are arranged in seven series, which were not microfilmed. Subgroup 5, scrapbooks, 1872-1904; Subgroup 6, documents, 1862-1905; Subgroup 7, newspapers, 1832-1892; Subgroup 8, miscellany, 1850-1903.

DESCRIPTION

SUBGROUP 1 INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, 1844-1906

Boxes 1-10 Includes: Index of correspondence contained in Box 1

SUBGROUP 2 OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, 1845-1904

Box 11

SUBGROUP 3 BOUND VOLUMES, 1849-1882

Boxes 12-14 Includes: Records of Furnas' printing and publishing career, military activity, Indian Agency Administration and business ventures.

SUBGROUP 4 DOCUMENTS , 1844-1905,

Box 15 Includes: Treaties, reports, warrants and deeds, bills, and speeches, petitions and resolutions, including fake petition of 1873.

SUBGROUP 5 SCRAPBOOKS, 1872-1904

SERIES 1

Box 16 1872-1873 Furnas-Omaha Herald Libel Suit, Agricultural Reports, editorials by the Omaha Herald (3 books)

Box 17 1873-1871 Agriculture statistics; silver issue (2 books)

Box 18 1873-1874 Furnas-Omaha Herald Libel Suit, editorials on taxation, grasshopper invasion (2 books)

Box 19 1873-1875 Party politics, frontier life, state conventions (2 books)

Box 20 1868-1875 Editorials on economy, silver issue, capitol removal (2 books)

Box 21 1874-1875 Grasshopper invasion, Nebraska politics (2 books)

Box 22 1878-1882 Agriculture of the Southwest, income tax and monetary articles, Garfield inauguration (3 books)

Box 23 1885 Worlds' Exposition at New Orleans (2 books)

Box 24 1880-1894 Editorials on prominent men of the United States, editorials inserted in an 1866-1867 edition of the Congressional Globe

Box 25 1890-1893 Editorials on state fairs, 1891, 1893 (3 books)

Box 26 1894-1902 State Fairs, articles relating political and private life of Furnas (2 books).

Box 27 1900-1904 Death of J. Sterling Morton, state fair of 1901 (2 books) and a Prose & Poetry Scrapbook packed on shelf.

SUBGROUP 6 DOCUMENTS, 1862-1905

SERIES 1 RECORDS, 1862-1878

Box 28

Folders 1-2 Invoices, requisitions vouchers of the first Indian Regiment and the 2nd Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry, 1862-1864.

Folder 3 Invoices, warrants and receipts of Furnas' Governorship, 1873, warranty deeds, 1868-1878.

Folders 4-6 Bills, receipts, records pertaining to state and county fairs.

Box 25

Folders 7-12 Omaha Indian Agency materials, vouchers, receipts of the agency, 1864-1866.

Box 30

Folders 13-22 Financial records and receipt books of Omaha Indian Agency

SERIES 2 FINANCIAL FILE, 1863-1895

Box 31

Folders 1-3 Personal financial records of Furnas, including bank statements, tax statements, deposit slips and checks.

Box 32

Folders 4-7 Bank books, checks and vouchers, 1863-1855

Box 33

Folder 8 Personal checks, receipts, notes, 1870-1895, warrants against Nebraska State Board of Agriculture, 1888, Treasury receipts, 1886.

SUBGROUP 7 NEWSPAPERS

SERIES 1

NEWSPAPERS, 1835-1892, from various parts of the United States; complete index to papers contained in Manuscript box # 1. Newspapers are shelved in oversize and labeled MS2501.

SUBGROUP 8 MISCELLANY, 1850-1904

SERIES 1 NEWSPAPERS CLIPPINGS, 1850-1904

Box 34
Folders 1-6
Box 35
Folders 7-12

SERIES 2 PRINTED MATERIAL, 1834-1902

Box 36
Folders 1-5

SERIES 3 MICELLANEOUS MISCELLANY

Boxes 37-40 Miscellaneous ledgers, autograph books, address books, Bible, account books

Box 41
Folders 1-5 Receipts, reports, documents and notations
(Oversize) Misc, documents and certificates

NSHS HAS ON MICROFILM:

Reel 1 December 1844-September 1872 (#8393)
Reel 2 October 1872-June 1874 (#8394)
Reel 3 July 1874-December 1883 (#8395)
Reel 4 January 1884-April 1885 (#8396)
Reel 5 April 1885-September 1887 (#8397)
Reel 6 October 1887-March 1889 (#8398)
Reel 7 April 1889-December 1891 (#8399)
Reel 8 January 1892-October 1897 (#8400)
Reel 9 November 1897-June 1900 (#8401)
Reel 10 August 1900-September 1906 (#8402)
Reel 11 February 1845-November 1904 (#8403)
Reel 12 May 1849-1882 (#8404)
Reel 13 1844-1905 (#8405)
Reel 14 Furnas Journal, 1862-1863 (#13799)