Guide to the Gaskill Brothers Papers MS 52

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills

San Diego History Center Document Collection
1649 El Prado, Suite 3
San Diego, CA, 92101
619-232-6203
February 16, 2017
Title: Gaskill Brothers Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 52
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet (1 box)
Date (inclusive): 1863-1908
Abstract: This collection contains a business ledger of the Campo and Petaluma general stores, as well as some personal papers of the Gaskill brothers, local pioneers responsible for founding the town of Campo in San Diego, CA in the mid-1800s.
Language of Materials: English; Spanish.
creator: Gaskill, Silas
Biographical / Historical Notes
Silas E Gaskill was born February 16, 1829 in New York and his younger brother Luman H. Gaskill was born July 17, 1843, in Steuben County, Indiana to Courtland Gaskill and Theresa Brink Gaskill. Silas came to California in 1850 at the age of 21, crossing over the Great Plains. Seven years later, Luman and their parents arrived in San Francisco by sea voyage from Panama in 1857.

The family was involved in the mining business, in particular the Buffalo Gold and Silver Mining Company in Petaluma CA. After this the brothers became bear hunters in the northern California area. In 1868 Luman and Silas arrived in the Milquatay Valley east of San Diego. They established a town about a mile away from the Mexican border and named it Campo. They opened a general store, a blacksmith shop, and a gristmill. They also operated a bee farm and cattle ranch. The Gaskill brothers' most famous feat was defending against the December 4, 1875 raid on Campo by Mexican bandits under the leadership of Cruz Lopez. Luman was shot in the lung and Silas was wounded in the shoulder. Luman held a number of posts in Campo, such as dentist, doctor, and Justice of the Peace.

The Gaskill were also known to have a darker side. There was a strange disappearance of a man named Jacob Hanson who owned a cattle ranch in Baja California in 1885. He stopped at Campo on the way to San Diego and was never seen again, his buggy being found in the Gaskills' backyard with a new coat of paint on it. Luman spent time in a Mexican jail and was released after a few years. Luman married Eliza J. Benson in 1868 and they had seven children together. Silas married a woman named Kate in 1870, and divorced her in 1873. He then married Catherine Scott in 1881 and they were married until his death on December 26, 1914. In 1901 the Gaskill brothers sold all their properties in Campo and moved to San Diego. Luman died May 3, 1914 in Whittier California.

Scope and Content
This collection contains a business ledger of the Campo and Petaluma general stores, as well as some personal papers of the Gaskill brothers, local pioneers responsible for founding the town of Campo in San Diego, CA in the mid-1800s. The business ledger covers the years 1863-1908 and details business transactions from the Campo store as well as records from the general store in Petaluma. It also includes home remedies and poems, with various newspaper clippings tuck into the back of the ledger. Other items in the collection include documents from east San Diego County and correspondence to the brothers, as well as a letter in Spanish to Luman and a pencil sketch of Silas. Of particular interest are cures for smallpox, poison for squirrels, cures for cancer, rattle snakebites and a cure for habitual drunkenness.

Arrangement
This collection is arranged in chronological order.

Preferred Citation
Gaskill Brothers Collection, MS 52, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.

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 Nelson Chase on February 10, 2006.

Comments
This collection is a combination of: the Luman Gaskill Records and the Campo Gaskill Brothers Document collection.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Box-folder 1:1       Book of Records, Campo 1869 L.H Gaskill, 1863-1908

Includes:

Business transactions from the Campo store and the general store in Petaluma; home
remedies; poems; and newspaper clippings.

Box-folder 1:2       Affidavit of Luman Gaskill (County Clerk), 1877
Box-folder 1:2       Letter, Anonymous re: cattle branding, 1879
Box-folder 1:2       Receipt for School funds, 1880
Box-folder 1:2       Receipt for School funds, 1882
Box-folder 1:2       Letter of Sale: U.S Army to Luman Gaskill, 1884
Box-folder 1:2       Notice of appropriation of water, 1894
Box-folder 1:2       Letter, to L.H Gaskill (in Spanish), 1895
Box-folder 1:2       Sketch of Silas Gaskill, 1895