Guide to the Alonzo and Lydia Knapp Horton Collection MS 26

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills
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
March 21, 2013
Title: Alonzo and Lydia Knapp Horton Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 26
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
Date (inclusive): 1863-1976
Abstract: This collection contains deeds and business correspondence of Alonzo E. Horton and some personal papers of Alonzo E. Horton and Lydia Knapp Horton.
creator: Horton, Alonzo E., 1813-1909
creator: Horton, Lydia Knapp

Biographical / Historical Notes
Alonzo Erastus Horton, known as the “Father of San Diego,” was born in Union, Connecticut on October 24, 1813. He moved to Wisconsin in 1836, where he founded and developed the town of Hortonville. In 1850, he sold those lands and moved west to San Francisco to take advantage of the gold boom, and he found success selling supplies to miners and running a used furniture store. In 1867, he turned his attention south to San Diego, where he bought 800 acres of public land at auction for $265. Two years later he bought an additional 160 acres to complete Horton’s Addition in New San Diego. Horton was an active promoter and returned to San Francisco with maps and brochures to pitch the growing city. He partnered with San Diego businessman Ephraim W. Morse and sent him a stream of tourists, settlers, and speculators. In addition to selling his lots at high profit, Horton encouraged community growth by donating lots to religious organizations, building the wharf at the end of Fifth Avenue, opening the first bank in New San Diego, and helping to promote and finance a post office, a telegraph line, and increased railroad service. He lost most of his holdings after a series of real estate boom-and-bust cycles and by 1903 he was left dependent on the income of his third wife, Lydia Knapp Horton. Alonzo died on January 7, 1909.
Lydia Knapp Horton was born Lydia Maria Smith on August 7, 1843 in West Newbury, Massachusetts to Daniel and Charlotte Bailey Smith. She moved to San Francisco in 1868 and then San Diego in 1869 with her first husband, Lieutenant William Knapp. They had two sons, William Bailey and Philip, and in 1877 Lydia and the boys moved back to Massachusetts, where she supported them by teaching art and selling paintings. In 1885 William died, and in 1888 Lydia returned to San Diego to settle her business affairs. She decided to stay, and took up an art instructor position at the Southwest Institute. In 1890, she married Alonzo Horton, whose second wife, Sarah, had died the previous year. Lydia was active in San Diego civic life, particularly the Wednesday Club and other women’s organizations. She was instrumental in founding the San Diego Public Library and was on the board of the 1915 San Diego Exposition. In 1903, she went to work as Librarian of the State Normal School to supplement her husband’s sudden loss of income. She supported them until after his death, and in 1910 she was able to retire with financial support from her sons. Lydia remained active in San Diego civic life until she suffered a stroke in 1924. She remained in ill health till her death on October 17, 1926.

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.

Arrangement
Collection is arranged by subject.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Samantha Mills on March 21, 2013.
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.

Preferred Citation
Alonzo and Lydia Knapp Horton Collection, MS 26, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

Scope and Content
This collection contains deeds and business correspondence of Alonzo E. Horton and some personal papers of Alonzo E. Horton and Lydia Knapp Horton. Alonzo’s correspondence is primarily addressed to Ephraim W. Morse regarding real estate development in San Diego. Personal papers of Alonzo include records of memorials enacted in his honor and extended family information. Personal papers of Lydia Knapp Horton include correspondence and an autobiographical note, as well as several papers from the extended Knapp family.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Horton, Alonzo E., 1813-1909
Horton, Lydia Knapp
Morse, Ephraim W.
Abstracts of title
Correspondence
Deeds
Hortonville (Wis.)
Real property
San Diego (Calif.)
Trial and arbitral proceedings

Box-folder 1:1  Real estate: deeds, 1867 May 4-1868 December 24
   Includes:
   Records of city lands bought by Alonzo Horton and lots in Horton's Addition bought and sold by Alonzo Horton.

Box-folder 1:2  Real estate: deeds, 1869 February 15-November 24
   Includes:
   Records of city lands bought by Alonzo Horton and lots in Horton's Addition bought and sold by Alonzo Horton.
   Deed for 1/2 of Lot D, Block 58 of Horton's Addition, sold by M.P. McLaughlin to Alonzo Horton, dated May 19, 1869 (in F4D1)

Box-folder 1:3  Real estate: deeds, 1870 February 7-1894 November 7
   Includes:
   Records of city lands bought by Alonzo Horton and lots in Horton's Addition bought and sold by Alonzo Horton.

Box-folder 1:4  Real estate: Abstracts of Title, 1885 September 17-1887 September 28
   Includes:
   Abstract for the southern half of Block 178 of Horton's Addition
   Two copies of an abstract for Lot J of Block 112 of Horton's Addition

Box-folder 1:5  Real estate: correspondence, 1867 August 26-1868 March 1
   Includes:
   Correspondence from Alonzo Horton to E.W. Morse.

Box-folder 1:6  Real estate: correspondence, 1868 May 25-1873 July 19
   Includes:
   Correspondence from Alonzo Horton to E.W. Morse and A.C. Wright, and one letter from the San Diego Board of Supervisors to Alonzo Horton.

Box-folder 1:7  Real estate: miscellaneous land developments, 1870-1976 and undated
   Includes:
   Article about the Horton House
   Recollections of Horton House architect W.W. Bowers
   Correspondence regarding Horton Plaza
   Pamphlet about Hortonville, Wisconsin
   Full issue of the Hortonville Star, May 7, 1971 (in F4D1)
Box-folder 1:8  **Legal proceedings, 1869-1882**
Includes:
Printed court proceedings from Charles E. DeWolf vs. A.E. Horton et al., and Savings & Loan Society vs. Horton et al.

Box-folder 1:9  **Alonzo Horton memorials, 1908-1972 and undated**
Includes:
Resolution No. 71330 to install a plaque at Civic Center Hall
Correspondence and pledges to the Horton Bust Fund
Programs for Alonzo Horton Day
Certificates from the Chamber of Commerce Centennial

Box-folder 1:10  **Horton family, 1866 November 12-1948 May 24 and undated**
Includes:
Invoice for work at Mrs. Horton’s house
Horton family tree
Postcards and correspondence about Barnabas Horton

Box-folder 1:11  **Lydia Knapp Horton, 1903 April 20-1924 March 6 and undated**
Includes:
Correspondence
Affidavit of election expenses
Autobiographical notes
Transcript of a public address

Box-folder 1:12  **Knapp family, 1863 October 21-1971 May 11 and undated**
Includes:
Military record of William Knapp
Estate of William Bailey Knapp
Record book of Smith/Bailey/Knapp family births and deaths
Several photos and sketches