TITLE: Roscoe Willson Photograph Collection

DATE RANGE: 1860s-1970s

CALL NUMBER: FP FPC #10

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11 linear feet (22 boxes)

PROVENANCE: The collection was donated posthumously to the Foundation.

COPYRIGHT: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: This collection has no restrictions.

CREDIT LINE: Roscoe Willson Photograph Collection, FP FPC #10, Arizona Historical Foundation

PROCESSED BY: Rebekah Tabah, May, 2008

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:
Roscoe George Willson was born in Granite Falls, Minnesota, July 13, 1879. His family moved to the Dakota Territory in 1881. During the construction of the Great Northern Railroad Roscoe's father ran a farm machinery business and started the *Pembina County Democratic Weekly Newspaper*. Roscoe graduated from high school in Bathgate, North Dakota at the age of 16 and began working at his father's newspaper.

In 1898 Roscoe went to Minneapolis to work in his uncle's printing plant. He also did police court reporting for the *Minneapolis Tribune*. That same year Roscoe became restless, sold all his possessions and rode a bicycle from North Dakota to Mexico.

Roscoe spent over three years wandering around Mexico and Guatemala. He worked for the railroads, construction, coffee and rubber plantations, harbor works, and other odd jobs. When yellow fever broke out in Tampico, Mexico Roscoe returned to the United States through El Paso, narrowly escaping quarantine. He followed railroad construction, finding himself jobs along the way through Texas, New Mexico, and finally into Prescott, Arizona on July 1, 1902.

Roscoe found his way to Crown King, Arizona, a booming mining camp at the time and took a job at the Crown King Mine. He bought himself a burro and went out prospecting on his own – an activity that held a lifelong interest. Roscoe later joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1905. His job was to inventory the timber in Horsethief Basin and where he earned the nickname name Horsethief Willson. His assignments took him to Huachuca, Tumacacori, and Baboquivari forests in Southern Arizona.

In May of 1907 Roscoe met Maude Hudgin, in Nogales, Arizona. The two were married January 6, 1909 and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. In May of that year he was

appointed supervisor of the Tonto National Forest with headquarters at Roosevelt. The couple then moved to Roosevelt, Arizona and lived there for four years during the construction and dedication of the dam.

After several years of Forest Service work, Roscoe took time off to publish the *Southwestern Stockman* in Phoenix; soon after he became the supervisor of Madison National Forest in Clearwater, Idaho adjoining Yellowstone National Park.

By 1919, Roscoe quit the Forest Service to pursue sheep ranching in Montana. He went broke after the 1929 stock market crash and gave up ranching to run a lumber yard at the Cat Creek Oil Field in Montana. He sold oil well supplies and wrote oil field news for the Montana newspapers. This led to a partnership in the oil rig business. Roscoe built the first oil rig in the Kevin-Sunburst Field just north of Shelby, Montana. He sold the business in 1923 and drove to California for the winter.

Roscoe returned to Arizona in the spring of 1924. The Willsons opened the Arizona Specialty Company and became one of the first tenants of the Luhrs Building in Phoenix. Maude ran the office and Roscoe sold advertising. He also went back to prospecting in the nearby desert. Roscoe claimed to have never found any riches but thoroughly enjoyed the hunt. The Willsons sold the business in 1945 and retired. In 1947, Roscoe began writing *Arizona Days and Ways*, a column for the Sunday *Arizona Republic*. In 1953 the column was shortened to *Arizona Days*, which he continued to write until his death on August 25, 1976 at the age of 97.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:
The collection consists of 2000 photographs, 100 postcards, 6 album pages, and thousands of negatives, ranging from fair to good condition. The collection is divided into three series: **Series I: Photographs, Series II: Postcards and Series III: Negatives**. All materials have been individually sleeved and labeled.

The collection is arranged by subject and then alphabetically and chronologically within. Highlights of the collection include photographs of notable individuals like Teddy Roosevelt, Mark Twain, Al Sieber, and Henry Ashurst. Petroglyphs, historic markers, gravesites, miners and mines, and panoramas of forests are richly documented.
For more information on Roscoe Willson see the AHF Ephemera Biography file, FE BIO WIL, ROS.

