Title: Don M. Stewart Papers
Identifier/Call Number: MS 34
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 Linear feet(2 boxes)
Date: 1871-1970
Abstract: This collection contains personal papers of Don M. Stewart, documents on San Diego water development, and drafts of Stewart’s book “Frontier Port.”
creator: Stewart, Don M.

Biographical / Historical Notes
Donald M. Stewart (1873-1969) was born in San Diego on August 3, 1873. His father, Daniel Stewart came to San Diego from England in 1868 and worked for the Panama Steamship Company. Donald was one of six children. He attended school in San Diego from 1882 to 1891. He then held jobs for the San Diego Sun, the Lion Clothing Company, and a building contractor in San Francisco. In 1899 he joined a goat hunting expedition to Guadalupe Island. That same year he was appointed as ensign in the Naval Military Service, which later became the National Naval Volunteers, and then the Naval Reserve. In 1900 he was employed by the Western Metal Supply Company. In 1903 he was elected to the City Council, choosing not to run for re-election in 1905. In 1902 he married Maude Wilson. They had three children: Donald M. b. 1904, Dorothy M. b. 1909, and Marjorie May Stewart Sanborn b. 1911.
In 1906 he left Western Metal Supply and joined W.H. Frazer in the real estate business. He later joined Harry Fisher and Company in the insurance business. In 1907 he organized an armed guard to accompany the British steamer Maori King to Guaymas, Mexico. He was employed by the Pacific Coast Steamship Company as office clerk and cashier until 1909 when he was elected City Treasurer and Tax Collector of San Diego. He served in the Navy from 1917 to 1919 as Lieutenant Commander of National Naval Reserves. During WWI he was assigned to the U.S.S. San Diego which was engaged in escorting troops to France from New York or Halifax. He was on leave when the San Diego was sunk after hitting a floating mine near Fire Island. He worked in real estate until 1921 when the City Council elected him to fill a vacancy on the Council. He served on the council until 1927. During Stewart’s terms on the city council, he was actively involved in efforts to increase San Diego’s water supply. Stewart was especially involved in efforts to bring Colorado River water to San Diego. After leaving the City Council he returned to real estate, took over the business of Charles Cass and devoted his time to general insurance and property interests. In 1932 he became Chairman of the Democratic County Central Committee. Later he was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party’s state organization. In May of 1934 U.S. Senator William G. McAdoo elected him Postmaster of San Diego (1934-1948).

He was involved in many social organizations and served as President of the San Diego Historical Society. In 1965 Wade Ritchie Press of Los Angeles published his book, Frontier Port. It chronicles the development of San Diego and its maritime history with the author’s personal experiences from 1880’s through the turn of the century. Don M. Stewart died June 14, 1969 in Lemon Grove. According to newspaper reports at the time of his death, he was the oldest living San Diego native.

Scope and Content
This collection contains personal papers of Don M. Stewart, documents on San Diego water development, and drafts of Stewart’s book “Frontier Port.” His personal papers primarily cover his military service, political activities, and time as postmaster. The documents on San Diego water development were collected during his time on the City Council and Democratic County Central Committee. They cover several dam sites, the Sutherland-San Dieguito system, Boulder Canyon, and assorted other reports. The book “Frontier Port” is a collection of essays and anecdotes regarding Stewart’s experiences in San Diego from the 1880s and details the general conditions and maritime history of San Diego at the time.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in three series:
Series I: Personal Papers;
Series II: Water Development;
Series III: Frontier Port.

Preferred Citation
Don M. Stewart Papers, MS 34, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.

Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
The ledger book and papers in this collection are in good condition. The Freeman Report newspaper is brittle and badly yellowed. Use copy instead.

Comments
In April of 2002 Don Stewart’s Frontier Port papers and the Certificates of Elections were combined with MS 34.

Processing Information

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Boulder Canyon Project.
Fletcher, Ed
Jorgenson, Lars
Pyle, Fred
San Diego (Calif.), City Council.
Savage, Hiram N.
Stewart Family
United States. Naval Reserve.
Barrett Dam (Calif.)
Dams
El Capitan Dam (Calif.)
Lower Otay Dam (Calif.)
Morena Dam (Calif.)
Postmasters
San Diego River (Calif.)
Sutherland Reservoir (Calif.)
Upper Otay Dam (Calif.)
Water development projects -- California -- San Diego County

Series I: Personal Papers

Box-folder 1:1 Family Papers, 1871-1970
Includes:
Tax receipts and reports; letters of introduction; letters of appointment; certificates of election; and membership cards. Certificate of membership of Daniel Stewart in Odd Fellows Mutual Aid Society in Oversize Collections D7.

Box-folder 1:2 Democratic Party Service, 1894-1950
Box-folder 1:3 Military Service, 1900-1964
Box-folder 1:4 Post Office Service, 1934-1950

Series II: Water Development

Box-folder 1:5 Correspondence, 1926-1931
Scope and Content
Primarily including Don Stewart, Ed Fletcher, Lars Jorgenson, and El Capitan Citizens Committee.

Box-folder 1:6 Correspondence: Board of Water Commissioners, 1922
Box-folder 1:7 Correspondence: State Railroad Commission, 1925
Box-folder 1:8  Water Development: Dams, undated
   Includes:
   Photos and statistics for Barrett Dam and Reservoir, Morena Dam, Lower Otay Dam, and Tajunga Dam.

Box-folder 1:9  Water Development: Sutherland-San Dieguito System, 1925-1951
   Includes:
   “Estimated Revenue from San Dieguito Water System as it Exists 2-10-1925” and 

Box-folder 1:10 Water Development: Boulder Canyon / All American Canal Project, 1934-1937
Box-folder 1:11 Water Development: Miscellanea, 1914-1928
   Includes:
   Brochure against Mission Gorge No. 2; Water Commission report on acquisition of La Mesa, Lemon Grove, and Spring Valley Irrigation District; 1931 agreement between Southern California irrigation districts on water distribution; data for use in proposed settlement of San Diego River litigation.

Box-folder 1:12 Reports: H.N. Savage, 1914-1930
Box-folder 1:13 Reports: Freeman Report, 1924
Box-folder 1:14 Petition: Capitan Grande Indian Lands, 1930
Box-folder 1:15 Miscellanea, 1923-1938
   Includes:
   Articles and advertisements (primarily regarding Ambursen Dam); expenditures from Sutherland Dam Bond Fund; and San Pasqual Valley Purchases Options.

Series III: Frontier Port

Box-folder 2:1 Chronology of Stewart Family, undated
Box-folder 2:2 Annotated drafts of Frontier Port, undated
Box-folder 2:3 Annotated drafts of Frontier Port, undated
Box-folder 2:4 Drafts of Frontier Port, undated
Box-folder 2:5 Uncut Proof of Frontier Port, 1965
Box-folder 2:6 Record of distribution of Frontier Port, 1967-1969