
Inventory of the John S. Harbison Papers

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Creator: Harbison, J. S. (John S.)

Title: John S. Harbison Papers

Date (inclusive): 1857-1920

Extent: 1.3 linear feet

Abstract: John S. Harbison (1826-1912) was one of the first beekeepers to import bees into California and was an inventor of innovative beehives and new methods of rearing queen bees. He authored *An Improved System of Propagating the Honey Bee* (1860) and *The Beekeeper's Directory* (1861). His papers contain daybooks documenting Harbison's beekeeping activities; correspondence to and from his brothers, his patent representatives, and business partners; and deeds, business receipts and patent grants.

Physical location: Researchers should contact Special Collections to request collections, as many are stored offsite.

Repository: University of California, Davis. General Library. Dept. of Special Collections.

Davis, California 95616-5292

Collection number: D-080

Language of Material: Collection materials in English.

Biography

John Stewart Harbison was born to William and Margaret (Curry) Harbison in Beaver County, Pennsylvania on September 28, 1826. Harbison followed in his father's footsteps and became interested in beekeeping and the nursery trade.

In 1854, he settled in Calaveras County, California where he began searching for gold. His quest for gold did not last long and in early 1855 he relocated to Sutterville, near Sacramento, where he started the first nursery of fruit and shade trees in the Sacramento Valley.

Harbison returned to Pennsylvania in 1857 with the intention of shipping bees back to California. His first shipment of bees arrived in San Francisco on November 30, 1857 aboard the *Sonora*. Since this endeavor was successful, he obtained a second supply of bees from Pennsylvania the following year.

During 1857-1858, Harbison created a bee hive with a section honey box. The hive, which was patented by Harbison, is described and illustrated in his book, *The Beekeeper's Directory* (1861).

Harbison formed a four year partnership with R.G. Clark in 1869 for the purpose of introducing and keeping bees in San Diego County. Harbison agreed to furnish one hundred and ten colonies of bees, bee supplies, and the necessary financing to transport and keep the bees in San Diego County, while Clark had complete charge of the apiaries. The partners equally divided the surplus honey and any increase in the colonies.

By 1873, Clark & Harbison had sold three hundred colonies of bees to the residents of San Diego County. When their four year contract expired in November 1873, they split the bees and apiary sites evenly and operated their apiaries separately.

Harbison continued his nursery and apiary business near Sacramento until February 1874 when he moved to San Diego.

He passed away on October 12, 1912.

Source:

Watkins, Lee H. "John S. Harbison: Pioneer San Diego Beekeeper." *The Journal of San Diego History*. 15.4 (1969): 17-26.

Scope and Content

The John S. Harbison Papers contain daybooks documenting Harbison's beekeeping activities; correspondence to and from his brothers, his patent representatives, and business partners; and deeds, business receipts and patent grants. Also included are manuscripts of his book *The Beekeepers' Directory*.

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection is arranged in six series: 1. Writings by Harbison, 2. Correspondence, 3. Legal and Financial Materials, 4. Works by Others, 5. Ephemera, 6. Photographic Materials.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Harbison, J. S. (John S.)--Archives

Beekeepers--California

Bee culture--California

Bees--California

Access

Collection is open for research.

Processing Information

Sara Gunasekara processed this collection and created and encoded this finding aid.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], John S. Harbison Papers, D-080, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis.

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Series 1. Writings by Harbison 1857-1911

Physical Description: 19 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains daybooks documenting Harbison's beekeeping activities as well as manuscripts of his book, *The Beekeeper's Directory*.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Box 2:1 | The Beekeeper's Directory, Advertisement and List of plates circa 1860 |
| Box 2:2 | The Beekeeper's Directory, Explanation of plates and Preface circa 1860 |
| Box 2:3 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 1-89 circa 1860 |
| Box 2:4 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 90-158 circa 1860 |
| Box 2:5 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 159-254 circa 1860 |
| Box 2:6 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 255-320 circa 1860 |
| Box 2:7 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 321-358 circa 1860 |
| Box 3:1 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 359-414 circa 1860 |
| Box 3:2 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 415-447 circa 1860 |
| Box 3:3 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 486-499 circa 1860 |
| Box 3:4 | The Beekeeper's Directory, p. 505-508; Index circa 1860 |
| Box 1:1 | Daybook 1857 June 12-1858 February 3
Physical Description: 1 volume |
| Box 1:2 | Daybook 1866 January 4-1866 December 3
Physical Description: 1 volume |
| Box 1:3 | Daybook 1876 April 20-1876 August 11
Physical Description: 1 volume |
| Box 1:4 | Daybook 1876 September 4-1876 October 31
Physical Description: 1 volume |
| Box 1:5 | Instructions for care of bees while enroute to Japan undated |
| Box 1:6 | Explanation of parts undated |
| Box 1:7 | Notes of bee book titles? undated |
| Box 1:8 | Outline Suggestion for an Aparian Experiment Station 1911 November 8 |

