Guide to the Panama-California Exposition Administrative Collection MS 263

Finding aid prepared by Lauren Rasmussen
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
May 30, 2012
Title: Panama-California Exposition Administrative Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 263
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.25 Linear feet (3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1909-1919
Abstract: This collection contains materials related to the planning and execution of the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915-1916.
creator: Panama-California Exposition (1915 : San Diego, Calif.).
creator: Panama-California International Exposition (1916 : San Diego, Calif.).
creator: San Diego Museum of Man.
Biographical / Historical Notes
The Panama–California Exposition was a world's fair held in San Diego from March 1915 through December 1916 to commemorate the completion of the Panama Canal in South America. The Exposition was meant to promote San Diego as the first American port of call north of the Canal. The fair drew a large amount of attention and tourism to San Diego, helping re-establish the city’s economy that had remained weak after the Wall Street Panic of 1907. The idea was originally conceived by G. Aubrey Davidson, the founder of the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank, who was also the president of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. Davidson and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce chose real-estate developer David Collier to help guide the planning of the Exposition as the director-general of the Exposition’s Executive Committee. Collier was responsible for dictating both the selection of Balboa Park as the Exposition site and the combination of the Pueblo Revival and Mission Revival architectural styles that were used for the Exposition buildings.
The buildings, originally meant to be temporary, were designed and constructed by Bertram Goodhue, Frank Allen, and Carleton Winslow. Construction began in 1911 and lasted for 3 years. Exposition exhibitions showcased San Diego’s culture, history, port, and economy. The Exposition hosted several anthropological exhibits lent to them by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., as well as cultural exhibitions hosted by other states and countries. The Exposition was so successful that it was prolonged through 1916.
Scope and Content
The collection contains administrative documents, including by-laws, meeting minutes, and correspondence. The bulk of the collection is comprised of three volumes of meeting minutes from the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for the Exposition, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Exposition’s planning and execution. The first volume of meeting minutes begins in 1909 and is related to the planning of the Exposition, while the second volume is primarily related to its execution. The third volume covers the last few months of the Exposition through the final reconciliation of accounts in 1919. Additional documents include minutes and correspondence of other Exposition committees, such as the Women’s Board, Subscription Campaign Committee, and Committee for the Preservation of Fair Buildings. An Exposition guest book, copies of the Exposition’s daily earnings and expenses, as well as shareholder’s stock certificates are also present.
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.
Preferred Citation
Panama-California Exposition Administrative Collection, MS 263, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.
Processing Information
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Immediate Source of Acquisition
Accession number 950217.
Comments
Original covers for three volumes of Executive Committee meeting minutes (Box 1, folders 2-4) and one Subscription Campaign Committee ledger (Box 2, folder 2) have been separated and moved to Box 3.

**Arrangement**

Collection materials are arranged by subject. Original covers have been separated and are located in Box 3.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Allen, Frank Phillips, Jr.
Collier, David Charles
Davis, H. O.
Gill, Irving, 1870-1936
Goodhue, Bertram Grosvenor, 1869-1924
Grant, Ulysses S., 1852-1929
Hewett, Edgar L. (Edgar Lee), 1865-1946
Hogaboom, Winfield
Marston, George White, 1850-1946
McLure, Lewis Steenrod
Panama-California Exposition (1915 : San Diego, Calif.).
Panama-California International Exposition (1916 : San Diego, Calif.).
San Diego Chamber of Commerce.
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.
Sefton, Joseph W., 1882-1966
Spreckels, John Diedrich, b. 1853
United States. Marine Corps.
Winslow, Carleton Monroe, 1876-1946
Balboa Park (San Diego, Calif.)
Committees
Exhibition buildings
Panama Canal (Panama)
San Diego (Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.)
Tourism

Box-folder 1:1  
**Articles of incorporation and by-laws, 1909**

Box-folder 1:2  
**“Minute Book of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Panama-California Exposition, Vol. I,” 1909 October 27- 1912 December 28**

