Louisiana Pacific/Hammond Lumber Company Collection

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Louisiana Pacific/Hammond Lumber Company Collection

Dates: 1871-1992

Collection Number: 1999.13

Creator/Collector: Vance Redwood Lumber Company; Hammond Lumber Company; Hammond & Little River Redwood Company; Hammond Redwood Lumber Company; Georgia-Pacific Corporation; Louisiana Pacific Corporation-Samoa Division

Extent: 14 map cabinets with approximately 3000 maps, plans and drawings; approximately 300 maps, plans and drawings on rolling tubes; 63 boxes of documents; one five-drawer file cabinet of vendor catalogues; one oversize flat file box of computer circuit diagrams.

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Abstract: Company records for Vance Redwood Lumber Company; Hammond Lumber Company, Hammond & Little River Redwood Company, Hammond Redwood Lumber Company; Georgia-Pacific Corporation; and the Louisiana Pacific Corporation-Samoa Division. Contents include maps, blueprints, and detailed architectural drawings for buildings, structures, tools, and equipment; timber and railroad engineering surveys, notes and maps; Engineering Department files and records; public relations and publicity materials including photographic prints, slides, negatives, and pulp operation newsletter; legal files relating to business transactions, railroad property disputes, and worker health and safety issues from 1871 to 1992; letters of applications 1923-1924. This collection documents company operations throughout California and in Oregon; strengths include industrial drawings and architectural plans for mills, company towns and mobile field camps; an extensive collection of maps and plans documenting logging operations, property holdings and company railroads; and dealings with major property owners in the region. Sites include Samoa, Samoa Peninsula, Humboldt Bay, Big Lagoon, Crannell, Eureka, Fieldbrook, Trinidad, the Simpson Pulp Mill; other California operations, including Mendocino County, Santa Cruz County, the San Pedro lumber yard; Oregon, including Astoria, Hammond, Mill City; Eel River, Luffenholtz Creek, Little River, Mad River, Redwood Creek; the Eureka and Klamath River Railroad and Northwest Pacific Railroad, and a full transcript and legal files for the suit between the Eureka and Klamath River Railroad Co. et al VS California and Northern Railway Co, et al, in 1911.

Language of Material: English

Access

Open for research by appointment.

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information

At the time that the bulk of this collection was acquired from the Louisiana Pacific Corporation in 1997, through the intervention of Sam Swanlund, lumber operations had ceased. Documents in this collection were originally on file at the company offices in the Samoa Block. Additional materials were contributed in 2006 and 2010 by former employees who had salvaged some of the discarded materials and by the current owners, the Samoa Pacific Group LLC. These include more than 100 maps, plans and drawings found in the Samoa Cookhouse and donated by Samoa-Pacific Corporation and the Danco Group; as well as legal files, photographs and public relations files, early survey handbooks and notes, property appraisals, and early maps and plans. Later acquisitions have all been incorporated into the Louisiana Pacific/Hammond Lumber Company Collection. See also the Thornburgh Timber Maps collection, last used at the Big Lagoon operations of this same company, circa 1900 through the 1970s.

Biography/Administrative History

The Vance and Garwood Lumber Company was established in Eureka in 1856, by John Vance and Joseph S. Garwood of San Francisco. Garwood was primarily an investor and Vance assumed the role of manager until 1863, when Garwood drowned in a boat accident and he became sole owner. Vance expanded the operation along the Eureka waterfront until he passed away in 1892. Shortly afterward the mill burned down, which provided an opportunity for his heirs to construct a larger mill on the Samoa Peninsula, across the Bay. In 1900, the Vance Redwood Lumber Company was sold to multimillionaire industrialist A.B. Hammond. He began his lumber, railroad and mercantile career in Montana and had already acquired other operations in the Pacific Northwest, invested in lumber and railroads and developed the Columbia River Canneries.
Hammond purchased mills and retail outlets in California and Oregon. He expanded his operations in Samoa with a modern new mill and expanded network of logging railroads. After seeing the lumber company towns in the Pacific Northwest, Hammond decided to construct a company owned worker community in Samoa. After WWII he created one of the largest lumber yards in the West in San Pedro, California, to serve the postwar building boom. Although the business headquarters of the company was in San Francisco, financial hub of Northern California, the operations headquarters remained in Samoa. The Hammond Lumber Company was sold to the Georgia Pacific Corporation in 1956, which moved the company headquarters to Portland, Oregon. As a result of a Federal Trade Commission order to Georgia Pacific to divest part of its plywood operations, the Louisiana Pacific Corporation was created in 1972 and received all of the local company holdings. The mill and town were sold in 1998 to a new company called Simpson-Samoa. In 2000, Simpson-Samoa reopened the pulp mill, which had closed in 1993, and sold the remainder of the site to the Samoa Pacific Group LLC. Most of the buildings on the mill site had been demolished. At that time, the town of Samoa was one of only two intact lumber company towns in northwestern California.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection incorporates the original acquisition in 1997, along with subsequent donations through 2010. These documents span the company operations under various owners from 1871-1992, with the bulk of the material dating from 1893 to 1985. Seven official company names were used over the years and these may appear in full or as abbreviations on company documents, as listed in the table below. Although the Georgia Pacific Corporation had a written agreement to retain company documents on site, under subsequent owners the documents, in boxes and file cabinets, were moved from the Samoa Block company office. Materials in the original acquisition in 1997 were retrieved from a windowless 8 X 12 ft. portable metal building located within a structure adjacent to the roundhouse in the rail yard. Four large filing cabinets and six map filing cabinet units lined the walls, with boxes stacked on top, and one light bulb hung from the ceiling. Subsequent donations include materials in temporary containers or bundled with other materials of the same type or age. This comprehensive set of maps, plans and drawings includes a wide range of materials on paper and canvas, Cyanotypes, Diazotypes or negatives, Van Dyke prints or negatives, as well as pen and ink on drafting cloth or tracing paper, pencil on paper, photocopies, laser print or graphic lettering on Mylar, and lithographs. A table describing the contents of the six original map cabinets was created by student Aron Crowell in 1999. A selection of documents from these files was digitized and 84 documents were posted on Calisphere in 2005. A list of the contents of the original map drawers was begun by student Chris Haynes in 2007 and a detailed list of PDs was created by volunteer Les Cook in 2014.

Indexing Terms

Forest management - California - Humboldt County
Hammond Lumber Company
Humboldt County (Calif.) - History
Little River Redwood Co.
Logging - California - Humboldt County
Louisiana-Pacific Corporation. Samoa Division
Lumber trade - California - Humboldt County
Lumbering - California - Humboldt County
Redwood
Samoa (Calif.) - History
Vance Redwood Lumber Co.