Series 2. Correspondence 1858-1920

Physical Description: 52 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains correspondence to and from Harbison's brothers, his patent representatives, and business partners.

Arranged in three subseries: Outgoing, Incoming, and Third Party.

Subseries 2.1 **Outgoing 1865-1912**

Physical Description: 12 folders

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box 1:9	Benton, Frank 1912 September 16
Box 1:10	Clark, R.C. 1865 March 25
Box 1:11	Daly, John C. 1875 June 30
Box 1:12	Harbison, J.H. 1876 September 9
Box 1:13	Harbison, J.H. 1876 October 30
Box 1:14	Harbison, J.H. 1876 November 1
Box 1:15	Harbison, J.H. 1876 November 4
Box 1:16	Harbison, J.H.? 1876?
Box 1:17	Harbison, Mary H. 1876 September 26
Box 1:18	Harbison, Mary H. 1876 October 7
Box 1:19	Harbison, Mary H. 1876 October 21
Box 1:20	Munn & Co. 1875 September 29

Subseries 2.2 **Incoming 1858-1885**

Physical Description: 34 folders

Scope and Content Note

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box 1:21	Boston Journal of Commerce 1877 February 15
Box 1:22	Bowron, J. 1875 June 12
Box 1:23	Cave, D. 1875 June 24
Box 1:24	Central Pacific Railroad Company 1880 July 12
Box 1:25	Central Pacific Railroad Company 1880 August 6
Box 1:26	Clark, R.G. 1873 September 26
Box 1:27	Curtis, Willie J. 1875 June 11
Box 1:28	Daly, John C. 1875 June 9
Box 1:29	Dann, E. 1875 June 7
Box 1:30	Dewey & Co. 1872 August 23
Box 1:31	Dewey & Co. 1872 August 28
Box 1:32	Dewey & Co. 1872 September 19
Box 1:33	Garduer, Robert 1875 June 16
Box 1:34	Gaskill Bros. 1881 July 28
Box 1:35	Gerber & Lorenz 1875 June 3
Box 1:36	Harbison, Andrew 1875 December
Box 1:37	Harbison, W.C. 1876 August 10
Box 1:38	Harbison, W.C. 1876 September 14
Box 1:39	Hellman, Samuel 1875 June 17
Box 1:40	Lohman, Coghill, & Rountree 1875 December 15
Box 1:41	Nagura, Asam 1876 December 20
Box 1:42	Perrine, C.O. 1875 June 25
Box 1:43	Pleasants, J.E. 1884 December 20
Box 1:44	Pleasants, J.E. 1885 January 8
Box 1:45	Pleasants, J.E. 1885 January 13
Box 1:46	Pleasants, J.E. 1885 April 15
Box 1:47	Putnam, Seth H. and Dinwoody, Henry 1872 May 30
Box 1:48	Reed, Joe 1875 June 23
Box 1:49	Roberts, George H. 1875 June 26
Box 1:50	Scientific American 1875 June 15
Box 1:51	Scientific American 1875 September 6

Box 1:52 **Scientific American undated**
Box 1:53 **Sweetser & Alsip 1875 June 9**
Box 1:54 **Umpleby, John H. 1875 June 18**
Box 1:55 **United States Patent Office 1858 February 16**
Box 1:56 **United States Patent Office 1876 November 1**
Box 1:57 **United States Patent Office 1876 November 8**

Subseries 2.3 **Third Party 1875-1920**

Physical Description: 6 folders

Scope and Content Note

Letters that are to or between individuals other than Harbison. Arranged alphabetically by author

Box 1:58 **National Gold Bank to Gentlemen 1876 September 9**
Box 1:59 **Phillips, E.F. to Mary Harbison 1920 March 4**
Box 1:60 **Scientific American to Andrew Harbison 1875 December 20**
Box 1:61 **United States Patent Office to Andrew Harbison 1875 November 18**
Box 1:62 **United States Patent Office to Andrew Harbison 1875 December 2**
Box 1:63 **United States Patent Office to Andrew Harbison 1875 December 17**

Series 3. **Legal and Financial Materials 1857-1892**

Physical Description: 10 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains deeds, patent grants, and receipts. Arranged alphabetically.

