

August 1 1922

Mr. George Buxton,
Douglas, Arizona.

My dear Buxton:

Enclosed find copies of letters to and
from Mr. Ronstadt of Tucson, also copy of my report to
the Chamber of Commerce, which is for your information,
but please keep confidential.

Yours very truly,

KLM



DOUGLAS HOUSE

HOUSES IN
DOUGLAS, ARIZONA
BISBEE, ARIZONA
NOGALES, ARIZONA

DOUGLAS, ARIZONA

March 11, 1922

Col. Ed Fletcher,
San Diego,
California.

Dear Colonel:

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter received
by our Chamber of Commerce from the Automobile Club of Ariz-
ona. Evidently this letter was written after the announce-
ment was made that the San Diego-Yuma-Ajo-Tucson-Douglas-
El Paso road would be signed by the Automobile Club of South-
ern California.

Knowing how we feel in Southern Arizona, I do not
need to tell you that this letter was completely ignored.

Mr. Rhodes, with his assistant, Mr. Woodward, was
here this week logging the road to El Paso. In addition
to the regular sign there will be an auxiliary sign reading as
follows:

BANKHEAD HIGHWAY ----BORDERLAND ROUTE

I think Tucson will sign in about the same manner. I believe
it is a good idea to put the Bankhead Highway signs on this road
now as far as Tucson in view of the fact that the Bankhead
is the best advertised Southern Highway. and if Mr.
Roundtree does move his Highway to the Superior route we will
still have the signs on our road, which is more than he has
done to build or equip the so-called Bankhead Highway. From
conversation I have had with people in Tucson, Bisbee and here,
the general idea is, not to spend any more money on Roundtree.
You have probably noticed he has already announced from his
Phoenix headquarters that there is a strong demand from many
quarters for several changes in the present route of the Bank-
head Highway, and intimates that all sections interested should
be on hand with many votes. (Cont.)

Mr. Martin will write the Automobile Club of Southern
California in a few days, suggesting the publication
of a map emphasizing the Borderland Highway from
San Diego to Socorro. At the same time, we think it



#2 E.F.
3/11/22

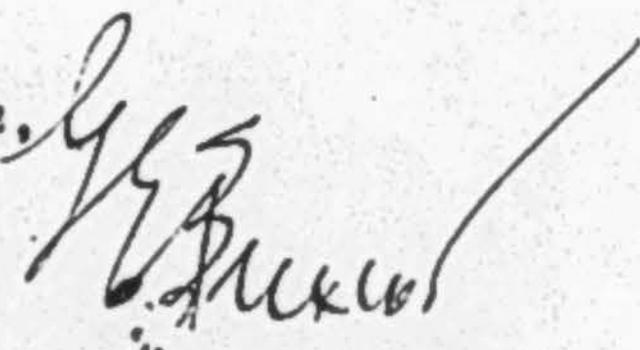
would be a good plan to show the National Old Trails, Blythe and other roads in fine lines. I am sure all of the towns along the border would like to buy considerable quantities of such a map. Every organization showing its imprint on the maps it distributes. What do you think of the idea, or can you make a better suggestion? We don't want a general map giving equal importance to all the routes. We want a map made on the order of a railroad map, showing our particular route as THE MAIN ROUTE.

We have not yet been able to obtain change in Maddock's plan, which will give aid to the Tucson-Ajo-Yuma route, and I am afraid the present administration is tied up politically with the Phoenix bunch. Our only hope is through the influence of the Secretary of War, insisting on the Ajo route being given Federal aid.

I am glad to know that you intend to come over with a carload of boosters in April. I think it will be best for your party to make the trip through to El Paso, stopping at the towns which are on the Borderland Route and stop in Phoenix on your return. On the Southern Pacific as far as Tucson, arrangements could be made to attach your car on most any of the trains which run several hours apart. In Tucson you could have a train in the morning or in the afternoon. I am sure an arrangement could be made whereby the party would be brought in automobiles from Bisbee to Douglas and board your car here at 8 o'clock P.M., making your night run to El Paso. We would arrange for a luncheon or dinner here, (or rather at our private club in Agua Prieta). I trust this trip will materialize as it will give us great pleasure to greet yourself and the other good boosters of San Diego. San Diego and the towns on the border must stand together if they want to get anywhere in the Transcontinental traffic business.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



GEB:LD
1 encl.

March
Fourteen
1922

Mr. George E. Buxton,
Douglas, Arizona.

My dear Mr. Buxton:

I am glad to get your letter of March 11th. Inclosed find copy of letter written by the Tucson Chamber of Commerce to the Automobile Club of Southern California, which is explanatory.

