Guide to the Little Landers Colony Records MS 240

Finding aid prepared by Sandra Kirkwood
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.
San Diego History Center Document Collection
1649 El Prado, Suite 3
San Diego, CA, 92101
619-232-6203
April 4, 2012
Title: Little Landers Colony Records
Identifier/Call Number: MS 240
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet (1 box)
Date (inclusive): 1909-1923
creator: Little Landers Colony No. 1.

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The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials.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 Sandra Kirkwood on April 4, 2012.
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.

Arrangement
Collection materials are arranged by subject.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
Some pages of cash book are damaged or missing (pages 63-154). (April 4, 2012)

Preferred Citation
Little Landers Colony Records, MS 240, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

Biographical / Historical Notes
The Little Landers Colony near San Ysidro was founded by William E. Smythe on August 1, 1908. Smythe worked primarily in the newspaper business, but he was also an expert on irrigation. His early work included chairman of the National Irrigation Congress, founding the collective farming town of New Plymouth, Idaho in 1895, and providing consultation services for communities near Sacramento and in Lassen County, California. He relocated to San Diego around 1902 and wrote two books, one of which is the "History of San Diego."

In August 1908, the Little Landers Colony No. 1 was founded, and in December the old Belcher Ranch was announced as the colony site. In 1909, land was distributed, and they established the community school, library, clubhouse, and headquarters. The group developed financial issues due to configuration of the corporation. Some landowners did not live in the community, and therefore became burdensome. Additionally, there was a delay in the development of the irrigation system, limiting productivity. In 1910, Little Landers, Incorporated, was established and improved the overall condition. Work was also started to address the irrigation concern. Generally, the Little Landers Colony No. 1 flourished from 1909 to 1916. The clubhouse became the center of community life. It housed social clubs, dances, lectures, elections, school activities, and church services. In January 1916, the so-called Hatfield Flood destroyed the property of 100 families, along with the community’s pumping plant and distribution system. There was an outpouring of support from the citizens of San Diego, and the Little Landers Relief Fund was established. The flood, however, effectively signified the beginning of the end for the Little Landers group. After the death of his wife, Smythe left the group in 1918 to provide consultation services to other settlements in the east. He died in New York City on October 6, 1922. The Little Landers Colony in San Ysidro survived until roughly 1923 but was then overtaken by residential development and financial woes. The bulk of the collection explores the latter years of the Little Landers Colony clubhouse activities, starting four months after the 1916 flood through 1923.

Scope and Content
The collection contains records from the Little Landers Colony, including land deeds and financials. The cash book contains cash received and cash paid for clubhouse activities. Clubhouse receipts cover supplies (e.g., food, light bulbs, lumber) and operations (e.g., repairs, janitorial work), as well as electricity bills and insurance. In addition, the collection includes a Christmas letter from William E. Smythe, a Little Landers’ Market membership card, and three Jenny Wren recipes.

Comments
Materials added to collection from Document Files Collection, Little Landers file.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Guide to the Little Landers
Colony Records MS 240

Accession number 2005.30.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Campbell, M., Mrs.
Gottsch, John W.
Gottsch, Pauline C.
Hall, Bolton, 1854-1938
Hall, George P.
Jenny Wren Products Company.
Larsen, Mattie Hall Corbett
Little Landers Colony No. 1.
Little Landers Relief Fund.
Miller, H. E., Mrs.
Mills, Henry H.
Nulton, H. F., Mrs.
Smythe, William E. (William Ellsworth), 1861-1922
Agricultural colonies
Agriculture
Agriculture -- California
Agriculture, Cooperative
Garrick Theatre (San Diego, Calif.)
San Diego (Calif.)
San Ysidro (San Diego, Calif.)
San Ysidro Inn (San Diego, Calif.)

---

**Box-folder 1:1**

Land deeds, 1909 August 16-1913 September 13

---

**Box-folder 1:2**

Cash Book of Little Landers Colony, 1916 May-1923 March

**Scope and Content**
Cash book records cash received and cash paid. Most cash received was for space rental in support of church services, dances, social clubs, and school activities. The library and irrigation district office also paid rent. Most of the cash paid went towards repairs, janitorial work, and electricity. On pages 1-125, there is one list for cash received and one list for cash paid, with a balance summary at the end of each month. On pages 126-141, cash received and cash paid are listed in chronological order. Inventory lists and special fund accounts begin on page 142 until the end of the cash book.

---

**Box-folder 1:3**

Clubhouse supply receipts, 1915-1923 and undated

---

**Box-folder 1:4**

Clubhouse operations receipts, 1915-1923 and undated
Includes:
- Bids and specifications for 1923 repairs

---

**Box-folder 1:5**

Clubhouse electricity bills, 1916-1923

---

**Box-folder 1:6**

Clubhouse insurance, 1919-1921

---

**Box-folder 1:7**

Miscellanea, 1913-1922 and undated
Includes:
- Little Landers' Market membership card, 1913
- Christmas letter from William E. Smythe to "Billy" Hevener, 1918
- Letter to Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Hevener from members of National Parks Association and New Jersey Audubon Society, January 5, 1922
- Jenny Wren recipes

---

Guide to the Little Landers
Colony Records MS 240

MS 240