Entries of interest:

Brief conversation regarding hiring a man from Kansas who has proposed to ride his burro around the Southern United States in order to promote the Exposition. (page 7)

Committee discusses agreements with the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum to lend collections to San Diego for the Exposition's anthropological exhibitions. (page 98)

Committee has an in-depth discussion regarding the construction of a pedestrian bridge (what is now the Cabrillo Bridge) leading to the Exposition grounds. (page 143)

Box-folder 3:1  
**“Minute Book of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Panama-California Exposition, Vol. I” (original cover), undated**
“Minute Book of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Panama-California Exposition, Vol. II,” 1913 January 7-1915 May 18

Entries of interest:
- First of many discussions regarding promotion of the Exposition and encouragement of support from other states. (page 233)
- Committee comes to the conclusion that they will sell alcohol (“intoxicants”) at the Exposition in spite of some minor controversy regarding the matter. (page 255)
- Proposal for a “Panama-California Transcontinental Exposition Aviation Race.” The race did not take place, but was discussed in-depth by the committee. (page 256)
- Applications for concessions and exhibits are considered by the Committee. (page 262)
- Discussion regarding the groundbreaking and beginning of construction of the Botanical Building. (page 264)
- Transcript of a meeting between the Executive Committee and the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council regarding employment of union workers for the construction of Exposition buildings. Director-General Collier, with the committee’s support, declines the Council’s demands to make construction work strictly a union endeavor. (page 290)
- Discussion of the possibility of hiring Spanish dancers to add “Spanish flair” to the Exposition. (page 326)
- Initial discussion of J.D. Spreckels’ proposal to construct an organ pavilion for the Exposition. (page 330)
- Committee outlines the rules and regulations for Exposition passes. (page 451)

Pre-Exposition financial accounts summary. (page 566)
Discussion of Theodore Roosevelt’s Exposition speaking engagement. (page 597)
Discussion of a “considerable disturbance” among the Spanish dancers hired for the Exposition. No further details are provided, but the committee agrees unanimously to fire all Spanish dance entertainers. (page 630)
Discussion of the Marine Corps Ball to be held in the Organ Pavilion plaza. (page 632)
Discussion of the transfer of power to the City of San Diego Board of Park Commissioners. (page 666)
Discussion regarding transferring Exposition exhibitions to the permanent care of the San Diego Museum Association. (page 668)
Discussion of correspondence received by the Smithsonian indicating that they have been unable to procure several planned exhibits on “the War” (World War I). (page 672)
Committee drafts a resolution to the California Governor and State Legislature requesting ongoing use of Balboa Park to continue after the Exposition into 1916. (page 684)


“Minutes of the Women’s Board,” 1914 December 4-1915 December 28
Includes:
- “Meeting Minutes of the Fine Art Committee,” a Women’s Board sub-committee
- “Meeting Minutes of the Furnishings Committee,” a Women’s Board sub-committee

“Preservation of Fair Buildings Committee” (ledger), 1916 July 24-1917 January 22
Box-folder 2:1  Daily receipts, expenses, and earnings, 1915 August 31–December 31
Box-folder 2:2  “Panama-California Exposition Subscription Campaign Committee” (ledger), undated

Scope and Content
List of shareholder subscribers for the Exposition. Columns are divided by name, address, amount subscribed, and amount paid.

Box-folder 3:4  “Panama-California Subscription Campaign Committee” (original cover), undated
Exposition guest book, 1915-1916

Dimensions: Measures 27 inches x 20 inches x 13 inches.

Box-folder 2:3  Stock certificates, 1910 March 9–1917 February 27
Box-folder 2:4  Correspondence, 1913 January 14–1916 December 29
Box-folder 2:5  Art exhibits and awards, 1916
Box-folder 2:6  Miscellanea, 1916

Includes:
“Exposition Friends” souvenir booklet