Descriptive Summary

Title: Ronald B. Robie papers


Collection Number: WRCA 140

Extent: 14 linear feet

Repository: Rivera Library. Special Collections Department.
Riverside, CA 92517-5900

Languages: English

Provenance

The Ronald B. Robie papers were donated to the Water Resources Collections and Archives in 1990 by Ronald B. Robie.

Access

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Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [date if possible], Ronald B. Robie papers (WRCA 140). Water Resources Collections and Archives. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Biography

Ronald B. Robie was born March 13, 1937 in Oakland, California. Raised in Oakland, he attended schools there and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a B.A. in journalism in 1958 and an M.A., also in journalism, in 1960. In 1967, he received his J.D. from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Robie moved from Oakland to Sacramento in 1960 to work as a legislative intern and was chosen to work for Carley Porter, the influential Chair of the Assembly Committee on Water. Robie began working with Porter's office during the campaign over the state referendum on the Burns-Porter Act; ultimately accepted by voters, the act authorized the financing and construction of California's State Water Project. For the following 23 years, Robie devoted his career to California water policy issues and played a pivotal role in setting the state's course on those questions. Over that time, he acquired a reputation as an environmentalist who was also able to maintain the confidence of water developers in the state. He has characterized his approach to water policy as simultaneously emphasizing the directions of water development, water quality improvement, and water conservation and management.

Robie's influence on water issues has been exercised through terms at three state government posts. During his term with Carley Porter and the Assembly Committee on Water, two landmark water bills passed into law. The State Water Resources Control Board Act (1967) created that board to address issues of water quality and water rights; the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act (1969) revised California's water pollution law and assigned the task of administering the pollution control program to the board. It is generally recognized that the two acts were largely drafted by Robie. In 1969, Robie was appointed by Governor Reagan to be the lawyer member of the State Water Resources Control Board. During the six years Robie served on it, the board handed down a number of major, controversial decisions on environmental protection for the San Francisco Bay Delta, the New Melones Dam area, and the American River. Governor Brown appointed Robie to be Director of the California Department of Water Resources in 1975 where he served until 1983. In addition to addressing issues like sources of energy for the State Water Project, water rights law, and drought, Robie spent many years in negotiating for construction of the Peripheral Canal; the proposal was eventually defeated in a 1982 referendum. As one of its chief architects, Robie defended the proposal as a compromise which would have both completed the State Water Project and protected the environment of the Delta.

Since leaving the Department of Water Resources, Robie has been active as a judge; at this time he is a Judge of the Superior Court in Sacramento. He has taught at McGeorge School of Law and has published many articles on water issues in professional and environmental journals. An oral history interview with Robie, The California State Department of Water Resources, 1975-1983, has been published by the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Collection Scope and Contents
The Ronald B. Robie papers consist of files and documents assembled by Robie during his years with the Assembly Committee on Water, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the California Department of Water Resources. The collection contains materials whose dates span from 1963-1982; the majority, however, are concentrated in the period from 1967-1979. A large portion of the material to be found in the collection is made up of copies of Robie's incoming and outgoing correspondence (as well as letters neither to nor from him) clippings, and office memoranda. Also present in significant amounts are legal papers, including briefs field during the late 1960s and early 1970s on New Melones Dam, the Delta, and the American River; a collection of legal opinions out of the Department of Water Resources; and documentation of miscellaneous other litigation. Binders (often with indexes) were compiled on topics such as the Dos Rios Dam Hearings; the Study Project on the Water Quality Control Program (which resulted in recommendations incorporated into the Porter-Cologne bill); Water Quality Control Actions taken by the State Water Resources Control Board; the California Water Advisory Panel; and the Governor's Commission to Review Water Rights Law. These contain very focused materials and may include reports, minutes of meetings, transcripts of testimony, charts and other types of documents. Robie has also kept copies of over 70 speeches by 40 prominent commentators on the water scene. Twenty-three binders, accumulated during Robie's term as Director of the Department of Water Resources, contain memoranda of activities by various staff members, providing an inside view of the workings of the organization. The Department of Water Resources years represent the largest group of materials in the collection; the most extensively documented topic is the process of negotiating the Peripheral Canal, primarily during the years 1977-1980. A notable weak spot is documentation of the Peripheral Canal issue after it came up for public referendum as Proposition 9. Virtually absent, also, is discussion of the 1976-1977 drought.

The arrangement of the Robie papers is described fully in an inventory on the following pages. It was decided during processing of the collection at the archives to group the papers into three series corresponding to Robie's three appointments. Materials within each of the three series were arranged into chronological order also during processing. Most of the descriptive headings used within each series were those originally given to the materials by Robie; where a heading may have been ambiguous or incomplete, another was assigned by the processor. The composition of the materials at the binder and file levels has been retained as originally brought together by Robie. However, thick subject files, made up of many loose papers, were broken up into groups of smaller folders. In the process, when sub-units within a file could be discerned and rearrangement seemed to add to the intelligibility of the contents, papers were shifted. For example, in the Peripheral Canal section of the Department of Water Resources series, copies of the bills and their various amendments were scattered throughout each of their individual files separated by other documents and unnecessarily duplicated at times, as well. It was decided within each file to move these from their somewhat random positions and collect them together.

