Finding Aid to the Charles D. (Charles Debrille) Poston Manuscript Collection MS.592

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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2012 October 9
Title: Charles D. (Charles Debrille) Poston Manuscript Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS.592
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 linear feet(4 folders)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1865-1925
Date (inclusive): 1865-1925, 1977
Abstract: This collection includes manuscripts for a speech, a magazine article, and two monographs by Charles Debrill Poston, as well as memorial newspaper clippings and a program for an honorary statue of Poston. Materials range from 1865-1977.
creator: Poston, Charles D. (Charles Debrille), 1825-1902
Related Archival Materials
Poston Memorial by Herman Ehrenberg, February 19, 1880, in MS 540 Ehrenberg Collection. Poston Memorial by Samuel P. Heintzelman, May 13, 1880, in MS 541 Heintzelman Collection.
Processing history
Processed by Glenna Schroeder, circa 1977-1981. Finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Processing Archivist, 2012 October 9, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commissions (NHPRC).
Biographical note
Charles Debrille Poston (1825, April 20 - 1902, June 24) was an American explorer, prospector, author, politician, and civil servant. He is referred to as the "Father of Arizona" due to his efforts lobbying for creation of the territory. Poston was also Arizona Territory's first Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.
In 1851, Poston traveled to California as part of the Gold Rush and took a clerk position at the San Francisco Customs House. While at this job, he became involved with a group of French bankers interested in the lands of the recently negotiated Gadsden Purchase. In late 1853, with the bankers' backing, Poston joined with mining engineer Herman Ehrenberg to organize an expedition into the territory Mexico was expected to sell to the United States. After returning to San Francisco, Poston left for the East Coast in search of capital to fund a mining operation in the newly acquired territory. In 1856, he secured $2 million to found the Sonora Exploring and Mining Company with Samuel P. Heintzelman as company president and Poston as managing supervisor. The company set up headquarters in Tubac, Arizona and began mining operations in the nearby Santa Rita Mountains and elsewhere. Poston served as alcalde of the settlement and became known as "Colonel" Poston in the town of roughly 800 people. Mining operations produced $3000 per day in silver until 1861. With the withdrawal of Union troops due to the American Civil War, Tubac saw an increase in hostilities from local Apaches and the settlement had to be abandoned. After being forced to leave Tubac due to the Apache siege, Poston went to Washington D.C. Poston used this time to lobby both President Lincoln and Congress for creation of an Arizona Territory, advertising the benefits of the area's mineral wealth to the Union cause. On 12 March 1863, Poston was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs. This appointment was followed by his election as Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives on 18 July 1864, where he served for 2 years. After leaving Congress, Poston traveled in Europe and India, converted to Zoroastrian, and upon returning to Arizona, built a Sun Temple in Florence. When he passed away in 1902, this temple became the site of his burial, renamed Poston Butte.
Scope and Contents
This collection includes manuscripts for a speech, a magazine article, and two monographs by Charles Debrill Poston, as well as memorial newspaper clippings and a program for an honorary statue of Poston. Materials range from 1865-1977.
1) Speech by Poston on Indian Affairs in the House of Representatives; March 2, 1865 (2 c., 1 is Photostat)
2) "Irrigation" by Poston, 1887
3) "Arizona" by Poston, undated
4) "Building a State in Apache Land IV: Arizona a Territory at Last" by Poston in Overland Monthly, October 1894; Program of Services in Connection with Dedication of a Monument to the memory of Hon. Charles Debrill Poston, Florence, Arizona, Sunday April 26, 1925, 1:00 p.m.; article with mention of Poston in Los Angeles Times, 20 Nov 1977.
Preferred citation
Charles D. (Charles Debrille) Poston Manuscript Collection, 1865-1977, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.592; [folder number] [folder title][date].
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Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit
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Acquisition
Purchase from Joseph Amasa Munk as part of the Munk Library of Arizoniana, 1910 May 10.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Arizona -- History
Arizona Territory
Articles
Building a State in Apache Land IV: Arizona a Territory at Last
Clippings
Indians of North America -- Arizona
Manuscripts
Mines and mineral resources -- Arizona
Speeches