The Auto Club have their own signs from Los Angeles to Kansas City and New York through Northern Arizona. They are the largest organization in the world and the most efficient, and San Diego and Southern Arizona connected up with El Paso and Albuquerque want the same benefits as Northern Arizona is getting. For that reason we want the Auto Club of Southern California signs, and we also have no objection to having the Auto Club of Arizona on the signs too; in fact the Auto Club of Southern California have agreed to let the Auto Club of Arizona put their name on the signs without any expense to the Auto Club of Arizona, if they care do do so.

But we are determined to have our direct route - San Diego to El Paso - signed by the Auto Club of Southern California, thereby putting us officially on the maps of the Auto Club of Southern California, and all their maps and literature.

I agree with you absolutely about Rountree. I believe he is after the coin - nothing more. I think the plan suggested by Mr. Martin emphasizing the Borderland highway is fine, and a map should be made as suggested. I do think, however, it is only a question of time when El Paso to San Diego must join into a working organization to furnish the east with literature showing the advantages of our route.

Page Two

Thanks for the suggested itinerary. Will
keep you posted.

With kind personal regards,

Very sincerely yours,

EF:AH

P. S. I enjoy your refreshing letters exceedingly.

November
Thirteenth
1922

Mr. George Buxton,
Douglas, Arizona.

My dear Buxton:

The latest report from Phoenix that I have received states that the bond issue for 2-1/2 million has carried by 1,000 votes, with the final returns not all in. If they win it was done thru fraud and misrepresentation.

All over the state of Arizona the word was passed around from Phoenix that California had agreed to complete the highway to Ehrenberg if the bond issue was put over. I received a wire to this effect from Tucson. I immediately wired the proper authorities of the state - the California Highway Commission, and received the following telegram from A. B. Fletcher, Chief of Department of Public Works and chief engineer in charge of the California Highway Commission work:

"Answering your telegram November 4th California Highway Commission has not discussed Blythe to Mecca Road recently and I think any statement concerning it must be a campaign canard."

I immediately wired the Tucson Chamber of Commerce as follows:

"A. B. Fletcher Chief of Board of Public Works controlling State Highway Commission wires that any statement you mention must be a campaign canard."

Another dirty trick, the Automobile Club of Southern California has been constantly knocking our Holtville-Yuma road, publicly and privately. The following letter from McStay of the Automobile Club of Southern California to Mr. Franklin of Yuma, is explanatory:

"Automobile Club of Southern California
October 21, 1922.

Mr. J. E. Franklin, President,
Yuma National Bank,
Yuma, Arizona.

Dear Sir:

Page - 2 -

Our Mr. Salisbury advises me of his talk with you concerning construction of the state highway from the California line westward.

One of the chief causes of delay in the carrying out of this project is the apparent change in the plans of the present California Highway Commission, which, according to publicity given out by Division Engineer Patch of that body, contemplates a change in the route from the Plank Road to the lower or southerly end of the sand dunes in Mexican territory.

The Automobile Club of Southern California is vitally interested in the completion of a road to the California border over each of the more important transcontinental routes and we class the route by way of Yuma as a route of exceeding importance to this state, as shown by the extensive signposting work done by the Club along this route from San Diego to a point east of El Paso and the carrying northward from El Paso of this signing system to a junction with the National Old Trails road near Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The purpose of this signposting system is to divert travel to the more southerly route, which we realize is travelable throughout the year, where the more northerly routes are at times blocked on account of weather conditions.

Our organization has taken exception to the methods employed by the present Highway authorities in this state, not only as to the type of roads being built, but more particularly to their failure to complete the trunk line and inter-state roads. This piece meal construction program we feel has been unfair, not only to the states bordering California but it has seriously affected transcontinental travel and we hope and trust that the contemplated change in administration, which is assured following the coming election, will bring a greatly improved and aggressive program of construction.

The opposition of the Automobile Club of Southern California to the so-called Plank road was based on the belief of our engineers that it was not practical or feasible to build and maintain a road thru the sand dunes but when the Highway Commission of the State of California definitely decided upon that route, all opposition thereto by this organization ceased and at no time since the adoption of that road by the Highway Commission, has a single objection thereto been offered by the Club. Now that their own engineers have reached the conclusion that the proposed route is impractical, we find ourselves in

the same position that we occupied in 1913, at which time the engineers of the Club made a careful survey of the conditions of the way from Nilands to and below the border.

The writer expects to be in Imperial Valley within the next couple of weeks and if it is the desire of yourself and others at Yuma interested in the completion of this important road, I will be glad to make the trip to Yuma and to discuss ways and means for furthering this important project.

Awaiting your advice, I am

Very truly yours,

C. E. McStay

Field Secretary

I immediately put the matter up to Mr. Fletcher, also to Mr. Darlington, Chairman of the Commission. I received the following reply by telegram from A. B. Fletcher:

"Answering your letter of sixth I have never stated that present plank road between El Centro and Yuma is not practicable and I do not believe any member of highway commission has done so.

