Excelsior Creamery Company Records

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2017
Excelsior Creamery Company Records

Descriptive Summary

Title: Excelsior Creamery Company Records
Dates: 1914-2002
Collection Number: 2006_04
Creator/Collector: Excelsior Creamery Company (Santa Ana, Calif.), Excelsior Farms (Norco, Calif.), Excelsior Ranch Company (Santa Ana, Calif.)
Extent: 7 document boxes and 3 flat oversize boxes.
Repository: Sherman Library and Gardens
Corona del Mar, California 92625

Abstract: The collection consists of the business records (including correspondence, financial records, publications, legal documents and other materials) of the Excelsior Creamery Company and its affiliated organizations, the Excelsior Ranch Company and Excelsior Farms. A sizeable amount of financial records in the collection between 1925-1966 show various annual and monthly profit and loss figures and balance statements for the company and record its growth over the years. There are materials regarding a few other Orange County area dairies acquired by the company and an extensive amount of land records which indicate the extensive amount of property acquired by the Excelsior Creamery over the years.

Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation
Excelsior Creamery Company Records. Sherman Library and Gardens

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated to the Sherman Library by Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Ranney in 1981.

Biography/Administrative History
Walter Daniel Ranney (1875-1949), his wife, Florence Knertes Wycoff Ranney (1877-1949), and their four children moved from Groton, New York, to Santa Ana, California in 1913. That same year W. D. Ranney established the Ranney Sanitary Dairy. In 1915, he and Charles F. Heil bought the Excelsior Dairy, which Henry Russell and E. D. Burns opened in Santa Ana earlier that year. W. D. Ranney's brother, Joseph A. Ranney, moved from New York to also join in the business, and in 1917 the name of the company changed to Excelsior Creamery. In 1920 they purchased Taylor's Ice Cream Factory in Santa Ana and entered the ice cream business, selling Excelsior ice cream in chocolate, vanilla and strawberry flavors. In 1922 the Excelsior Creamery opened its $150,000 three-story complex on East First Street in Santa Ana. The Excelsior Creamery was the first in Orange County, California, to use the milk pasteurization process and to offer frozen orange juice for sale. In the 1920s they leased pasture land for the creamery's cows in Round Valley, California, near Bishop, and in 1922 they purchased 400 acres to accommodate milk cows at Prado, California, just west of Corona. The Excelsior Ranch Company, created in 1930, separated the farming operations and dairy from the creamery, and in 1937 they purchased 100 acres of property in Garden Grove along with the cows and the dairy operations from Raitt's Dairy (Orange County's first dairy farm, which began operations in 1896). Following the Santa Ana River Flood of 1938, their Prado property was acquired through eminent domain by the government in order to build what became the Prado Dam, and afterwards all their dairy farming operations continued at what grew to be the 240 acre Seventeenth Street ranch in Garden Grove. The Excelsior Ranch Company dissolved in the early 1950s, the Garden Grove property was sold for the development of homes in 1953, and in 1957 Excelsior Farms was created and began cattle ranching in Norco, California. Upon its sale to the Los Angeles-based Carnation Company in 1980, the Excelsior Creamery’s sixty-five-year dairy industry business came to an end.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of the business records (including correspondence, financial records, publications, legal documents and other materials) of the Excelsior Creamery Company and its affiliated organizations, the Excelsior Ranch Company and Excelsior Farms. A sizeable amount of financial records in the collection between 1925-1966 show various annual and monthly profit and loss figures and balance statements for the company and record its growth over the years. There are materials regarding a few other Orange County area dairies acquired by the company and an extensive amount of land records which indicate the extensive amount of property acquired by the Excelsior Creamery over the years. Of particular note in the collection is the large body of materials which document the regulations and restrictions placed on manufacturers, supplies and food products during World War II. There are official publications from the United States Office of War Information and the Department of Agriculture regarding the rationing of sugar and automobile fuel and tires, and there are also contracts and related documentation regarding Excelsior Creamery’s role as the supplier of dairy products.
Excelsior Creamery Company

Records

for Orange County area military bases during the war. There are also some materials from this same era which record early attempts to use refrigerated ice cream trucks to deliver and distribute frozen foods. Other interesting materials in the collection include documents regarding the various types of containers for milk delivery, advertisements for Excelsior Creamery products and for Family Brick ice cream, and a large amount of company stock certificates. There are a few recipes in the collection related to the use of chocolate and cocoa to make chocolate milk and chocolate malted beverages, and it appears that at one time the Excelsior Creamery had a cocoa mix which they sold to other dairies with which they could create chocolate milk. The collection also contains materials related to the dairy, livestock and grazing activities of the Excelsior Creamery Company and its affiliated organizations, the Excelsior Ranch Company and Excelsior Farms. There is some material concerning their grazing activities on leased land in California’s Owens Valley, but there is more documentation concerning their Garden Grove ranch. There is a small amount of material concerning the condemnation of their grazing property in the vicinity of what became the Prado Dam following the destructive Santa Ana River Flood of 1938.

Indexing Terms
Dairies - California - Orange County - History - 20th century - Sources
Ranches - California - Orange County - History - 20th century.
Santa Ana (Calif.)
Norco (Calif.)
Business records - California - Orange County - 20th century.

Excelsior Creamery Company Records Finding Aid

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Subject Files

Excelsior Creamery Company 2006_04
Subject Files

Excelsior Creamery Company

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