This collection is a record of Roscoe Willson's life, in addition to, photographs that were collected, gifted, and copied for use in Willson's writings. The majority of the Territorial Arizona photographs are not originals. Most of the later (1930s-1970s) photographs were taken by Roscoe Willson. Many of the photographs were used in magazine and newspaper articles and contain crop marks, grease pencil lines, and other publication notations. Almost all the photographs contain captions, many with historical information written by Willson. Not all photographs have a corresponding negative. Not all negatives have been printed.

Roscoe Willson (Call # FB BIO WIL, ROS) and the AHF Roscoe Willson Manuscript Collection (Call #MSS 46). The Roscoe Willson biography file contains his original handwritten autobiography and recent transcription.

CONTAINER LIST:
Series I:

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	**Photographs:** Adobe Ruins	1950s-1960s
		Photographs: Album Pages (includes the Willsons camping, hunting, horseback riding, cowboys, and landscapes)	ND
	2	**Photographs:** Animals, Bears	ND
	3	**Photographs:** Animals, Bighorn Sheep (1 of 2)	ND
	4	**Photographs:** Animals, Bighorn Sheep (2 of 2)	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Animals, Burros	ND
	6	**Photographs:** Animals, Coyotes	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Animals, Various	ND
2	1	**Photographs:** Arizona Pioneers Historical Society	1950s
	2	**Photographs:** Arizona Pioneers Reunion	1955
	3	**Photographs:** Arizona Rangers	1903-1963
	4	**Photographs:** Artifacts (various)	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Automobiles	1909-1940s
	6	**Photographs:** Bisbee Strike and Deportation	1917
	7	**Photographs:** Buildings (1 of 2)	ND
	8	**Photographs:** Buildings (2 of 2)	ND
3	1	**Photographs:** C.C. Pyle's Bunion Derby Foot Race	1928
	2	**Photographs:** Canyons (various)	1909-1955
	3	**Photographs:** Cemeteries and Gravesites (1 of 2)	1934-1962
	4	**Photographs:** Cemeteries and Gravesites (2 of 2)	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Cowboys and Rodeos	1898-1950s
	6	**Photographs:** Craters and Comets	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Creeks, Lakes, and Rivers (various)	ND
	8	**Photographs:** Cullings Well Ruins	ND
	9	**Photographs:** Dams, Canals, and Water Wells (various)	ND
	10	**Photographs:** Dedication of Kofa Game Refuge	1939
	11	**Photographs:** Desert Food Safe	ND
4	1	**Photographs:** Family, Willson Family and Friends	1930s-1960s
	2	**Photographs:** Family,	ND

		Willson, Maude (wife)	
	3	**Photographs:** Family, Willson, Maude and Roscoe	1930s-1970s
	4	**Photographs:** Family, Willson, Roscoe (1 of 2)	1880-1975
	5	**Photographs:** Family, Willson, Roscoe (2 of 2)	ND
	6	**Photographs:** Family, Willson, Roscoe and Friends	1938-1970s
	7	**Photographs:** Fossils	ND
5	1	**Photographs:** Geoglyphs	ND
		Photographs: Grindell Expedition	1906
	2	**Photographs:** Horse-Drawn Vehicles (includes mules and burros) (1 of 2)	1869-1948
	3	**Photographs:** Horse-Drawn Vehicles (includes burros, mules, camels, and ox)	ND
	4	**Photographs:** Housing, Adobe Houses	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Housing, Personal Residences (A-Z)	1890-1961
	6	**Photographs:** Housing, Various	1934-1950s
6	1	**Photographs:** Indians, Apache (includes Geronimo)	1886-1959
	2	**Photographs:** Indians, Navajo	1950s
	3	**Photographs:** Indians, Papago Indian Reservation	1934-1951
	4	**Photographs:** Indians, Various	1873-1950s
	5	**Photographs:** Indian Ruins (includes Wupatki and Kinishba)	1915-1950s
	6	**Photographs:** Individuals, A-B (includes notable people)	1878-1952
	7	**Photographs:** Individuals, C-F (includes notable people)	1868-1957
7	1	**Photographs:** Individuals, G-K (includes notable people)	1880-1971
	2	**Photographs:** Individuals, L-P (includes notable people)	1886-1964
	3	**Photographs:** Individuals, R-W (includes notable people)	1890-1957
	4	**Photographs:** Individuals, Unidentified	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Laguna Dam	1909

