Finding aid to the Geil J. Norris family papers, Vault MS 156

Finding aid prepared by Marie Silva.
California Historical Society
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2012
Title: Geil J. Norris family papers
Date (inclusive): 1828-1969
Date (bulk): 1828-1899
Collection Identifier: Vault MS 156
Creator: Norris, Geil J., collector.
Extent: 1.0 box (0.5 linear feet)
Contributing Institution: California Historical Society
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA, 94105-4014
(415) 357-1848
reference@calhist.org
URL: http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/
Location of Materials: Collection is stored onsite.
Language of Materials: Most collection materials are in Spanish, with some in English and one unidentified letter in German.
Abstract: Consists of correspondence, broadsides, baptismal certificates, land records, ephemera, and other materials created by and documenting the Pico, Castro, and Sanchez families—from which Geil J. Norris was descended—between the years 1828 to 1969, with the bulk of the materials dating from the nineteenth century. Collection materials document the military and political life of California in the Mexican era; the Mexican War; land tenure and transactions in Monterey County; and familial and social relationships between prominent Californios in the nineteenth century. Correspondents include: Agustin V. Zamorano, Thomas O. Larkin, Pío Pico, Manuel Castro, Juan B. Castro, Rafael Sanchez, Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez, and Catalina Castro.
Access
Collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
All requests to reproduce, publish, quote from or otherwise use collection materials must be submitted in writing to the Director of Library and Archives, North Baker Research Library, California Historical Society, 678 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Consent is given on behalf of the California Historical Society as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission from the copyright owner. Such permission must be obtained from the copyright owner. Restrictions also apply to digital representations of the original materials. Use of digital files is restricted to research and educational purposes.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Geil J. Norris family papers, Vault MS 156, California Historical Society.
Separated Materials
Photographs of Juan B. Castro, Manuel Castro, Samuel F. Geil, and Monterey, California, have been separated and shelved under MSP Vault 156.
Acquisition Information
The collection was given to the California Historical Society by Mrs. Geil J. Norris in 1979.
System of Arrangement
Collection is mostly arranged in chronological order.
Processing Information
Collection was reprocessed by Marie Silva in 2012.
Family History
Geil J. Norris of Salinas, California, was a descendent of the Cota, Pico, Castro, and Sanchez families, prominent Mexican American families who settled in California, mostly in the Monterey area, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Members of these families, among them Pío Pico, Manuel Castro, Juan B. Castro, and Rafael Sanchez, were important figures in the military and political life of California in the Spanish and Mexican periods.
Geil J. Norris' earliest Mexican Californian ancestor, Pablo Cota, accompanied Junípero Serra on his expedition to California in the eighteenth century. Cota's daughter Maria Isabel married José Maria Pico; among their children were Pío Pico (governor of California, 1832 and 1845-1846), Andrés Pico, and Maria Antonia Pico. Maria Antonia married Simeon Castro,
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with whom she had several children, including Manuel Castro (prefect of Monterey and Mexican War general), Juan B. Castro, and Maria Antonia Castro. The latter married Rafael Sanchez (secretary to Governor Manuel Micheltorena), becoming Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez. They had three daughters: Dolores Sanchez, Eduvigues Bache, and Josefa Castro Sanchez. Josefa married Monterey attorney Samuel F. Geil; their daughter Erlinda Geil Norris and her husband Walter E. Norris were the parents of Geil J. Norris, who owned the collection until his death in 1979.

**Scope and Contents**
The collection consists of correspondence, broadsides, baptismal certificates, land records, ephemera, and other materials created by and documenting the Pico, Castro, and Sanchez families—from which Geil J. Norris was descended—between the years 1828 to 1969, with the bulk of the materials dating from the nineteenth century. Collection materials document the military and political life of California in the Mexican era; the Mexican War; land tenure and transactions in Monterey County; and familial and social relationships between prominent Californios in the nineteenth century. Correspondents include: Agustin V. Zamorano, Thomas O. Larkin, Pío Pico, Manuel Castro, Juan B. Castro, Rafael Sanchez, Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez, and Catalina Castro.

