

Colorado Governors

John Vanderhoof



Scope and Content Note

The Governor John D. Vanderhoof collection constitutes approximately 49 cubic feet of record material covering his term of governor from 1973 - 1975. The collection is described down to the file folder level. Major record series in the collection include correspondence files; the Executive Record; photographs; speeches and messages; proclamations; fiscal reports and some material concerning legislative actions. The correspondence files comprise the main group of record material. Governor Vanderhoof's term is well documented throughout the records that are in the custody of the Colorado State Archives. The strengths of the collection primarily concern fuel shortages, oil shale development, inflation, and land use concerns due to population growth. There is also a small amount of material concerning the reorganization of the Executive Department and state government overall.

Biography

John David Vanderhoof was born May 27, 1922 in Rocky Ford, Colorado. John's parents were both in the fruit packing business and those in the occupation were otherwise known as "fruit tramps". At the age of four the family moved to Stove Prairie where they bought an iceberg lettuce farm. After discovering that iceberg lettuce was a difficult crop to grow, John's father took a job as an insurance agent and moved the family to Loveland and then Ft. Collins. John would live here, completing Junior High and High School until he graduated in 1939. Upon graduation he moved to California to attend Glendale Community College while working and living at a veterinary kennel. In 1942 John graduated from college. With WWII looming, Vanderhoof signed up for the Civilian Pilot Training. Famed actor Jimmy Stewart was one of his classmates. Upon graduation from training in 1942 John then joined the Navy Pilot training program and graduated in 1943. With the knowledge that he acquired, Vanderhoof flew many missions during the Pacific Campaign which included a couple of firsts. John flew his fighter aircraft in the first U.S. Navy night takeoff and was also part of the first wave of the Iwo Jima mission. Unfortunately, during a mission in Legaspi, Vanderhoof was shot down and ended up breaking his leg. Learning that the Hotel Colorado was a navy hospital in Glenwood Springs Vanderhoof asked to be transferred there. His request was granted.

Upon returning to the States, Vanderhoof was discharged from the Navy and started a sporting goods store in Glenwood Springs. It was in Glenwood Springs where John's political career began. Joining fellow minded individuals, John helped start a Young Republican's organization. Fellow club members were the ones who encouraged John to run for the State House of Representatives in 1950. John, who was always willing to try something new, agreed, and eventually won the open House seat even though he had no political experience. For twenty years Mr. Vanderhoof was present in the House of Representatives and was the chairman for the Game and Fish Committee and the Business Affairs Committee and served as minority House leader. In 1970 John D. Vanderhoof was elected Lieutenant

Governor for the State of Colorado with Governor John Love. He was the first Lt. Governor elected under a new constitutional provision calling for the joint election of Governor and Lieutenant Governor. On July 16, 1973 John Vanderhoof took the oath of office to become the 37th Governor of the State of Colorado. Vanderhoof took over for his predecessor John Love when Love took a position with the Nixon administration. While Governor Vanderhoof was in office for only a year and a half, his administration did encounter a very serious situation. In October of 1973 the United States experienced its first Oil Crisis when an embargo was placed on all countries supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War. Governor Vanderhoof quickly reacted by issuing Executive Orders for the state employees to carpool, drive under 50 miles per hour, turn off all unnecessary lights when not in use and turn off the air conditioning. The citizens of Colorado were strongly encouraged to follow suit. The Governor used the Oil Crisis to promote alternative energies such as Oil Shale development, nuclear power and solar power. Vanderhoof warned that if new technologies were not discovered or improved upon, the State and the Nation would face many oil crises in the future. Governor Vanderhoof encouraged the U.S. and State government to set up a government of action and not reaction.

Governor Vanderhoof's 18 month tenure had very few successes with the legislature even though he put forth his best efforts. A significant victory was the reduction of property taxes for Colorado citizens. Using state surplus funds, Vanderhoof made a larger state contribution to education, therefore, local governments required less funds from their constituents. Another achievement was the passing of the first land use bill in Colorado history. While the bill was heavily amended, it was a step in the right direction. The bill protected Colorado lands and citizens from many potential problems that came with population growth and economic development of natural resources by giving the power to local government, instead of state government, to make land use decisions. In his reorganization of state government he changed the name of the Department of Institutions to the Department of Corrections. Vanderhoof also expanded the workers programs for the prisoners so they could learn a trade to be used after their release into society. These accomplishments were top priorities for the Governor. The 1974 election did not go well for Governor Vanderhoof who lost to Democrat Dick Lamm. This election was not successful nationally for Republicans who lost amidst the Watergate Scandal. John Vanderhoof went on to become the president of Club 20 which was an organization devoted to uniting the western slope in various aspects ranging from growth and finances to politics.

John D. Vanderhoof Bibliography

Colorado State Archives. Records of the Office of the Governor, John Vanderhoof, 1973-1975.

Correspondence.

Newspaper Files of John Vanderhoof. Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

Transcript, John Vanderhoof Oral History Interview, June 19, 1975, by David McComb, 31 pages, Oral History Project, Colorado Historical Society.

Series Descriptions

Correspondence

The correspondence series is separated primarily into administrative and legislative. There are several containers of miscellaneous correspondence. The administrative correspondence contains documents of

various departments and federal agencies that primarily discuss the energy crisis, growth and land use, and new energy resources. Other topics discussed significantly are the development of Beaver Creek Ski Resort, tourism, and preparing the state for economic hardships. The legislative correspondence, in general, is categorized by House and Senate Bill numbers. At times, the legislative intent of a bill is documented within the file folder. The miscellaneous correspondence is divided by the last name of the person writing to the Governor. The topics discussed are of wide range.

Executive Record

The Executive Record contains executive orders; appointments; legislative messages; pardons, extraditions and requisitions; honorary citations; and proclamations that were issued by Governor Vanderhoof during his terms of office from 1973 – 1975.

Photographs

There are various photographs included in the correspondence. Generally, they are of Governor Vanderhoof attending functions throughout the state.

Speeches and Messages

Copies of topical speeches concerning subjects such as agriculture, education, fuel, economic growth and land development are part of this record group. There are also speeches that Vanderhoof delivered as Lieutenant Governor. Included within the Executive Record Governor Vanderhoof's speeches and messages to the General Assembly are printed.