Vignes Family Papers

1843-1901
**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Vignes Family Papers  
**Dates:** 1843-1901  
**Collection Number:** GC 1248  
**Creator/Collector:**  
**Extent:** (Boxes: 1 legal, 1 ov folder)  
**Repository:** Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
**Abstract:** Collection consists of a diary, letters, legal documents, photographs, recipes and wine-making notes. Pierre Vignes was Jean-Louis's brother and the author of the diary in this collection. Creators of this collection were Pierre Vignes and Pierre's son, Vital Ferdinand Vignes.  
**Language of Material:** English  
**Access**  
Research is by appointment only  
**Publication Rights**  
Permission to publish, quote or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder  
**Preferred Citation**  
Vignes Family Papers. Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
**Acquisition Information**  
The Papers include several different accessions which have been combined as they all relate to the same family (but were donated to the Museum by different family members at different times). However, within the collection, the papers have been separated by their respective accession numbers in order to respect the principle of provenance.  
**Biography/Administrative History**  
The Vignes Family was part of a small but influential French community in 19th century Los Angeles. The family patriarch was Jean-Louis Vignes who left Cadillac, France in 1826, arriving in El Dorado, California in 1831. (Vignes remained in Los Angeles until his death in 1863.) He bought a tract of land adjacent to the Los Angeles River (near the present location of Alameda Street and south of Aliso Street) and laid out El Aliso Vineyard, named for the huge sycamore which shaded it—a misnomer; “aliso” actually means alder. (Vignes's neighbors then called him Don Luis del Aliso.) Vignes, whose name means “vines” in French, became the most important winemaker in the West, producing as many as forty thousand gallons a year, and is today considered a pioneer of California viticulture. (He also planted what was probably the first orange grove in the city of Los Angeles.) Two present-day Los Angeles thoroughfares, Vignes and Aliso streets, are named for this pioneering family. Pierre Vignes was Jean-Louis's brother and the author of the diary in this collection. He married Catherine Lataste in 1816; the couple then had four girls and a boy, though one of the girls died at two years old. Though trained as a cooper, Pierre shifted to trade and moved from Cadillac to Beguey where he had bought a house with a small vineyard and a garden.  
**Scope and Content of Collection**  
The Vignes Family Papers consists of a diary, letters, legal documents, photographs, recipes and wine-making notes. Pierre Vignes was Jean-Louis's brother and the author of the diary in this collection. Creators of this collection were Pierre Vignes and Pierre's son, Vital Ferdinand Vignes. The letters and other written materials in the collection are all in French, though some of the letters have been transcribed and translated by Claudine Chambers; the diary has been transcribed and translated by Annick Foucier.  
**Indexing Terms**  
Viticulture--California--History.  
French--California--Los Angeles.  

**Finding Aid**