Walter T. Steilberg Collection, ca. 1910-1974

Processed by the Environmental Design Archives staff
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Note
Arts and Humanities--Architecture
History--California History--Bay Area
History--California History Geographical (By Place)--California
Geographical (By Place)--California--Bay Area
Geographical (By Place)--University of California--UC
Berkeley
History--University of California History--UC Berkeley History
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**Collection Number: 1973-1**

Environmental Design Archives

University of California, Berkeley
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Processed by:
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Encoded by:
- Campbell J. Crabtree

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- Arrangement and description of this collection was funded by a grant from the Getty Foundation.

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Collection Title:** Walter T. Steilberg Collection,

**Date (inclusive):** ca. 1910-1974

**Collection Number:** 1973-1

**Creator:** Steilberg, Walter T., 1817-1974

**Extent:** 12 boxes, 5 card file boxes, 10 flat file drawers, ca. 35 tubes

**Repository:** Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California

**Language:** English.

**Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights**

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Director.

**Preferred Citation**


**Access Points**

Architects--California.
Architecture--California.
Building materials.
Buildings--California--Earthquake effects.
Structural engineering.
Berkeley (Calif.)--Fire, 1923.
Sather Tower (Berkeley, Calif.)
University of California, Berkeley -- Buildings.
Morgan, Julia, 1872-1957
Dailey, Gardner, 1895-

Biography
Walter T. Steilberg was born in 1887 in Louisville, Kentucky. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1910 with a bachelor's degree in architecture and a minor in structural engineering.

Steilberg worked with Julia Morgan from 1910-1920 as draftsman, architect, office manager, and structural engineer. In 1920 he formed his own architecture and consulting firm, and designed the Berkeley College Women's Club, Claremont Junior High School in Oakland, the Pavilion at Lake Merritt, and numerous residential projects. In addition, he designed buildings on many University of California Campuses, and directed the preservation of Sather Tower. He also supervised the dismantling of Spanish monastery in Santa Marin de Oliva, Spain. The building was shipped piece by piece to San Francisco as a gift to the city from William Randolph Hearst, but was never reassembled. As a consultant, Steilberg collaborated with Gardner Dailey on many projects.

Steilberg became an expert in seismic architecture and engineering issues. He researched and wrote a book entitled "Earthquakes Made Simple," presented illustrated lectures, and collected reference materials on the subject. Additionally, he did extensive experimental research in concrete.

He was a member of the American Institute of Architects, the Seismological Institute and the Concrete Institute of America. Steilberg died in 1974 at the age of 88.

Sources:
University of California job application, 1942 (folder II.1)

Scope and Content
The Walter Steilberg Collection spans the years 1910-1973 and documents Steilberg's engineering and architectural careers, as well as his own research into building materials and the structural effects of earthquakes. The collection is organized into five series: Personal Papers, Professional Papers, Office Records, Project Records, and University of California.

Steilberg's personal papers are minimal, consisting of his student drawings. His professional papers, which contain correspondence, collected articles, writings and photographs, are more thorough. These records are primarily related to earthquakes throughout California and in other states. The Berkeley fire of 1923, the structural characteristics of concrete and the effects of termites are also documented. Office records include correspondence to various trade publications and product literature.

Steilberg's project records include correspondence, notes, reports, photographs and drawings documenting both his consulting and design work. Projects for the University of California, including the Sather Tower renovation, are well-represented. The project records also contain correspondence between Steilberg and architect Gardner Dailey, and biographical information on Julia Morgan.

Title: Interviews with Walter Steilberg and related material,
Identifier/Call Number: BANC MSS 77/97,
Contributing Institution: The Bancroft Library
Title: Gardner Dailey Collection,
Identifier/Call Number: 1988-1,
Contributing Institution: Environmental Design Archives
Title: Julia Morgan Collection,
Identifier/Call Number: 1959-2,
Contributing Institution: Environmental Design Archives
I. Personal Papers, ca. 1910

Scope and Content Note
Consists of Steilberg's student drawings.

Boxes 1-3, 13-17, Flat Files

II. Professional Papers, 1923-1965

A. Employment and Professional Associations

B. Research Files
Scope and Content Note
Includes correspondence and printed and photographic materials relating to the structural properties of concrete, the Berkeley fire, termites, and housing projects.

C. Earthquake Research
Scope and Content Note
Consists of the book "Earthquakes Made Simple," which contains detail photographs and descriptions of Long Beach and San Francisco earthquakes. Also includes photographs, notes, printed materials, and research reports on seismic activity, primarily in California locations.

D. Photographic Materials
Scope and Content Note
Contains lantern slides and 35 mm slides depicting architectural drawings, buildings, construction scenes and earthquake damage. These materials were most likely used in teaching and research.

III. Office Records, 1920-1972

Scope and Content Note
Correspondence includes Steilberg's communication with various publications, and outgoing letters regarding his projects. Includes correspondence with Gardner Dailey and other architects for whom Steilberg consulted. Product literature contains a large selection of manuals, technical booklets, publications, construction material specifications, and engineering pamphlets, alphabetically arranged.

A. Correspondence

B. Product Literature

IV. Project Records, 1910-1967

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically within subseries.

Scope and Content Note
Contains correspondence, notes, photographs, and drawings related to commercial and private construction, structural consulting, and repair projects. Includes information about Julia Morgan.
IV. Project Records, 1910-1967

A. Files

B. Drawings

Boxes 10-12, Flat Files

V. University of California, 1913-1966

Scope and Content Note

Records of Sather Tower include information regarding its construction, repair of surface cracking, chime specifications, structure and maintenance plans, and artifacts. Additional projects include the original Architecture Building and the Faculty Club.

A. Sather Tower

B. Other University of California Projects

C. Drawings