Guide to the Couts Family Collection MS 18

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills
San Diego History Center Document Collection
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Title: Couts Family Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 18
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1838-1896
Date (inclusive): 1826 - 1964
Abstract: This collection contains the military, business, and personal papers of Cave J. Couts, a prominent businessman in early San Diego, as well as business papers and personal papers of other members of the Couts Family.
creator: Couts, Cave Johnson, 1821-1874

Biographical / Historical Notes
Cave Johnson Couts was born near Springfield, Tennessee on November 11, 1821. His uncle, Cave Johnson, was Postmaster General under President Polk and had him appointed to West Point, where he graduated in 1843. Cave served on the frontier until after the Mexican war, and then in Los Angeles, San Luis Rey, and San Diego from 1848 to 1851. In 1849, he was the commander for the escort of Lt. Amiel Weeks Whipple’s expedition to the Colorado River. In 1851, he retired from the army and accepted an appointment as aid-de-camp to Governor Bigler.
He married Ysidora Bandini, daughter of Juan Bandini, on April 5, 1851 and they built a ranch on a tract of land known as the Guajome, gifted to Ysidora by her brother-in-law Abel Stearns. They had ten children together: Abel Stearns, María Antonía Arcadia, William Bandini Guillermo Antonio, Cave Johnson Jr., Nancy Dolores, Ysidora Forster, Elena Francisca, Robert Lee, John Forster, and María Carolina (Caroline). Cave grew wealthy through the cattle industry and expanded onto ranchos in San Marcos, Buena Vista, and La Jolla. He died in San Diego on June 10, 1874. Ysidora continued to live on the rancho and managed it until her death in 1897.

Scope and Content
This collection contains the military, business, and personal papers of Cave J. Couts. Military papers consist of correspondence regarding Couts’ army expedition to the Colorado River with Lieutenant Whipple, as well as certificates of appointment. Business papers include correspondence with business partners such as E.W. Morse, lists of taxable property, and a traders’ licenses. Personal papers include estate papers as well as correspondence with family.
The collection also contains business papers and personal papers of other members of Cave Cout’s family: his sons, William Bandini, Cave Johnson Jr., and Robert Lee; his brothers, John Forster and William Blount; as well as assorted wills, marriage licenses, and genealogical notes.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in two series:
Series I: Cave J. Couts Papers;
Series II: Couts Family Papers.
Series I is arranged by subject and Series II is arranged alphabetically by family member.

Preferred Citation
Couts Family Collection, MS 18, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Samantha Mills in June 2013.

Comments
This collection represents a fraction of the total size of Couts’ papers that are available, with the Huntington Library possessing approximately 16,000 items dating from 1821-1874.
The typed inventory of military correspondence located in Folder 1 was created when the collection was originally processed in 1955.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Ames, Frank
Couts, Cave Johnson, Jr.
Couts, John Forster
Couts, Robert Lee
Couts, William Bandini
Couts, William Blount
Emory, William H. (William Hemsley), 1811-1887
Ensworth, Augustus S.
International Boundary Commission.
Mendoza, Juan
Morse, Ephraim W.
Whipple, Amiel Weeks, 1817-1863
Correspondence
Licenses
Real property
San Diego (Calif.)

Series I: Cave J. Couts Papers

Box-folder 1:1 Military Papers: Correspondence, 1849 June 2 - 1849 September 17
Includes:
A "calendar of letters" describing all military correspondence, assembled in 1955.

Box-folder 1:2 Military Papers: Correspondence, 1849 October 1 - 1849 October 29
Box-folder 1:3 Military Papers: Correspondence, 1849 November 1 - 1856 April 25
Box-folder 1:4 Military Papers: Journal, 1849
Scope and Content

Box-folder 1:5 Military Papers: Certificates, 1843 July 1 - 1852 June 22
Scope and Content
Contents of entire folder in Oversize Collections D9: Certificate appointing Cave J. Couts to Second Lieutenant in Regiment of Riflemen, dated July 1, 1843; Certificate appointing Cave J. Couts to Second Lieutenant in First Regiment of Dragoons, dated March 31, 1845; and Certificate appointing Cave J. Couts to Aide de Camp to Governor, with rank of Colonel of Cavalry, dated June 22, 1852.

Box-folder 1:6 Business Papers: E.W. Morse Correspondence, 1859 March 21 - 1868 December 19
Box-folder 1:7 Business Papers: Ames and Ensworth Correspondence, 1858 December 26 - 1864 September 25
Box-folder 1:8 Business Papers: Lists of Taxable Property, 1854-1873
Box-folder 1:9 Business Papers: Traders’ Licenses, 1862 January 13 - 1868 October 1
Box-folder 1:10 Personal Papers: Correspondence, 1838 September 24 - 1840 February 16
Box-folder 1:11 Personal Papers: Cave Couts’ Estate, 1875 February 15 - 1896 July 1
Box-folder 1:12 Miscellanea, 1858 March 22 - 1964 April 19
Includes
A lease for land; Couts’ appointment to Public School Trustee; a Coroner’s Inquest held after Couts killed Juan Mendoza; and a newspaper clipping.
Shipping manifest dated February 10, 1864 (in Oversize Collections D9).
Shipping manifest dated February 27, 1864 (in Oversize Collections D9).
Series II: Couts Family Papers

Box-folder 1:13  
**Couts Family Genealogical Papers, 1826-1963 and undated**  
Includes  
Marriage Certificate of William B. Couts and Maria Cristina Estudillo, dated November 18, 1872 (in Oversize Collections D9).

Box-folder 1:14  
**Cave Johnson Couts, Jr., 1876 March 31 - 1937 August 21 and undated**  
Includes  
Copy of Cave Couts' drawing of Guajome ranch house (in Oversize Collections D9).

Box-folder 1:15  
**Henry J. Couts, 1856 January 15 - 1857 April 7**  
Box-folder 1:16  
**John Forster Couts, 1891 December 1 - 1894 August 10**  
Box-folder 1:17  
**Robert Lee Couts, 1889 November 23 - 1890 August 15**  
Box-folder 1:18  
**William Bandini Couts, 1889 October 15 - 1889 November 25**  
Box-folder 1:19  
**William Blount Couts, 1856 November 27 - 1871 September 19**  
Box-folder 1:20  
**Miscellanea, undated**  
Includes  
Election tickets from various political parties in Boston, and a print depicting the Old Horton House.