
Guide to the Rancho de la Nacion Collection MS 280

Finding aid prepared by Katrina White

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

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Title: Rancho de la Nacion Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MS 280

Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet(1 box)

Date (inclusive): 1843-1906

Abstract: This collection contains documents pertaining to the ownership of Rancho de la Nacion in the second half of the nineteenth century. These include land petitions and grants, deeds, land surveys, mortgages, property taxes, and maps.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English and Spanish.

creator: San Diego Historical Society.

Comments

It is possible the maps were originally part of the petition.

Biographical / Historical Notes

Leading up to the nineteenth century, the area that was to make up Rancho de la Nacion was used by the Spanish as cattle grazing lands. The Spanish had called it Rancho del Rey. In 1821, when the Mexican government secured independence from Spain, the name of the area was changed to Rancho de la Nacion.

Rancho de la Nacion was eventually comprised of "6 square leagues" (26,631 acres) bordered on the south by San Diego Bay, on the north by Sierra de San Miguel, on the east by Canada de las Chagus, and on the west by Rancho de la Punta. This area makes up present-day National City, Chula Vista and Bonita.

John (Juan) Forster (1814-1882) was an English-born traveler who arrived in Mexico in 1831. He drifted north to California in 1833, where in 1837 he met Pio Pico (1801-1894). Pico took Forster in and later that year after converting to Catholicism, Forster married Pico's sister, Isidora Ygnacia Pico.

In 1843, Juan Forster petitioned the Mexican governor for a grant of land. The land was granted to him on July 26, 1843, with the provision that the Mexican government could continue to graze cattle and horses on it. In December of 1845, Forster's brother-in-law, Governor Pio Pico, made the grant permanent. Juan Forster started a cattle farm and built a home there in 1846. It should be noted that Jose Antonio Estudillo had once gained concession for the land, but it was revoked when he failed to make the required improvements. Around the same time, Forster acquired several other tracts of land including Rancho San Felipe, Rancho Trabuco, Rancho Mission Viejo and Rancho Margarita y Las Flores.

After the Mexican-American war, the U.S. government required land holders of formerly Mexican-owned lands to petition for the right to continue to own these lands. In 1866 Forster's petition for rights to Rancho de la Nacion was successful after a long fight with the Land Commission. However, by that time, Forster had suffered some financial setbacks and was forced to sell the rancho to San Francisco bankers Pioche, Bayerque & Co. in 1856. The land exchanged hands multiple times over the next twelve years between the owners of the San Francisco company, remaining under the bankers' control until Francois A. L. Pioche sold it to Frank and Warren Kimball in 1868. The Kimball brothers began to subdivide the Rancho land as part of their organization of National City, which they envisioned as a "railroad boom town," although the transcontinental railroad never came to fruition. By the mid-1880s, the San Diego Land & Town Co. took over the administration and sale of the subdivided Rancho lands.

Scope and Content

This collection contains documents relating to the tract of land known as Rancho de la Nacion during the 1800s. It primarily consists of land petitions and grants, both from the period of Mexican rule, and the later period of U.S. governance following 1848. The Mexican land grants are handwritten translations of the original Spanish documents. The post-1848 documents include a petition for land claim confirmation by Juan Forster to the U.S. Board of Land Commissioners, as well as supporting documents. These documents are accompanied by an official land survey of Rancho de la Nacion, in addition to property mortgage and tax documentation. The land grants and deeds relate to the periods of land ownership by Juan Forster, Pioche, Bayerque & Co. and Frank and Warren Kimball. The collection also contains two tracings of original maps of the Rancho lands.

Arrangement

Items in this collection are arranged by subject.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Some documents and maps are on brittle tracing paper with torn and frayed edges. Maps are encapsulated. Abstract of Title (1906) pages are detached from original binding. (July 13, 2011)

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

Rancho de la Nacion Collection, MS 280, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Katrina White on July 13, 2011.

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Subjects and Indexing Terms

Arguello, Santiago
Bayerque, J. B.
Estudillo, Jose Antonio
Forster, John, 1814-1882
Kimball, Frank
Kimball, Warren
Lorenzano, Apolinaria
Mofs, Samuel, Jr.
Morrill, George S.
Pico, Andres
Pico, Isidora Ygnacia
Pico, Pio, 1801-1894
Pioche, Bayerque & Company.
Pioche, Francois A. L.
San Diego Land & Town Co..
United States. Surveyor General.
Bonita (Calif.)
Chula Vista (Calif.)
Deeds
Land grants
Land surveying
Land tenure
Maps
National City (Calif.)
Ranches
Rancho de la Nacion
Rancho del Rey
Rancho Mission Viejo (Calif.)
Rancho San Felipe
Rancho Santa Margarita (Calif.)
Rancho Trabuco
San Diego (Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.)

Box-folder 1:1

Mexican land grants, 1843 July 3-1847 September 14

Includes:

Original English translation of Juan Forster's land petition and grant from the Mexican government for Rancho de la Nacion, July 3, 1843.

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- Box-folder 1:2 **U.S. land grants, 1852 November 6-1872 September 16**
Includes:
Juan Forster petition (no. 460) to U.S. Board of Land Commissioners for Rancho de la Nacion, including witness statements by Santiago Arguello and Andres Pico, November 6, 1852.
"Abstract of Title to Rancho de la Nacion situated in the County of San Diego as appears from the Records of said County," October 6, 1869.
Original deed to Rancho de la Nacion signed over from Francois Pioche to Frank and Warner Kimball, July 8, 1871 (in Oversize Collections D4)
- Box-folder 1:3 **U.S. land grants, 1906 February 3**
Includes:
"Abstract of Title for Lot Twenty-Five (25) of Quarter Section One Hundred and Thirty-nine (139) of Chula Vista, County of San Diego, State of California," February 3, 1906.
- Box-folder 1:4 **Land surveys, 1868 August 6-1872 October 5**
Includes:
Handwritten copy of Field Notes from the Official Survey of Rancho de la Nacion by George S. Morrill, August 6, 1868.
- Box-folder 1:5 **Property mortgages and taxes, 1854 November 11-1868 June 18**
Includes:
Handwritten copy of Mortgage to Rancho de la Nacion for Juan Forster, financed by Samuel Mofs, November 11, 1854.
Original property tax claim form for Pioche, Bayerque & Co. claiming Rancho de la Nacion and Rancho de San Felipe, July 21, 1864.
- Box-folder 1:6 **Maps, 1845 December 30 and undated**
Includes:
Two maps of Rancho de la Nacion, different views, undated (encapsulated).