Box 1:64 **Articles of agreement between Guy S. Hamilton, John S. Harbison, and S.M. Lincoln 1859 October 21**
Box 1:65 **Assignment of patent, A. Harbison to J. Harbison 1875 October 22**
Box 1:66 **Deed from United States General Land Office to Peter Nelson 1892 February 23**
Box 1:67 **Deed of J.S. Harbison to Odd Fellows Bank as mortgage 1870 September 17**
Box 1:68 **Deed of real estate from S.M. Lincoln to John S. Harbison 1859 October 21**
Box 1:69 **Deed of real estate from V.N. Leonard to John S. Harbison 1858 January 29**
Box 1:70 **Deed of trust from J.S. Harbison to C.H. Swift and William P. Coleman 1868 August 28**
Box 1:71 **Deed or farm right of Kidder hive from S.H. Putnam to J.S. Harbison 1879 May 26**
Box 3:5 **Grant of letters patent to Harbison for improvement in grated entrances to bee hives 1876 January 11**
Box 1:72 **Receipts 1857-1880**

Physical Description: 9 receipts

Scope and Content Note

Contains receipts, mostly for freight shipped via the railroad.

Series 4. **Works by Others circa 1860**

Physical Description: 3 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains writings by individuals other than Harbison. Arranged alphabetically by author.

Box 3:6 **Cleveland, Daniel. Bee pasturage plants of San Diego County, California undated**
Box 3:7 **Sherman, E.A. Wax, Transportation of bees, Untitled manuscript. undated**
Box 3:8 **Wheeler, O.C. Introductory Essay to Harbison's Beekeeper's Directory circa 1860**

Series 5. **Ephemera 1859-1877**

Physical Description: 10 folders

Box 1:73 **Advertisement about centennial diploma reproductions by Theo Leonhardt & Sons 1877 October 20**
Box D Folio 6 **Article about Harbison in *Boston Journal of Commerce* 1876 December 16**
Box D Folio 6 **Article about Harbison in *San Diego News*, extra edition undated**

- Box 1:74 **Certificate to Harbison from the California State Agricultural Society 1859 December 19**
- Box 1:75 **Clipping: The Uses of Honey undated**
- Box 1:76 **Description of Charles Foulk improvement in bee hives 1874 June 19?**
- Box 1:77 **Description of John Harbison improvement in grated entrance to bee hives 1876 January 11**
- Box 1:78 **Flyer from Thurber & Co. announcing partnership with Harbison 1877?**
- Box 1:79 **Flyer from Thurber & Co. announcing produce prices 1877?**
- Box 1:80 **Fragment from United States Government circular regarding patents undated**
- Box 1:81 **Harbison & Dowling labels for honey comb cases, (in pieces) undated**

Series 6. Photographic Materials circa 1905-1919

Physical Description: 10 folders

Scope and Content Note

Contains prints and lantern slides of Harbison and his apiary.

- Box 1:82 **Harbison and one of his hives circa 1905**
Physical Description: 1 lantern slide
- Box 1:83 **Harbison apiary, San Diego County 1919**
Physical Description: 9 prints
- Box 1:84 **Harbison examining one of his colonies circa 1905**
Physical Description: 1 lantern slide
- Box 1:85 **Harbison, John [poor quality copy photograph] undated**
Physical Description: 1 print
- Box 1:86 **Harbison, John undated**
Physical Description: 1 print
- Box 1:87 **Harbison section of comb honey undated**
Physical Description: 1 print
- Box 1:88 **Harbison's Sweetwater apiary circa 1905**
Physical Description: 1 lantern slide
- Box 1:89 **Harbison's two pound honey sections circa 1905**
Physical Description: 1 lantern slide
- Box 1:90 **Hive at Harbison's apiary, San Diego County 1919**
Physical Description: 1 print
- Box 1:91 **Hives at Harbison's apiary, San Diego County 1919**
Physical Description: 1 print