Two related collections in the archives which researchers may also find useful are the speeches given between 1958-1973 by William R. Gianelli, Robie's predecessor at the Department of Water Resources (ask for GIAN), and the transcripts of hearings held before the State Water Resources Control Board in 1969 and 1970 on applications to appropriate water from the Delta (ask for WRCA 093).

Collection Number
Collection number updated February 2019. Legacy collection number was MS 91/1. This change was part of a project in 2018/2019 to update the collection numbers for collections in the Water Resources Collections and Archives.

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Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
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California. State Water Resources Control Board
California. Legislature. Assembly. Committee on Water
California -- Politics and government
California Water Plans, 1960-
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I. Assembly Committee on Water 1967-1969
I. Assembly Committee on Water 1967-1969

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  - Correspondence, newspaper clippings, press releases.

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- Physical Description: 2 folders
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  - Correspondence, newspaper and journal clippings, memoranda.

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<td>(1/71-9/71; 1171-12/71; 1972; 1973-74)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Briefs, Decisions, memoranda, transcript of testimony, correspondence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 12, folder 63</th>
<th>Peripheral Canal 1969-1970, 1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, reports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 12, folder 64</th>
<th>Martinez Hearing SWRCB 14 March 1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 binder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript of public hearing to review discharge cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 12, folder 65</th>
<th>Kerry Mulligan, Resignation as Chair SWRCB 1972</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 folder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clippings, press releases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, folder 66</th>
<th>Planning and Conservation Task Force 1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 folder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, folder 67-72</th>
<th>1974 Legislation: SB 1873, AB 3070, AB 3204 1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 6 folders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clippings, correspondence, reports, memoranda, copies of bills as amended, proposed amendments, bill analyses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, folder 73</th>
<th>Bank of America vs. SWRCB (Rancho Murietta Appeal) 1971-1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 large folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twenty five sections of briefs. An index is provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13-14, folder 74-76</th>
<th>Contra Costa Co. Water Agency vs. SWRCB 1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 3 folders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contents: &quot;Reply to Petitioners' Brief After Trial&quot; (14 Dec 1977); &quot;Closing Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support of Demurrer and Motion to Strike&quot; (6 June 1977); &quot;Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support of Demurrer to Petition for Writ of Mandate&quot; (5 Apr 1977).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 14, folder 77</th>
<th>Environmental Protection Agency vs. SWRCB 1973-1976</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 1 folder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Briefs for petitioner and respondents, U.S. Supreme Court opinion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. State Water Resources Control Board 1971-1974
   B. Topical Materials

   Box 14, folder 78-79
   **Miscellaneous 1974-1975**
   - Physical Description: 2 folders
   - Scope and Contents
     Correspondence, "Material gathered during the campaign of Gov. Brown," Robie comments on filling various state positions.

III. Department of Water Resources 1976-1982

   A. General Materials

   Box 14, folder 80
   **DWR Legal Opinions 1975-1978**
   - Physical Description: 1 binder
   - Scope and Contents
     Divided by years, with final section: "Attorney General's Opinions" Memoranda. An index arranged by date is provided.

   Box 15-18, folder 81-89
   **Staff Activity Status Reports Oct 1976-Dec 1982**
   - Physical Description: 9 binders
   - Scope and Contents
     Memoranda. "They are to be Ron's personal record of activities in DWR while he is Director."

   Box 18-20, folder 90-103
   **Staff Daily Activities Sept 1975-Dec 1982**
   - Physical Description: 14 binders
   - Memoranda from:
     James, Bob (90-92) 9/76-12/77; 1/78-12/79; 1/80-11/82
     Johnston, Jack (93) 1/78-11/79
     Johnston, Jack/Mary Anne Mark 1/79-11/79
     Mark, Mary Anne (95) 1/80-12/82
     Meral, Jerry (96-98) 9/75-12/77; 1/78-12/79; 1/80-1/82
     Reynolds, Robin (99) 7/76-12/77
     Shoemaker, Chuck (100-102) 9/75-7/77; 12/15/78; 5/78-4/79
     Miscellaneous Staff (103) 2/81-11/81

   Box 21, folder 104-108
   **Director's Notes 1980-1982**
   - Physical Description: 5 folders
   - Scope and Contents
     Memoranda on personnel actions, reports on small hydro development, inventory of records of the Brown Administration sent to the History and Archives Project, organization charts for DWR (Nov 1982), photocopies of handwritten notes sent by Robie.

