Private Papers

Douglas E Mitchell Papers (1941-1984)

Inventory

Compiled by
Annette le Roux
January 1995
Updated September 2012

Douglas Mitchell was born in Natal on 8 September 1896, the second son of Charles and Florence Mitchell. He was the first baby born in the new farming settlement of Fascadale where his parents had settled on a new farm which they named Bushy Vales.

He was educated at the Weenen County College and served in East Africa as a scout in the 11th South African Infantry in 1915, and at the end of 1916 he was invalided out due to malaria and dysentery. At the age of 23, Douglas Mitchell started his own business recruiting and supplying contract labour.

On 3 October 1925 he married Mildred Hunt and they had three sons.

Mr Mitchell was elected to the Provincial Council in 1933 and set out to improve the infrastructure of the rural areas. In 1939, at the age of 43, he became a Member of the Executive Committee and accepted the unenviable portfolio of Financial Affairs.

After being appointed Administrator of Natal in 1944, he spent a fruitful three years putting his post-war reconstruction plan for Natal into action.

Douglas Mitchell had a lifelong love for nature and an abiding interest in nature conservation. As MEC and later Administrator he was responsible for introducing provincial legislation to establish proper control and development of the nature reserves and parks in Natal. In 1947 he signed the ordinance for the establishment of the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board. Later as parliamentarian he became deputy chairman of the Board and held this position for 26 years.

He resigned as Administrator in 1947 to take part in the general election of 1948. Mr Mitchell was elected to the South Coast Constituency and served it for 26 years until he left Parliament in 1974. He was also elected chairman of the United Party in 1949 and held this post until 1972 when he resigned. He organised and ran the United Party in his province efficiently and always with the good of the Party at heart. In Parliament he was known to be a fiery speaker and he fought to the bitter end for matters he believed in.


THE DOUGLAS E MITCHELL PAPERS (5.3 LINEAR METRES)

The Douglas E Mitchell Papers, which were donated by Mr Mitchell in January 1975, is a very important collection in the United Party Archives. The papers denote the distinguished career of a man who played an important part in the political, constitutional, agricultural and nature conservation life and development of Natal.

The bulk of the collection dates from the early 1950s to the early 1970s and does therefore not include material from the time Mr Mitchell was a member of the Provincial Council or Administrator of Natal.

The papers contain correspondence, memoranda, pamphlets, press cuttings and publications. The correspondence clearly shows the concern Mr Mitchell had for his constituents and other citizens of Natal, and the trouble he went to, to try and resolve their problems. The great volume of papers concerning the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board clearly spells out his interest in nature conservation and the game reserves.

The material has been divided into personal papers, subject files and files on people.

The papers concerning the United Party give insight into the functioning of the Party on provincial level and the leadership style of Mr Mitchell. The relationship between the Torch Commando, the United Democratic Front and the United Party in Natal can also be traced in the material.

The collection is a valuable asset in the wider picture of the history of the United Party and will be of value to researchers.
DOUGLAS E MITCHELL PAPERS (5.3 lm)

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1.4 Donations 1954-1967
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   prizes : correspondence 1954-1960;1967

1.5 Family affairs 1950;1956-1967
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1.6 Farming and agricultural interests 1953-1973
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   1.6.2 Guinea Fowl
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   1.6.3 Timber
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1 See also United Party, Natal U P : Retirement of leader, correspondence and press cuttings. The letters express
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2 The files are arranged in alphabetical and chronological order according to the surnames of the correspondents and the
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1.7.4  Consolidated Brick and Tile Company correspondence and annexures 1955-1958
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1.7.6  Graaffs' Trust correspondence and annexures, financial statements 1956-1968
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1.9  Labour Tennants correspondence and labour cards 1954-1957
1.10 Subscriptions 1954-1967
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1.12 Travel arrangements correspondence 1957;1968

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2. Administration of Estates Bill correspondence 1967
3. Africa pamphlets 1952-1973
press cuttings 1953-1960
5. Afrikaners press cuttings 1939;1954-1971
6. Agriculture General correspondence and press cuttings 1950-1973
6.1  General correspondence and press cuttings 1950-1963;1973
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8 See also Apartheid, Blacks, Homelands, Population Registration, KwaZulu and Transkei
9 See also Apartheid, Blacks, Group Areas, KwaZulu and Transkei

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29. KwaZulu\textsuperscript{10}          19621968;1972-1973
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PUBLICATIONS


*The Diamond jubilee of Dr Barton's missionary work*. 1953. Durban: Gospel Hall.

Added in 2012:
