Henry Dalton Papers: Finding Aid

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Overview of the Collection

Title: Henry Dalton Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1819-1942

Bulk dates: 1840-1883

Collection Number: mssDL 1-1196; mssFAC 682

Creator: Dalton, Henry, 1803-1884

Extent: 2,430 pieces in 15 boxes; 40 bound volumes; 1 tan case; and 13 maps

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Abstract: This collection consists of the business and personal papers of rancher and businessman Henry Dalton (1803-1884) and his life in early Southern California, with the bulk dating from 1840-1883. Of note are land papers and maps related to Dalton's ranches: Rancho Azusa, Rancho Santa Anita, Rancho San Francisquito, Rancho San José, and Rancho Addition.

Language: English.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. Henry Dalton Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Purchased from Mrs. Roger P. Dalton, January 24, 1958.

Biographical Note

Henry Dalton (1804-1884) was born in London, England, on October 8, 1804. On July 7, 1819, at age 14, he was apprenticed to Winnall Thomas Dalton as merchant tailor for a period of seven years. In 1827 Dalton was in Peru, where he purchased for $3000 certain articles in corner Public House in Callao, apparently for commercial purposes. He engaged in coastal trade and commerce in Peru and Mexico, extending his interests in Mexico when he contracted for the purchase of the estate of the Marques de San Miguel de Aguayo. He acquired property in both San Pedro and Los Angeles as early as 1843, from which time he appears to have been definitely established in California. In 1844, he purchased Rancho Azusa from its original grantee Luis Arenas; thereafter Dalton interested himself more in ranching than in shipping, although he maintained his commercial establishment in Los Angeles as an outlet for the surplus production of his various ranches. After 1846, when he charted a cargo vessel between Callao, Peru, and California, he seems to have diminished his trading relations with Peru, but he never abandoned his Mexican contacts.

Acquisition of land in California progressed rapidly after the Azusa purchase. In 1845, Pio Pico granted two extensions to Rancho Azusa, one of which had been part of the San Gabriel Mission lands. Dalton gradually accumulated properties until he was the owner of five ranches: Azusa, San Francisquito, San Jose and Addition, and Santa Anita. Other miscellaneous properties were acquired in and near Los Angeles. Santa Anita was sold in 1854; Francisquito was disposed of in small tracts between 1867 and 1875. Azusa was lost to the squatters through a series of highly questionable court decisions. San Jose and Addition became entangled in land litigation and were lost, while the miscellaneous property was gradually sold or lost as well.

Dalton was married in 1847 to fifteen-year-old María Guadalupe Zamorano, daughter of María Luisa Arguello de Zamorano and Agustín Vicente Zamorano. They had eleven children, seven of whom outlived their father: Winnall Augustin, Luisa, Soyla, Henry Francisco, Elena, Valentine, and Joseph Russell.
Dalton had three major dedications during his lifetime after establishing himself in California: the welfare of his family, his fight to keep his lands, and his efforts to obtain an equitable settlement in his claims before the Mexican government. These Mexican claims arose out of two events: damages to property sustained during the Mexican-American war of 1845-1848, during which he not only was in sympathy with the Mexican cause, but placed a considerable sum of money and supplies at the disposal of the Mexican governor of California. He also suffered material damages, as well as the loss of livestock stolen from ranchos Azusa and Santa Anita, when the troops of Fremont and Stockton entered Los Angeles. The second event occasioning claims in Mexico stemmed from the purchase he had made in 1840 of the lands forming part of the estate of the Marques de Aguayo, but to which he had never been given either clear title or possession. The Mexican government readily accepted the validity of both claims, and made payment in bonds which proved to be unredeemable during Dalton's lifetime because of the precarious condition of the Mexican economy. Thus the Mexican claims, like the California land litigation lasted many years: the former from 1846 until after Henry Dalton's death, being continued by his heirs; the latter from the early 1850s, culminating in the loss of Azusa in 1881.

Dalton never abandoned the hope of recovering at least part of the lost lands, and attempted on several occasions to repurchase sections of his ranches. This was an ambitious project, since he was deeply mortgaged during the entire period of litigation, largely because of the expenses caused by squatter claims on Azusa after 1858, the date of the erroneous and detrimental Hancock Survey. The mortgages were held by F. L. A. Pioche, later by the Pioche estate heirs.

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of letters, manuscripts, diaries, account books, and documents related to Henry Dalton and his life in early Southern California. Of note are land papers and maps related to Dalton's ranches: Rancho Azusa, Rancho Santa Anita, Rancho San Francisquito, Rancho San José, and Rancho Addition.

The papers include business papers and legal documents related to Dalton's trading in Peru, 1827-1842 (Box 1). Through 1842, Dalton's business correspondence, although including Peruvian interests, was written from cities on the Pacific coast of Mexico, while his coastal trade was extended northward to San Diego, San Pedro and Los Angeles. There is also correspondence and documents related to business affairs in Mexico, Dalton's litigation about his Mexican War claims, his land in Mexico, and claims before the Mexican government (Boxes 3-5). Boxes 6-12 contain business, personal, and family correspondence. Much of this correspondence and papers are of a personal nature, dealing with family matters, particularly after Dalton's death in 1884, when separate branches of the family grow and develop. There are also land papers (Boxes 13-14) and Dalton family accounts and receipts (Boxes 15 and 15a).

