

Information Sheet

R Nelson family.
252 Collection, 1879-1973.
Five volumes, eight folders, and 104 photographs.

MICROFILM

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are scrapbooks, miscellaneous papers, and photographs of the Nelson family of Lebanon, Laclede County, Missouri. Absolom, Arthur T., and Frank R. Nelson operated a commercial apple orchard and a tavern and motel along U.S. Highway 66. Arthur T. Nelson served on various Missouri state commissions and boards. The photographs in the collection have been copied on 35mm negatives and slides.

Absolom Nelson (1830-1901) was a native of Oneida County, New York, engaged in the lumber and grain trade at Buffalo. He was selected in 1882 as agent and resident manager of the Ozark Plateau Land Company, a group of Buffalo investors who owned about 100,000 acres of land in Laclede, Camden, Dallas and Webster counties in Missouri. Nelson came to Lebanon, Missouri, to direct the company's land sales program. He promoted the area for immigration and encouraged agricultural improvements, particularly in fruit-growing. He championed apple orchards for the area, and was himself owner of a 120-acre farm and orchard on the eastern edge of Lebanon. Nelson was instrumental in the organizations of several Laclede County agricultural societies, and was an officer of the Missouri State Horticultural Society and Missouri Board of Agriculture. Apple orchards became a big business for several years as a result of his promotions in the area. Nelson maintained a cooperage on his property which produced 1,000 barrels a day to meet the demands for shipping apples. Produce from Nelson's Apple House was exhibited widely and won many premiums in regional, state, and national competitions.

When Nelson died in 1901, his son, Arthur T. (1864-1936), assumed the management of his father's enterprises. While continuing the prosperous apple business, Nelson also accepted several state appointments from Republican governors. Beginning in 1901, he served on the Missouri State Board of Agriculture, the State Fair Board, the Penal Commission, Marketing Commission, and Highway Commission. Even before his appointment to the latter, in 1933, Nelson had been interested in the movement to improve Missouri's roads. In 1926, he donated land to the state for the construction of U.S. Highway 66, which bisected his property. He capitalized on the location by building the Nelson Tavern and Service Station in 1931. Prospering from increasing highway traffic, Nelson planned and built in 1934 the "Dream Village," a group of a dozen tourist cabins built of native stone. Extensive landscaping surrounded the complex, which was centered around a large pool and brightly-lit "Electrical Fountain."

Arthur T. Nelson died in 1936, leaving his son, Frank R. Nelson, to manage the properties. He operated them until 1944, when they were leased. In 1958 the property was sold and the buildings razed for construction of a supermarket. Nelson and his wife, the former Dorothy Kent, were active participants in many area civic and charitable organizations. They were honored in 1964 for their gift of a forty-acre tract for construction of the Laclede County Community Center.

The Nelson family papers consist primarily of scrapbooks and photographs detailing the enterprises and activities of family members. Along with biographical information, the apple-growing business, the state appointments of Arthur T. Nelson, the "Dream Village," and the history of Laclede County are the main themes of the material. The scrapbooks include newspaper clippings, telegrams, occasional pieces of correspondence, business cards, and other memorabilia. The vol-

umes are not indexed, but are generally in chronological order. A guide to selected contents precedes each volume.

The foldered materials include several pieces of promotional items concerning Laclede County. There are advertising brochures distributed by the Ozark Plateau Land Company and the Gasconade Hotel, ca. 1890; a list of premiums offered by the Lebanon Street Fair, 1904, and a Chamber of Commerce publication on Lebanon, 1928.

Views from the large Nelson family photograph collection have been copied on 35mm black and white negatives. Color postcard views are available on color slides. Many photographs are included of the apple orchards, packing house, and cooperage operated by the Nelsons, and of the later development on U.S. Route 66, the Nelson Tavern, and the "Dream Village." Views from Laclede County of general interest include photographs of Bennett Spring, the funeral procession of Richard Parks "Silver Dick" Bland, and a fatal derailment on the Frisco Railway near Lebanon, 1914.

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Shelf List

These are scrapbooks, miscellaneous papers, and photographs of the Nelson family of Lebanon, Laclede County, Missouri. Absolom, Arthur T., and Frank R. Nelson operated a commercial apple orchard and a tavern and motel on U.S. Highway 66. Arthur T. Nelson served various Missouri state commissions and boards. The photographs in the collection have been copied on 35mm negatives and slides.

Volumes 1-5: Nelson family scrapbooks, 1881-1966.

- Volume 1: Scrapbook, 1881-1962 (86 pp.).
- Volume 2: Scrapbook, 1899-1917 (7 pp.).
- Volume 3: Scrapbook, 1899-1965 (33 pp.).
- Volume 4: Scrapbook, 1906-1938 (18 pp.).
- Volume 5: Scrapbook, 1963-1966 (19 pp.).

