James Miller Guinn Papers: Finding Aid

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Manuscripts Department
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Overview of the Collection

Title: James Miller Guinn Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1824-1918

Bulk dates: 1870-1918

Collection Number: mssGuinn papers

Creator: Guinn, J. M. (James Miller), 1834-1918.

Extent: 151 items in 4 boxes + 1 oversize folder

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Abstract: This collection contains the papers of Southern California educator and historian J.M. Guinn (1834-1918), chiefly dating from 1870-1918 and including Guinn's research notebooks; drafts of books speeches, and papers; correspondence, with some letters written by Guinn while a Union soldier during the Civil War; and ephemera.

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


Provenance

Collection is comprised of several accessions: gifts from Mabel E. Guinn in 1951 and 1959, purchases from Dawson's L.A in 1965 and 1966, and a purchase from Burger & Evans in 1971.

Biographical Note

James Miller Guinn (aka J.M. Guinn) (1834-1918), was a prominent educator and historian in southern California during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Guinn maintained an active role in his community, having membership in several local historical and fraternal societies, and kept lifelong affiliations with the Presbyterian Church and the Republican Party. By the end of his life, Guinn had produced a voluminous literature on California and its prominent residents.

Born in Houston, Ohio, on November 27, 1834, Guinn grew up working on his family’s farm, garnering his primary education during the winter school sessions. He became a teacher at eighteen years old, a vocation he utilized to earn his way through college - first at Antioch, and later at Oberlin. When the news of the fall of Fort Sumter reached Guinn at Oberlin in 1861, he immediately volunteered to fight for the Union Army, serving as a member of Company C of the Seventh Ohio Infantry. He participated in the early West Virginia campaign, serving under Rosecrans, then later under McClellan. During this campaign, Guinn’s company saw heavy combat in the battles of Green Lane, Winchester, Cedar Mountain, Antietam, and Gettysburg. At Cedar Mountain, Guinn was only one of six soldiers from his unit to emerge unhurt. After Gettysburg, his superiors promoted Guinn to corporal and sent his regiment to serve under William Tecumseh Sherman in the Tennessee and Georgia campaigns. During this service, Guinn again saw fighting at the battles of Lookout Mountain, Mission Ridge, and Ringgold. He mustered out in June 1864, shortly before Sherman set out on what would be the final blow to the Confederacy - his “march to the sea” through Georgia.

In poor health after leaving the army, Guinn traveled to California by way of Panama. Shortly after settling and finding a teaching position in Alameda County, however, Guinn got wind of gold finds in Idaho and walked three hundred miles to the Boise Basin to seek his fortune. After failing to strike it rich after three years of mining, Guinn returned to California, this time to the southern portion of the state. Here he took a position as the superintendent of Anaheim schools. The administrator took a fancy to a young teacher in the Anaheim schools, Dapsiliea Marquis, whom he married in 1874. The marriage produced three children: daughters Mabel Elizabeth and Edna Marquis (deceased at Guinn’s death), and son...
Howard James. In 1873, he narrowly lost an election to the state assembly.
In 1881, after Anaheim schools showed marked improvement, the city of Los Angeles hired Guinn to superintend their school system. After two years in this position, Guinn shifted his vocational interests into real estate and merchandising, although he maintained a strong interest in Los Angeles' history and educational facilities for the remainder of his life.
Guinn was a long time (and founding) member of the Stanton Post (Los Angeles) chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic. He was a member of the American Historical Association, a founding member of the Historical Society of Southern California, an officer in the Pioneers of Los Angeles County, served on the LA Board of Education between 1904 and 1914, and received a gubernatorial appointment to serve on the California Historical Commission in 1914. As an historian, Guinn became very prolific towards the end of his life, producing a number of massive volumes on numerous California counties and notable residents after the turn of the century. Guinn died at his home in Highland Park, California, after a short illness in September 1918, weeks shy of his eighty-fourth birthday.

**Scope and Content**
This collection contains the papers of Southern California educator and historian J.M. Guinn (1834-1918).
The first box contains twelve of Guinn's autograph notebooks from his research on California in general – and on many specific California counties – which served as the basis for a number of local histories he published near the turn of the century. The collection’s second box features autograph and typescript drafts of Guinn’s speeches and papers, many of which were published in the *Annual Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California* or one of Los Angeles’ many newspapers. Also included are a number of speeches on the methods and practice of education.
The collection’s third box contains a rather extensive collection of autograph and typescript manuscripts which formed the basis for Guinn’s three-volume magnum opus *A History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles and Environs* (1915).
The collection’s fourth box contains correspondence and ephemera. The centerpiece of the correspondence is a folder of thirty autograph letters (many with typescript copies) and letter fragments Guinn wrote to his mother, brother, and sister while fighting for the Union army during the Civil War between 1861 and 1863. Also contained in the correspondence are letters written by Dapsilea Marquis (Guinn’s later wife) circa 1870. Ephemera includes photographs (two with duplicates) of Guinn himself, and with his compatriots at the Historical Society of Southern California. Business papers include real estate contracts, deeds, and invoices. Other ephemera includes Guinn’s wallet, several of his obituary clippings from local newspapers, and pamphlets from events at the local Grand Army of the Republic, of which Guinn was a proud member.
Two certificates of his rank in this organization are in an oversize folder.
Subjects in collection include: California history; the Civil War; Education; El Camino Real, Calif.; Grand Army of the Republic; Historical Society of Southern California; Los Angeles, Calif.; Orange County, Calif.; Owens River, Calif.; San Diego County, Calif.; San Louis Obispo County, Calif.; San Pedro Bay, Calif.; Santa Barbara County, Calif.; Ventura County, Calif.

**Arrangement**
Arranged in 4 boxes and 1 oversize folder, with items arranged alphabetically by title.
- Box 1: Manuscripts: Research Notebooks
- Box 2: Manuscripts
- Box 3: Chapter drafts from *A History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles and Environs*, vol. I (1915)
- Box 4: Correspondence and Ephemera
- Oversize folder

**Indexing: Subjects**
California--History
- Subject in research notebook on California history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (1).
- Subject in research notebook on California history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (2).
- Subject in research notebook on early California history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (3).

Education
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Does it require a great deal of patience to teach school?:” [essay] (1872). 1 item. Box 2 (6).
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Educational Advice and Educational Advisors:” [essay] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (8).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Literature in the Advanced Grade of our Schools:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (15).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Schoolmaster in Fiction:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (24).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Section 1702 PC Public Schools Speech” [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (25).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Training in the Use of Language:” [essay] (1878). 1 item. Box 2 (33).

El Camino Real (Calif.)
• Subject in research notebook on the history of El Camino Real [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (4).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The El Camino Real Fake:” [essay] (1904). 1 item. Box 2 (9).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Myth of El Camino Real:” [essay] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (18).

Grand Army of the Republic
• Subject in list and brief biographies of members of the Grand Army of the Republic’s Stanton Post [ca.1915-1918]. 1 item. Box 2 (14).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s speech on the formation of the Stanton Post chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic [ca. 1908]. 1 item. Box 2 (28).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s speech to the Grand Army of the Republic [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (29).
• Subject in Ephemera: Grand Army of the Republic Civil War memorabilia (1890-1904). 3 items. Box 4 (9).
• Subject in Grand Army of the Republic certificates. 2 items. Oversize folder.

Historical Society of Southern California
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Thirty-Three Years of Historical Activities:” [essay] [ca. 1916]. 1 item. Box 2 (31).
• Subject in Photographs: James Miller Guinn, 1834-1918. Portraits and with members of the Historical Society of Southern California [ca.1892-1910]. 5 items. Box 4 (16).

Kern County (Calif.)
• Subject in research notebook on Kern County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (5).

Los Angeles (Calif.)--History
• Subject in research notebook on southern California history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (10).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The First Jury Trial in Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (10).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Historic Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item. Box 2 (28).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The City’s Development by Decades:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 2 items. Box 3 (2).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “History of the Boundaries of Los Angeles County:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (5).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Passing of the Rancho:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 2 items. Box 3 (9).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Plazas, Parks, and Playgrounds:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 2 items. Box 3 (10).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Twentieth Century Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (12).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s Yellow notebook containing early drafts for chapters of History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles and Environs, vol. I (1915) [ca. 1915]. 2 items. Box 3 (13).

Los Angeles Plaza (Los Angeles, Calif.)--History

Oberlin College
• Subject in James Miller Guinn, 1834-1918 letters (1861-1863) to his mother, sister and brother. 39 items. Box 4 (6).
• Subject in James Miller Guinn’s Oberlin College Class Day Speech (1863). 1 item. Box 2 (20).

Orange County (Calif.)
• Subject in research notebook on Orange County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (6).

Owens River (Calif.)
• Subject in “Some Early History of the Owens River Valley:” [essay] [ca. 1917]. 1 item. Box 2 (26).
• Subject in “The Owens River Aqueduct:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. Incomplete. 1 item. Box 3 (8).

San Diego County (Calif.)
• Subject in research notebook on San Diego County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (7).
San Louis Obispo County (Calif.)

- Subject in research notebook on San Louis Obispo County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (8).

San Pedro Bay (Calif.: Bay)

- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Bay of San Pedro under the Rule of Spain and Mexico:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 3 items. Box 3 (1).
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Free Harbor Contest:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (4).
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “The Inner Harbor:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (6).
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “Los Angeles Harbor:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (7).
- Subject in James Miller Guinn’s “San Pedro under American Rule:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item. Box 3 (11).

Santa Barbara County (Calif.)