	6	**Photographs:** Landscapes, Desert (1 of 3)	ND
8	1	**Photographs:** Landscapes, Desert (2 of 3)	ND
	2	**Photographs:** Landscapes, Desert (3 of 3)	ND
	3	**Photographs:** Landscapes, Forest	ND
	4	**Photographs:** Landscapes, Various	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Lumberjack Contest Butte, Montana	1908
	6	**Photographs:** Marble Quarry	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Military	1865-1898
	8	**Photographs:** Military, Apache Scouts	1870s-1890s
	9	**Photographs:** Mines, Ajo Copper Mine – Harquahala Mine	1898-1953
9	1	**Photographs:** Mines, Iron King Mines – Lost Frenchmen Mine	1893-1961
	2	**Photographs:** Mines, Manganese	1950s
	3	**Photographs:** Mines, McCabe Mines – Placer Mine	1896-1955
	4	**Photographs:** Mines, Ruby Mine – Weldon Mine	1878-1957
	5	**Photographs:** Mines, Unidentified	ND
	6	**Photographs:** Miners and Prospectors (1 of 2)	1890s-1950s
10	1	**Photographs:** Miners and Prospectors (2 of 2)	1890s-1950s
	2	**Photographs:** Mining Equipment	ND
	3	**Photographs:** Monuments and Markers	1924-1965
	4	**Photographs:** Mountains (various)	1908-1950s
	5	**Photographs:** Mug Shots of Killers in the Tong Murders California	1920s
	6	**Photographs:** Petroglyphs (1 of 3)	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Petroglyphs (2 of 3)	ND
	8	**Photographs:** Petroglyphs (3 of 3)	ND
11	1	**Photographs:** Places, Black Mesa, Arizona	1950-1960
	2	**Photographs:** Places, California (various cities)	1938, 1966
	3	**Photographs:** Places, Crater Lake, Oregon	1938
	4	**Photographs:** Places,	1891-1963

		Crown King, Arizona	
	5	**Photographs:** Places, Flagstaff, Arizona	ND
	6	**Photographs:** Places, Florence, Arizona	1905-1950s
	7	**Photographs:** Places, Grand Canyon, Arizona	ND
	8	**Photographs:** Places, Harquahala Mountains, Arizona (includes the Sun Studies Observatory)	1920s-1960s
	9	**Photographs:** Places, Huachuca Mountains and National Forest, Arizona	1891-1950s
	10	**Photographs:** Places, Jerome, Arizona	1898-1904
	11	**Photographs:** Places, Kingman, Arizona	1950s
12	1	**Photographs:** Places, Kofa Mountains, Arizona (includes Palm Canyon) (1 of 2)	1930s-1950s
	2	**Photographs:** Places, Kofa Mountains, Arizona (includes Palm Canyon) (2 of 2)	1930s-1950s
	3	**Photographs:** Places, Mexico (various cities) (1 of 2)	1899, 1900
	4	**Photographs:** Places, Mexico (various cities) (2 of 2)	1930s-1960s
	5	**Photographs:** Places, Montana (various cities)	1930s
	6	**Photographs:** Places, Nogales, Arizona	1907-1955
	7	**Photographs:** Places, Payson, Arizona (1 of 2)	1910-1955
	8	**Photographs:** Places, Payson, Arizona (2 of 2)	ND
13	1	**Photographs:** Places, Phoenix, Arizona	1890-1926
	2	**Photographs:** Places, Prescott, Arizona	1870-1959
	3	**Photographs:** Places, Quartzsite, Arizona	1904-1948
	4	**Photographs:** Places, Ramsey, Arizona	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Places, Salome, Arizona	1930-1960s
	6	**Photographs:** Places, Salt River, Arizona	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Places,	ND

