Frank B. Durkee Papers

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2016
Descriptive Summary
Title: Frank B. Durkee Papers
Dates: 1864-1982
Collection Number: MSS 204
Creator/Collector: Durkee, Frank B.
Extent: Items: 34 Boxes, Linear Feet: 14.4
Repository: California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0295
Abstract: Frank Bidwell Durkee was an attorney and director of Public Works for the State of California. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, maps, and scrapbooks.

Language of Material: English
Access
Collection is open for research without restriction.

Publication Rights
The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

Preferred Citation
Frank B. Durkee Papers. California State University, Chico

Acquisition Information
Gift of Frank B. Durkee.

Biography/Administrative History
Frank Bidwell Durkee was born December 3, 1892 in Chitwood, Oregon to Edward Warren Durkee and Anna Elisabeth Monk. He graduated from Chico High in 1913. He married Wanda Edger, they had two children. He studied law at USC from 1913 to 1914. He served in the National Guard of California from 1915 to 1916. He became a member of the State Bar of California in 1926. During his career he was Assistant Trust Officer at Capital Nation Bank, member of the editorial staff at the Sacramento Bee, Secretary of Chamber of Commerce and County Food Administrator in Butte County, an attorney for the California Department for Public Works from 1931 to 1949 deputy director in 1948 the director from 1951 until his retirement in 1958. During that time of public works included highways, freeways, buildings, and San Francisco Bay toll crossings. During World War II he tried to apply for military and merchant marine service. He was a member of Governor’s Council and many state boards and commissions to include: California Highway Commission, California Toll Bridge Authority, Water Project Authority, Public Works Board, and State Allocation Board. After his retirement he became a member of Sacramento Redevelopment Agency and played a key role in the development of Old Sacramento. Durkee was active in historical organizations in the state, the Bidwell Mansion Restoration Association, and the Sacramento Book Collector’s Club. He died in Sacramento May 8, 1983 at the age of ninety.

Scope and Content of Collection
The bulk of the collection involves California highways, buildings, bridges stemming from Durkee’s role in Public Works. Most of these files are correspondence but also include maps and photographs. The photographs include highway freeway and bridge dedications and panorama photographs of the National Guard Company of Chico in Nogales in 1916. Also are blueprint plans and profile sheets for highway 32. Included are proposals for the road around Emerald Bay, wilderness areas of Lassen National Park and the access roads for Hearst Castle. One box contains materials from a cruise on the USS Yorktown Durkee and his wife took in July 1954 from Alameda California to Pearl Harbor Hawaii as guests of the US Navy.

Durkee had interest in California history; he was related to the Matt and Anna Schwein of Chico and named after John Bidwell. He was involved in the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency, Democratic Party and California politics. He had interest in and US foreign relations regarding the Philippines, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa and Hawaiian territories. The collection includes his appointment and calendar books from 1944 to 1982. The materials of this collection mostly fall into the following groups: correspondence, historic materials, politics, Public Works, California State Parks and Lassen National Park, Sacramento, and personal, employment and travel. Along with these materials, Durkee donated a large book collection to Meriam Library. As noted, some historic material was removed and cataloged separately. A 1926 topographic map of Lassen National Park filed in the “to be cataloged” map drawer cm1266.

Indexing Terms
Roads -- California -- History.
California. Division of Highways -- History.
Highway departments -- California -- History.
Chico (Calif.) -- History.
Sacramento (Calif.) -- History.
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