The collection contains many notable examples of early Californiana, including: an 1844 broadside announcing Thomas O. Larkin’s appointment as United States consul; letters by Zamorano, Pío Pico, Thomas O. Larkin, and Manuel Castro; documents pertaining to the Mexican War, including an 1846 bando and a letter of protest written by the minister of the missions at Santa Clara and San José; and Sam Brannan and Manual Castro greeting cards.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog:
- California—History—to 1846.
- California—History—1846-1850.
- California—Politics and government—to 1846.
- Mexican Americans—California—History.
- Mexican War, 1846-1848.
- Real property—California—Monterey County.
- Baptismal certificates.
- Broadside.
- Ephemera.
- Letters.
- Property records.
- Castro family.
- Pico family.
- Sanchez family.
- Brannan, Sam, 1819-1889.
- Castro de Sanchez, Maria Antonia, d. 1890
- Castro, Catalina.
- Castro, Juan B. (Juan Bautista), 1835-1915.
- Castro, Manuel de Jesus, 1821-1891.
- Larkin, Thomas Oliver, 1802-1858.
- Pico, Pío, 1801-1894.
- Sanchez, Rafael, b. 1806.
- Zamorano, Agustin Juan Vicente, 1798-1842.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder 1</th>
<th>Descriptive materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Photocopies of collection contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folders 3-4</td>
<td>Family history 1890-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language of Materials: In English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Rafael Sanchez certificate of baptism, Santa Veracruz, Mexico City 1828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language of Materials: In Spanish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Folder 6  
**Agustin V. Zamorano letter, Monterey, to Juan Malarin 1832 February 6**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish, with English translation.  
Scope and Contents  
In this letter, provisional commandant Agustin Zamorano calls honorary lieutenant Juan Malarin to service at the port of Monterey, expressing hope that Malarin will cooperate with the legitimate authorities and condemning the pronouncement of the San Diego Presidio.

Folder 7  
**Broadside announcing Thomas O. Larkin's appointment as United States consul, Monterey 1844 April 2**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish.  
Physical Description: Broadside is printed askew on a folded sheet of paper with a blue decorative border, measuring 21 x 13 cm. folded; and is addressed to sub lieutenant Rafael Sanchez on the reverse.

Folder 8  
**Thomas O. Larkin letter of recommendation for Rafael Sanchez, Monterey 1845 September 5**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish.  
Scope and Contents  
In this letter, United States consul Thomas O. Larkin praises Sanchez's conduct as secretary to General Manual Micheltorena.

Folder 9  
**Pío Pico letter, Los Angeles, to Rafael Sanchez 1846 January 22**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish.  
Scope and Contents  
In this letter, Governor Pico asks his nephew Rafael Sanchez to persuade their relative Manuel Castro to continue in his position as prefect [of Monterey] despite his age.

Folder 10  
**Manuel Castro photograph and English translation of his letter to J. C. Fremont 1846 March 5, undated**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes an undated photograph of Manuel Castro in military regalia; and an English translation of his letter to Fremont ordering him to remove his forces from Monterey.

Folder 11  
**Copy of a decree issued by the Asamblea Departmental, Los Angeles, on 1846 May 13, and certified by José Abrego, Monterey 1846 June 30**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish.  
Scope and Contents  
Published in Monterey, this copy of Governor Pío Pico's bando of 1846 May 13 announces the decree of the Asamblea Departmental establishing a Consejo General de los Pueblos Unidos, as proposed by Juan Bandini. The decree also discusses military exigencies related to the possible invasion of California by foreign troops.

Folder 12  
**Letter, written by the minister of the missions of Santa Clara and San José, to the governor circa 1847**  
Language of Materials: In Spanish.  
Scope and Contents  
In this letter, the minister and guardian of the missions of Santa Clara and San José defends the legal rights of the missions and other property holders in California during the American military occupation.
Folder 13  
**Prayer books 1848, 1856**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

Includes two prayer books: *El libro de oro, o practica de la humildad, para conducir a la perfeccion cristiana* (Valparaiso: Imprenta Europea, 1848); and *Mes de Maria, or sea el mes de Mayo, consagrado a la gloria de la Madre de Dios* (San Francisco: Imprenta de O'Meara y Painter, 1856).