Folders 1-2: Nelson family papers, 1879-1973.

- Folder 1: Miscellaneous papers, 1879-1933 (26 items).
- Folder 2: Newspaper clippings, 1895-1973 (35 items).

Folders 3-8: Laclede County, Missouri, promotional material, ca. 1890-1947.

- Folder 3: Ozark Plateau Land Company, "A Description of Laclede County, Missouri," distributed by agent Absolom Nelson, ca. 1890 (12 pages, illustrated).
- Folder 4: "The Gasconade, Lebanon, Mo.," ca. 1890 (36 pages, illustrated).
- Folder 5: "Premium List." Lebanon Street Fair, 1904 (28 pages).
- Folder 6: Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, "Our Town, Your Town," 1928 (10 pages, illustrated).
- Folder 7: Laclede County Horse Show & Fair Association, program, June 7-8, 1945 (12 pages).
- Folder 8: Jane Louise Osborne, "Trinity [Episcopal] church, Lebanon, Missouri," *The Diocesan Bulletin*, XVI, No. 6 (March 1947), 6-10.

Photograph collection, ca. 1890-1950 (76 black and white negatives, 28 color slides on 35 mm. film)

The views have been copied from Nelson family photograph albums and postcards. Subjects include family members and their businesses, apple-growing in Laclede County, Missouri, and commercial establishments, depots, churches, and organizations in Lebanon. Descriptions of the photographs follow. Captions taken from the photographs are noted in quotation marks.

Black-and-white photographs:

Numbers 1 through 25 are on contact sheet "A"; numbers 26 through 37 are on contact sheet "B"; numbers 38 through 58 are on contact sheet "C"; numbers 59 through 76 are on contact sheet "D".

01. Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company, Lebanon, Mo. (interior of cooperage).
02. Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company (truck).
03. Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company (similar to No. 2).
04. Model "T" Ford, 1908.
05. Arthur T. Nelson and Frank R. Nelson on New York trip, 1915.
06. Nelson Apple House and employees.
07. "Apple Pickers."
08. "Apple Pickers."
09. "Apples to storage and market."
10. "Spraying apples."
11. "Apples damaged by hail."
12. "It's apple time at Lebanon, Mo."
13. Apples being packed in boxes.
14. "Medals won at the late expositions," 1918.
15. Nelson apple house and wagons.
16. "Home of the Big Red Apple."
17. "The Lincoln [railroad] car."
18. "Tayman, Nelson, Spiller," in U.S. Army uniforms, Tarlac, Philippines, 28 May 1901.
19. Snow scene [Commercial Street?], Lebanon, Missouri, 1914.
20. "Bank of Lebanon" (interior view).
21. "Old Nelson Home," Lebanon, Missouri.
22. "Old Nelson Home," (similar view).
23. First house of Frank and Dorothy Nelson, Garwood Avenue, Lebanon, Missouri.
24. Robert D. Walkinshaw seated in County Clerk's office, Lebanon, Missouri.
25. "Dam at Hahatonka, Mo."
26. "Counterfeit Cave," ca. 1910.
27. "Swinging Bridge," Lebanon, Missouri.
28. "Bennett's Mill Dam."
29. "Swinging Bridge, Lebanon, Mo."
30. "Bennett's Spring."
31. Nelson Service Station.
32. Nelson Tavern.
33. Lebanon Band Park.
34. Lebanon Community Band.
35. Lebanon Concert Band.
36. Lebanon Baseball Team, 1893.
37. "Mo. State Fair. Arthur T. Nelson in white felt hat."
38. Funeral procession for Richard Parks "Silver Dick" Bland, Lebanon, Mo., 1899.
39. On Commercial Street next to State Bank, 1900. Arthur T. Nelson in center.
40. Commercial Street, Lebanon, Missouri.
41. "St. Louis Store" [W. H. Owen], Lebanon, Missouri.
42. "St. Louis Store" [W. H. Owen], Lebanon, Missouri (rear view).
43. "700 Greetings from Lebanon, Mo., 1908" (turkeys in street).
44. "Frisco Depot, Lebanon, Mo." (color postcard).
45. "Frisco Railroad Depot, Lebanon, Mo." (color postcard).