		Tucson, Arizona	
14	1	**Photographs:** Places, Tumacacori National Forest, Arizona	1908
	2	**Photographs:** Places, Vicksburg, Arizona	ND
	3	**Photographs:** Places, Wellton, Arizona	1930s
	4	**Photographs:** Places, Wickenburg, Arizona	1911-1960s
	5	**Photographs:** Places, Yuma, Arizona	1914-1957
	6	**Photographs:** Places, Agua Cliente – Congress (Arizona)	1884-1961
	7	**Photographs:** Places, Fort Apache – Morenci (Arizona)	1874-1951
	8	**Photographs:** Places, Nowhere – Roosevelt (Arizona)	1905-1965
15	1	**Photographs:** Places, Safford – Tombstone (Arizona)	1900-1970
	2	**Photographs:** Places, Topock – Yarnell (Arizona)	1886-1955
	3	**Photographs:** Plants, Cactus (various)	ND
	4	**Photographs:** Plants, Saguaro Cactus	ND
	5	**Photographs:** Plants, Shrubs	ND
16	1	**Photographs:** Plants, Trees (1 of 2)	ND
	2	**Photographs:** Plants, Trees (2 of 2)	ND
	3	**Photographs:** Plants, Various	ND
	4	**Photographs:** Ranches, Arizona Ranch (Rancho La Arizona)	1916-1962
	5	**Photographs:** Ranches, Cattle Ranches and Cattle	ND
	6	**Photographs:** Ranches, Ellison Ranch	1898-1910
	7	**Photographs:** Ranches, Rainer Ranch	1898-1902
	8	**Photographs:** Ranches, A-Z (various)	1914-1951
	9	**Photographs:** Ranch and Farm Lands	ND
17	1	**Photographs:** Rock Formations (1 of 3)	1930-s1950s

	2	**Photographs:** Rock Formations (2 of 3)	1930s-1950s
	3	**Photographs:** Rock Formations (3 of 3)	1930s-1950s
	4	**Photographs:** Roosevelt Dam and Dedication	1908-1911
	5	**Photographs:** Ruins of Forts (all Arizona)	1950s
	6	**Photographs:** Ruins (various)	ND
	7	**Photographs:** Saw Mill and Lumber Yards	ND
	8	**Photographs:** Transportation (includes airplanes, boats, and trains)	1865-1950
18	1	**Photographs:** United States Forest Service Rangers	1907-1956
	2	**Photographs:** Willsons' Home, Cabin in Yarnell, Arizona (Peeples Valley)	1930s-1950s
	3	**Photographs:** Willsons' Home, Phoenix, Arizona	1935-1971
	4	**Photographs:** Willsons' Home, Roosevelt, Arizona	1909-1913
	5	**Photographs:** Willsons' Home, Various Locations	1910-1950s
19 OV		**Photographs:** Oversized (includes Places, Petroglyphs, Mines, and Rock Formations)	ND

Series II:

Box	Folder	Title	Date
20	1	**Postcards:** Animals	ND
	2	**Postcards:** Cartoons	ND
	3	**Postcards:** Indians	ND
	4	**Postcards:** Landscapes	ND
	5	**Postcards:** Miscellaneous	ND
	6	**Postcards:** Places (A-O)	ND
	7	**Postcards:** Places (P-Y)	ND
	8	**Postcards:** Places (oversized)	ND
	9	**Postcards:** Plants	ND

Series III:

Box	Folder	Title	Date
21	1	**Negatives:** Animals	ND
	2	**Negatives:** Artifacts	ND
	3	**Negatives:** Creeks, Lakes, and Rivers	ND
	4	**Negatives:** Fossils	ND
	5	**Negatives:** Gravesites and Monuments	ND
	6	**Negatives:** Housing	ND
	7	**Negatives:** Indians	ND
	8	**Negatives:** Landscapes	ND
	9	**Negatives:** Military	ND
	10	**Negatives:** Mines and Miners	ND
	11	**Negatives:** People	ND

22	1	**Negatives:** Petroglyphs	ND
	2	**Negatives:** Places	ND
	3	**Negatives:** Plants	ND
	4	**Negatives:** Ranches	ND
	5	**Negatives:** Rock Formations	ND
	6	**Negatives:** Ruins	ND
	7	**Negatives:** Transportation	ND
	8	**Negatives:** Willsons' House	ND
	9	**Negatives:** Willson, Roscoe and Maude	ND