Folder 14  
**R. Sanchez stagecoach ticket, Mexico 1851**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Folder 15  
**Broadside announcing the celebration of a mass for Maria Santisima de Guadalupe, Yglesia del Convento de Nuestro Padre San Francisco, Mexico City 1852 January 1**

Folder 16  
**Rafael Sanchez papers concerning Simeon Castro’s estate, Monterey 1853-1857**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

Includes a provisional deed, dated 1857 March 21, recording the sale of property inherited by Juan Bautista Castro, José A. Castro, José Francisco Castro, and Leandro Castro to their brother-in-law Rafael Sanchez; and related accounts, dated 1853 to 1857.

Folder 17  
**Manuel [Castro] letter, Mexico, to Rafael Sanchez 1854 August 19**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

In this letter, sent to Monterey from Mexico via the United States and Panama, Manuel Castro informs his brother-in-law Rafael Sanchez of the death of his brother, also named Manuel Castro; bemoans the recent cholera epidemic; and discusses the difficulties of sending mail due to the revolution in the south.

Folders 18-19  
**Monterey County land records 1861-1924**

Language of Materials: In English.

Scope and Contents

Includes deeds, mortgages, indentures, and certificates of title recording transactions between Manuel Castro, Maria Antonia Pico de Castro, Juan B. Castro, Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez, Josefa Geil, Dolores Sanchez, Eduvigues Bach, Henry Bach, S. F. Geil, Maria Antonia Bach, and others.

Folder 20  
**Manuel Castro letter, San Francisco, to Maria Antonia Pico 1865 July 24**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

In this letter, Manuel Castro writes to his mother about his recovery from a grave illness.

Folder 21  
**Juan B. Castro letters to Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez 1871-1885**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

Includes letters and telegrams from Juan B. Castro to his sister María Antonia Castro de Sanchez regarding family and business matters.

Folder 22  
**Catalina Castro letters, Castroville, to Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez 1875 May 30 and 1880 September 20**

Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Scope and Contents

In her letter of 1880 September 20, Catalina Castro refers to business dealings between Sam Brannan and Manuel Castro in Mexico.
Folder 23  Manuel Castro letter, San Antonio, to Eduviges Sanchez 1880 April [?]? 14
  Language of Materials: In Spanish.
  Scope and Contents
  In this letter to his niece Eduviges Sanchez, Manuel Castro describes his itinerary from California to Mexico City via New York and the Gulf of Mexico. He also describes meeting Jacob P. Leese in San Antonio.

Folder 24  Manuel Castro and Samuel Brannan New Year cards 1881
  Language of Materials: In English.
  Physical Description: Two greeting cards, printed in Mexico City and stamped with the Mexican coat of arms, with feathers affixed in the shape of birds.

Folder 25  María Antonia Castro de Sanchez account book, Monterey 1881
Folder 26  Manuel Castro letter, San Francisco, to Eduviges Sanchez 1882 August 5
  Language of Materials: In Spanish.
  Scope and Contents
  In this letter to his niece Eduviges Sanchez, Manuel Sanchez refers to an article he wrote about Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado, which was published in La Republica.

Folder 27  Hostetter's Illustrated California Almanac (Pittsburgh: Hostetter & Smith) 1884
  Language of Materials: In English.

Folder 28  La Correspondencia (San Francisco: Cardona Hermanos, Editores y Propietarios) 1885 July
  Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Folder 29  Monterey County ephemera 1885-1917, undated
  Language of Materials: In English.

Folder 30  San Francisco ephemera 1889, undated
  Language of Materials: In English.

Folder 31  Manuel Castro funeral notice and letters announcing his death 1891
  Language of Materials: In English and Spanish.

Folder 32  Unidentified letter in German 1894
Folder 33  Certified copy of legal document for Mariano Mallet, Madrid 1895 July 20
  Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Folder 34  Copy of Maria Fernandez y Varela birth certificate, Friol, Spain 1916 July 28
  Language of Materials: In Spanish.

Folder 35  María Antonia Thompson essays 1947
  Language of Materials: In English and Spanish.

Folder 36  Miscellaneous correspondence and papers 1853-1885
  Language of Materials: In English and Spanish.

Folder 37  Miscellaneous receipts 1863-1899
  Language of Materials: In English and Spanish.

Folder 38  Miscellaneous telegrams 1874-1886
  Language of Materials: In English and Spanish.
Folder 39

**Leather sample of the Castro brand undated**