46. "Frisco Depot, Lebanon, Mo."
47. "New [Methodist Episcopal] Church, Lebanon, Mo."
48. "Baptist and M.E. Church," Madison Ave., Lebanon, Missouri (color postcard).
49. "Old Christian College. Lebanon, Mo."
50. "New High School. Lebanon, Mo."
51. "Buster Brown and His Dog Tige, Exhibit at Heavner's."
52. "Lebanon Street Fair," 1912.
53. "Residence of Col. W. I. Diffenderfer, Lebanon, Mo.," 1911.
54. Laclede County Telephone Company.
55. "Old Gasconade Hotel," 1914.
56. "Laclede County Courthouse," 1910 (color postcard).
57. "Commercial Street, Lebanon, Mo.," 1906.
58. "The Old Academy," Lebanon, Missouri.
59. Arthur T. Nelson.
60. [Lebanon High School] Band, 1940.
61. [Lebanon] "High School Band, 1940."
62. Aerial view of Nelson's dream village.
63. Ha-Ha-Tonka.
64. Ha-Ha-Tonka (interior view).
65. Brice Hotel (Brice, Mo.).
66. "The Dam at Brice."
67. Nelson's Store (interior view).
68. Apple packer.
69. Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company (truck with apple barrels).
70. Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company (similar view).
71. July Fourth parade at Lebanon, Mo.[?].
72. Nelson's dream village under construction.
73. Cave at Ha-Ha-Tonka.
74. Suspension bridge at Linn Creek, Missouri.
75. "Wallace Memorial High School, Lebanon, Mo."
76. "Laclede County Courthouse."

Color Slides (from postcard views):

1. "Frisco Railroad Depot, Lebanon, Mo." (color postcard, view to east).
2. Frisco Depot, Lebanon, Missouri (color postcard, view to west).
3. Frisco Depot, Lebanon, Missouri (later view, brick building).
4. "Engine [and wrecking crane] Frisco wreck," 15 September 1914.
5. "Engine of Frisco wreck," 1914.
6. "The engine that was in Frisco wreck," 1914.
7. "Frisco Train Wreck," 1914.
8. "Frisco Wreck," 1914.
9. "Frisco Train Wreck," 1914.
10. "Frisco Train Wreck," 1914.
11. "Frisco Train Wreck," 1914.
12. "Where the track was washed out," 1914.
13. "Electrical and Musical Fountain."
14. "West Entrance."
15. "Guest House No. 1."
16. "Guest House No. 3."
17. "Home of Arthur T. Nelson."
18. "Nelson Park and Cottages."
19. "Nelson Tavern."
20. "Nelson Tavern."
21. "Nelson Tavern ... looking east on U.S. highway No. 66."
22. "Dining Room, Nelson Tavern."
23. "View of Guest Houses."

24. "Electrical and Musical Fountain."
25. "J.C.B. & T. Co.," Streetcar No. 10 [Jefferson City Bus and Transit Company].
26. "Warden's Residence," Missouri State Penitentiary, Jefferson City, Missouri.
27. "Bagnall Dam and Lake of the Ozarks."
28. "Bennett Spring mill and fish hatchery."

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Index Cards

Apple growers—Missouri—Laclede County.
Bennett Spring (Mo.).
Bland, Richard Parks, 1835-1899.
Brice (Mo.).
Churches—Missouri—Laclede County.
Coopers and cooperage—Missouri—Laclede County.
Diffenderfer, W. I.
Fruit-culture—Missouri—Laclede County.
Gasconade Hotel (Lebanon, Mo.).
Hahatonka (Mo.).
Hotels—Missouri—Laclede County.
Jefferson City Bus and Transit Company.
Johnson, William A., -1891.
Kent, Alice, -1928.
Laclede County (Mo.).
Laclede County Horse Show and Fair Association (Mo.).
Lebanon (Mo.).
Livestock exhibitions—Missouri—Laclede County.
McCormick, Dorothy, -1946.
Missouri. State Board of Agriculture.
Missouri. State Fair Board.
Missouri. State Highway Commission.
Motels—Missouri—Laclede County.
Nelson, Absolom, 1830-1901.
Nelson, Arthur T., 1864-1936.
Nelson, Dorothy Kent.
Nelson, Elizabeth, -1954.
Nelson, Harry, -1953.
Nelson, Laura, 1873-
Nelson Dream Village (Lebanon, Mo.).
Osborne, Jane Louise.
Owen, Mary Elizabeth Nelson.
Ozark Plateau Land Company (Lebanon, Mo.).
Ozark Plateau Fruit and Cooperage Company (Lebanon, Mo.).
Photograph collections—Missouri—Laclede County.
Pillman, Daisy O'Bannon, 1875-1962.
Raley, John M.
Raley, Mae J., -1954.
St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company.
Taverns (Inns)—Missouri—Laclede County.
Tourist camps, hostels, etc.—Missouri—Laclede County.
Trinity Church (Lebanon, Mo.).
United States Highway 66.
Waggoner, Hugh.
Walkinshaw, Mary A., 1837-1899.
Walkinshaw, Robert D., 1830-1916.