A. B. Fletcher"

Also the following letter from N. D. Darlington:

"My dear Colonel:

I have read with interest the copy of McStay's letter which you enclosed.

The Commission has not, of course, made any statement to the effect that the Plank road is impractical, nor have we reached any such conclusion.

If without seriously affecting its length, a road can be built partly thru Mexican territory to Yuma, and thus avoid the sandhills, it would, of course be a desirable thing to do. If, however, in the future it develops that this cannot be done, the Commission is strongly in favor of the route thru the sandhills.

It is my understanding that the Auto Club has always favored the route along the East side of the Southern Pacific from Yuma to Nilands, or to the Mammoth Wash, and McStay's letter, of course, is in line with that plan.

However, it is our intention to place the balance of the stretch between the High Line Canal and the well near the sand hills under contract as promptly as possible, and this should settle for all time any question as to the route.

There are some matters I wish to talk over with

you and would be glad to have you get in touch with me whenever you happen to be in Los Angeles.

Sincerely yours,

N. D. DARLINGTON

Chairman"

There is nothing too dirty for that Phoenix bunch to stoop to in their efforts to defeat our Yuma road. When they tied up Tucson and Yuma on the Phoenix-Yuma road they were simply playing a game of elimination, always intending to give Yuma only a dirt road, and a paved road direct to Ehrenberg.

Now I am willing to dig up \$250, and possibly \$250 more, to contest the election of the 2-1/2 million dollar bond issue. By the early completion of the Yuma-Phoenix road and a delay of one or two years in commencing the construction of the Ehrenberg road, it will cause the thru travel to come via Yuma. We should have the best lawyer in the state of Arizona up there when the votes are officially counted by the supervisors in the different counties, particularly in Maricopa County and we should call for a recount in court, and fight the thing out for two or three years. Let's give them a run for their money now, and in the meantime we will bring pressure to bear to complete the last gap of about 25 miles in the Holtville-Yuma road.

There is no use in giving any publicity to this letter - simply getting down to brass tacks and going to it. We have been tricked - that's all there is about it, and if they complete that road to Ehrenberg, the salvation of San Diego and Imperial Counties, and Southern Arizona is the road via Ajo, Tucson, connecting up with Lordsburg. If we do not put that road thru you are always going to be on the end of a switch.

It was a grave mistake that they pulled us away from our Ajo-Tucson road and lulled us to sleep while they put over their pet scheme Phoenix to Ehrenberg. I am going to urge Yuma County to immediately start in and build a passable road to the Pima County line, and make every effort to get Tucson to get busy and complete the link Phoenix to Ajo and Tucson direct, saving over 100 miles of travel across the continent. The War Department has officially urged the construction of this road, and I believe we can win in time for a paved highway along the border. We must all get together from El Paso along the border to San Diego and create an organization that cannot be busted up again. We will stay with it until we get a highway that we are entitled to.

Yours sincerely,

ED FLETCHER

EF:KLM

cc- Judge Westover
Mr. Franklin

CEMENT ROAD TO CALIFORNIA IS BEATEN, FINAL

Substantial Majority Assures Week End Trail Has Lost

PHOENIX, Nov. 22.—Amendment 100 under the provisions of which the state of Arizona would construct approximately 100 miles of cement road as a link in the Phoenix-Los Angeles highway, was decisively defeated as the result of late returns received here last night from outlying counties.

The fate of the amendment had been in doubt since election day due to the fact that no record of the vote on the proposition was kept in many counties and the figures in these counties were not available until the official count which commenced yesterday.

Complete official returns from 11 counties and incomplete unofficial returns from the other three gave the following vote:

For the amendment, 21,243; against the amendment, 22,929.

Returns from Mohave and Apache, the last two counties to report, reached here tonight and added more than 1200 to the negative majority. An increase in the negative vote in Cochise county was also reported as a result of the official count.

230 20

11/22/22

En Colonel -
We

done better than
we expected -

Those Phoenix
graffers held
their jacification
meeting too
soon.

1686 majority
isn't bad,
Yours -

230 ✓

November 29, 1922.

Mr. George Buxton,
Douglas, Arizona.

My dear Buxton:

Inclosed find copy of letter from
Dr. Hewes, Deputy Chief Engineer, in charge of U. S.
Government Federal aid funds, which is explanatory and
of interest, particularly as both Mr. MacDonald and Dr.
Hewes have promised me that they will put up all the money
to pave from Yuma west for ten miles through the Yuma Indian
Reservation if the State of California will allow the amount
to be deducted from their allotment. We hope to get this
work started this spring.

This may have some bearing in your section
of the country.

Yours very truly,

EF:AH

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 3 Folder: 14

General Correspondence - Buxton, George



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