The collection also contains 7 volumes detailing the daily occurrences at Rancho Azusa (1845-1879), 2 letter books; 8 diaries; 10 memorandum books, 25 account books, 4 Indian books, and 14 banking and receipt books. In addition, there are 13 maps (DL 1178-1190) and one facsimile (FAC 682, Rolled photocopy of Census of Free Inhabitants, Azusa, Calif. 1860, 10 p.)

**Arrangement**

Arranged in the following order:
- Peru (Box 1)
- Mexico (Boxes 3-5)
- Correspondence and miscellaneous papers; photographs (Boxes 6-12)
- Land papers (Boxes 13-14)
- Family accounts and receipts and miscellaneous; drawing of Soyla Dalton (Box 15 and 15a and folder)
- Volumes
- Maps

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

**Subjects**

Dalton, Henry, 1803-1884 -- Archives.
Land grants -- California -- Los Angeles County.
Land grants -- Law and legislation -- California -- Los Angeles County.
Land titles -- California -- Los Angeles County.
Land titles -- Mexico.
Ranch life -- California, Southern.
Ranchers -- California -- Los Angeles County -- Archives.
Ranches -- California -- Los Angeles County.
British Americans -- California -- Archives.
Mexican War, 1846-1848 -- Claims.
California, Southern -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Mexico -- Commerce -- 19th century -- Sources.
Peru -- Commerce -- 19th century -- Sources.
Rancho Addition (Calif.)
Rancho Azusa (Calif.)
Rancho San Francisquito (Calif.)
Rancho San José (Calif.)
Rancho Santa Anita (Calif.)
Rancho Santa Anita (Calif.) -- Maps.

**Forms/Genres**

Account books.
Business records 19th century.
Diaries 19th century.
Family papers.
Journals 19th century.
Letter books.
Letters (correspondence)
Maps.

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**Peru**

Box 1

Correspondence and documents, 1827-1842

Box 2

1840-1858

Box 3

1859-1869

Box 4

1870-1886

Correspondence and miscellaneous papers; photographs

Box 5

1819-1866

Box 6

1867-1869

Box 7

1870-1877

Box 8

1880 June-1881 May

Box 9

1881 June-1883

Box 10

1884-1899

Box 12

1900-1942; Miscellaneous business papers; Medical prescriptions; Photographs;
Dalton Estate papers

**Land papers**

Box 13

Land papers: Dalton ranches (Except Azusa) and Miscellaneous property

Box 14

Land papers: Azusa Ranch; Litigation, Dalton Ranches

Family accounts and receipts and miscellaneous

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Box 15
Accounts and receipts (Dalton family); Miscellaneous
Accounts and receipts (Dalton family); Miscellaneous
Drawing of [Soyla Dalton]. DL 1197

Volumes

DL 1138 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume I: 1845 March 7-September 23
DL 1139 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume II: 1856-1860
DL 1140 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume III: 1861-1864
DL 1141 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume IV: 1861-1862
DL 1142 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume V: 1864-1866
DL 1143 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume VI: 1867-1871
DL 1144 Daily Occurrences at Azusa: Volume VII: 1871-1879
DL 1145 Diary, 1883 Marc 1-December 7
DL 1146 Letterbook: Callao [Peru], Guayaquil [Ecuador], Brigantine "Sun", 1841-1842
DL 1147 Letterbook: Los Angeles, Azusa (Calif.), San Francisco, 1867-1873
DL 1148 Memorandum books, 1845-1879 (10 volumes)
DL 1149 Account book: store, 1844-1845
DL 1150 Account book: business, 1845-1856
DL 1151 Cash book, 1845-1856
DL 1152 Account book: business, 1851-1856
DL 1153 Account book: wages, 1852
DL 1154 Account book: cash sales, 1852-1857
DL 1155 Account book: Azusa Ranch, 1855-1856
DL 1157 Account book: business, 1859
DL 1158 "Indian Books"- wages and accounts for Indian employees on Azusa Ranch (4 volumes), 1857-1863, also: planting and harvesting notes, 1865-1876
DL 1159 Account book: credit, 1859-1861
DL 1160 Account book: Azusa Ranch, 1861-1862
DL 1161 Account book: Azusa Ranch, 1861-1863
DL 1162 Account book: sales, 1860-1861
DL 1164 Account book: business, 1861-1865
DL 1166 Vineyard Accounts, Azusa Ranch, 1863-1864
DL 1167 Account books, Azusa Mills (2 volumes), 1863-1867
DL 1168 Roberts, Henry C. Account book: No. 3, 1864-1865
DL 1169 Memoranda of work: Azusa Ranch, 1865-1866
DL 1170 Cash books, employee accounts, Azusa Ranch, 1865-1873
DL 1171 Account book: business, 1868-1879
DL 1172 Account book: bee, tobacco, and other business, 1868-1883; also: several pages of cash accounts of Valentine Z. Dalton, 1886-1889
DL 1173 Roberts, Henry C. Cash book, 1873-1874
DL 1174 Cash accounts, 1876-1877
DL 1175 Water distribution accounts, Ranch, 1877-1883
DL 1176 Dalton, Henry Francisco. Miscellaneous accounts, 1890-1895
DL 1177 Dalton, Maria, and Henry Dalton. Bank deposit and check books; receipt books (14 pieces), 1885-1897

Maps
Maps (DL 1178-1183, 1185, 1187-1188)
Maps (DL 1184, DL 1186, DL 1189-1190)
Photocopy of Census of Free Inhabitants, Azusa, Calif. 1860 July 23-25 (10 pages)

mssFAC 682