   B. Topical Materials

   Box 21-23, folder 109-120
   **SB 346 Office Files 1977**
   - Physical Description: 11 large file folders
III. Department of Water Resources 1976-1982

B. Topical Materials

- **Box 21**, folder 109-111: Ronal B. Robie papers
- **Box 22**, folder 112-114:
  - SB 346 General Correspondence Jan-May; June-July; Aug-Oct
  - SB 346 DWR Amendments Jan-15 June; 16 June-July; Aug-Sept
  - SB 346 Amendments Submitted by Others
  - SB 346 Correspondence to and from State Legislators
  - SB 346 Letters of Support
  - SB 346 Letters of Opposition
  - SB 346 Speeches
  - SB 346 Technical Back-up Data

  **Documentation of the Bill's History 1977**
  - Physical Description: 2 large binders
  - Scope and Contents
  - Arranged into 12 sections:
  - Correspondence, handout material, financial analysis, operations studies... An index is provided.

  **Box 24-25**, folder 123-126:
  - Documentation of Reactions to a Peripheral Canal 1977-1979
    - Physical Description: 4 binders
    - Scope and Contents
      - Correspondence, comments on the bill, analyses of the bill, proposed amendments, maps, memoranda, reports.

  **Box 25**, folder 127-133:
  - Amendments 1977
    - Physical Description: 7 folders
    - Scope and Contents
    - Final versions of the bill at various dates, working copies of the bill with suggested amendments, amendments proposed by various groups.

  **Box 25-26**, folder 134-137:
  - Miscellaneous 1977
    - Physical Description: 4 folders
    - Scope and Contents
    - Correspondence, memoranda, clippings.

  **Box 26**, folder 138:
  - SB 1361 1980
    - Physical Description: 1 folder
    - Scope and Contents
    - Final printed versions of the bill, working copies of the bill with suggested amendments, roll calls.

  **Box 26**, folder 139-141:
  - SB 200 Comments and Analyses of the Bill 1979-1980
    - Physical Description: 3 folders
    - Scope and Contents
    - Correspondence, memoranda, reports.

  **Box 26-27**, folder 142-143:
  - SB 200 Amendments 1979-1980
    - Physical Description: 1 large binder and 1 folder
    - Scope and Contents
    - Final printed versions of SB 200 as well as of related Assembly Bills, working copies of the bills with suggested amendments, copies of amendments proposed by various legislators.
III. Department of Water Resources 1976-1982

B. Topical Materials

Box 27-30, folder 144-149

Clippings 1977-1982

Physical Description: 6 large binders
Scope and Contents
The first binder also contains memoranda, correspondence, draft EIR for the peripheral canal, Comments by the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund on the draft EIR (43 pp).

Box 30, folder 150-151

Correspondence 1980

Physical Description: 2 large binders
Scope and Contents
Letters from private citizens and legislators with copies of Robie's replies, a few memoranda, press releases and clippings.

Box 31, folder 152

Reports 1979-1980

Physical Description: 1 binder

Box 31, folder 153-154

Miscellaneous 1979-1980

Physical Description: 2 folders
Scope and Contents
Clippings, memoranda, correspondence.

Box 31, folder 155

California Water Advisory Panel 27-28 Oct 1975

Physical Description: 1 binder
Scope and Contents
Meeting notes transcribed from a cassette recording. A list of those in attendance is provided.

Box 31, folder 156-157

Delta Negotiations 1975 1976

Physical Description: 1 binder;
Physical Description: 1 folder
Scope and Contents
Correspondence, memoranda, comments from various agencies on DWR's Phase II report on Delta Alternatives, summary of testimony at Delta Water Hearing (15 Nov 1976), charts of supply and demand for Delta water.

Box 31, folder 158

Western States Water Council 1975-1982

Physical Description: 1 folder
Scope and Contents
From Bob Miller: "Here is a small pile of WSWC material that I felt Ron might like to have....This material was subjectively selected for its personal and nostalgic merit."
Memoranda, correspondence, policy statements.

Box 31, folder 159

Surplus Water 1963-1968

Physical Description: 1 folder
Scope and Contents
From P. A. Towner: "In reply to your memorandum of August 4, 1976, we have assembled copies of correspondence, etc., on the early background of the surplus water program and amendments."
List of contents is provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box/Box/Folder#</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Scope and Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32/160</td>
<td><strong>Federal/State Issues 1977</strong></td>
<td>1 large binder</td>
<td>15 sections in alphabetical order (A-F), each section has a contents page Memoranda, reports, press releases, position papers, drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32/161</td>
<td><strong>Coal Power Plant 1978</strong></td>
<td>1 large binder</td>
<td>47 sections of memoranda, 11 sections of articles Index is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-34/162-164</td>
<td><strong>Governor's Commission to Review Water Rights Law 1978</strong></td>
<td>3 large binders</td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically (A-F; G-Q; R-Z) First binder contains a list of commenters' names and affiliations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34/165-166</td>
<td><strong>San Joaquin Valley 1978-1979</strong></td>
<td>2 binders</td>
<td>Arranged by subject, an index is provided DWR reports and excerpts, memoranda, graphs and tables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35/167</td>
<td><strong>State Employees’ Strike June 1979</strong></td>
<td>1 binder</td>
<td>3 sections: Court Decisions, Status Reports, News Clips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35/168</td>
<td><strong>Proposition 8: Water Resources Development and Protection Nov 1980</strong></td>
<td>1 binder</td>
<td>Clippings, correspondence, a copy of the proposition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>