Mexican Collection, 1540-1889

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2016
Descriptive Summary

Title: Mexican Collection, 1540-1889
Dates: 1540-1889
Collection Number: Mexican Collection, 1540-1889
Creator/Collector:
Extent: approximately 52 linear feet
Repository: California State Library. Sutro Library
San Francisco, California 94132-4030
Abstract: This collection consists of information related to the history of Mexican culture, religion, and politics from 1540 to 1889.
Language of Material: English
Access
Please contact the Sutro Library directly.
Preferred Citation
Mexican Collection, 1540-1889. California State Library. Sutro Library

Biography/Administrative History
The Mexican collection at the Sutro library contains over a century and a half of printing and bookselling in Mexico. It has been underutilized by researchers in Mexican history and culture. One of the characteristics that makes this collection unique, is that it provides insight into what a late nineteenth-century Mexican bookstore would have looked like. The collection was acquired when businessman and 24th mayor of San Francisco, Adolph Sutro, traveled to Mexico in 1889 and purchased at auction the contents and library of the Abadiano Bookstore. This bookstore had been, until its closure shortly after the death of Francisco Abadiano in 1883, Mexico City’s longest running bookstore and principal publishing house and “the culmination of a long and prestigious line of bookmen and printers.” The collection consists of books, Mexican broadsides, and pamphlets dating from the sixteenth century to around 1890. Books on Mexican history, literature, religion, philosophy, and political theory, as well as copies of works printed by Zuñiga y Ontinveros, Jáuregui, Valdés, as well as the Abadianos, are represented in the collection. For one period alone, the War of Independence, and the first ten years of the Mexican Republic (1810-1830), there are between 8000-9,000 pamphlets, many of which are unique to this collection. For the publicist and novelist, Lizardi (El Pensador Mexicano), of the 300 pamphlets known to have been written by him, 250 exist at the Sutro. In addition to this, 50 new ones are also present in the collection. And for Lizardi’s contemporary, Rafael Davila, about 100 pamphlets are in the collection. Included in Sutro’s purchase were also books from many conventual libraries, like the library of the Tlatelolco de Santa Cruz. Under the anticlerical liberal Constitution of 1857, and the subsequent orders for confiscating religious properties, the Abadiano bookstore became a depository in order to avoid the destruction of such property and religious literature. To this end, books from the oldest academic library in the New World, the Tlatelolco de Santa Cruz, came to the Abadiano’s and consists of over 500 volumes identified by specific firebrandings. The Mexican collection also contains the Abadiano bookstore ledgers, receipt books, corrected galley proofs, and inventories dating from the late eighteenth century. In order to facilitate research, the Mexican Collection is divided into four major sections: Pamphlets, Manuscripts, Library of the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, and General Imprints. In addition to this, the WPA, while doing the Sutro Library project in 1938, provided many additional tools. One tool is a legacy card catalog containing information more akin to an annotated bibliography, than say a traditional online catalog record would. For more information on the collection and access, please contact the Sutro library directly.

Scope and Content of Collection
Contains pamphlets, books, music scores, political tracts, receipts, ledgers, diaries, manuscripts, maps, and atlases that were acquired during a bulk purchase of the contents of the Abadiano bookstore in 1889.

Indexing Terms
Tlatelolco (Mexico)
Abadiano y Valdés, Luis
Pensador Mexicano, 1776-1827
Fernández de Lizardi, José Joaquín, 1776-1827
Dávila, Rafael
La Rata Güera

Manuscript descriptions