- Subject in research notebook on Santa Barbara County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (9).

United States. Army. Ohio Infantry Regiment, 7th (1861-1864)

- Subject in James Miller Guinn, 1834-1918 letters (1861-1863) to his mother, sister and brother. 39 items. Box 4 (6).
- Subject in Ephemera: Grand Army of the Republic Civil War memorabilia (1890-1916). 4 items. Box 4 (9).

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

- Subject in James Miller Guinn, 1834-1918 letters (1861-1863) to his mother, sister and brother. 39 items. Box 4 (6).
- Subject in Ephemera: Grand Army of the Republic Civil War memorabilia (1890-1916). 4 items. Box 4 (9).

Ventura County (Calif.)

- Subject in research notebook on Ventura County history [undated]. 1 item. Box 1 (12).

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](https://www.huntington.org).

**Subjects**
Guinn, J. M. (James Miller), 1834-1918.
Grand Army of the Republic.
Historical Society of Southern California.
Oberlin College.
United States. Army. Ohio Infantry Regiment, 7th (1861-1864)
Education -- United States.
Historians -- California.
Teachers -- California.
California -- History -- Sources.
El Camino Real (Calif.)
Kern County (Calif.)
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History -- Sources.
Los Angeles Plaza (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Orange County (Calif.)
Owens River (Calif.)
San Diego County (Calif.)
San Luis Obispo County (Calif.)
San Pedro Bay (Calif.: Bay)
Santa Barbara County (Calif.)
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives.
Ventura County (Calif.)

**Forms/Genres**
Letters (correspondence) -- United States.
Manuscripts -- United States.
Photographs -- United States.
Research notes -- United States.
Speeches -- United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>Manuscripts: Research Notebooks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on California history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on California history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on early California history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on the history of El Camino Real [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on Kern County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on Orange County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on San Diego County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on San Louis Obispo County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on Santa Barbara County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on southern California history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook from the “Spanish archives” [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Research notebook on Ventura County history [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 2</th>
<th>Manuscripts</th>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Concerning Advice” [undated]. Incomplete. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Concerning Superficiality:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Educational Advice and Educational Advisors:” [essay] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The First Jury Trial in Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Historic Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Iconoclasts:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. List and brief biographies of members of the Grand Army of the Republic’s Stanton Post [ca.1915-1918]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Literature in the Advanced Grade of our Schools:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Memorial Day Address:” [speech] [undated]. Address given to the Grand Army of the Republic. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Mental Dietetics:” [speech] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Myths that Pass for History:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Oberlin College Class Day Speech (1863). 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Once to all things come their hour:” [manuscript] [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Political Speech” [ca. 1873-1875]. 2 items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Section 1702 PC Public Schools Speech” [undated]. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Some Early History of the Owens River Valley:” [essay] [ca. 1917]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Some Early Industries that Failed:” [essay] [ca. 1906]. One draft contains both typed and handwritten elements. The other is an incomplete typescript. 2 items.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Speech on the formation of the Stanton Post chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic [ca. 1908]. Mostly handwritten with text pasted onto some pages. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Speech to the Grand Army of the Republic [undated]. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Story of a Plaza:” [essay] (1899). One draft is an incomplete typescript. The other is a complete autograph draft. 2 items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Thirty-Three Years of Historical Activities:” [essay] [ca. 1916]. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Trails and Trial Makers:” [manuscript] [ca. 1912]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. Untitled paper re: fraternal societies [undated]. 1 item.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 3</td>
<td>Manuscripts: Chapter drafts from A History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles and Environs, vol. 1 (1915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Bay of San Pedro under the Rule of Spain and Mexico:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915] One draft is a fragment. 3 items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Evolution of the Orange Industry:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. One draft is a complete typescript. The other is a fragment autograph draft. 2 items.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Free Harbor Contest:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. Incomplete. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “History of the Boundaries of Los Angeles County:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Inner Harbor:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Los Angeles Harbor:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Owens River Aqueduct:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. Incomplete. 1 item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “The Passing of the Rancho:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. One autograph and one typescript draft. 2 items.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Folder 10  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Plazas, Parks, and Playgrounds:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. One draft is an incomplete typescript. The other is an autograph fragment. 2 items.

Folder 11  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “San Pedro under American Rule:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. 1 item.

Folder 12  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. “Twentieth Century Los Angeles:” [manuscript] [ca. 1915]. Fragment. 1 item.


Box 4  Correspondence and Ephemera
Folder 1  Edwards, George. 1 letter (1888, Aug. 13) to James Miller Guinn, 1834-1918. 1 item.
Folder 2  Guinn, Dapsileia Marquis. 6 letters (1870-1877) to Lee Marquis and Edna Marquis. Five are autograph letters and one is a typescript. 6 items.
Folder 3  Guinn, Dapsileia Marquis. 1 letter (1873, Sept. 1) to “My very dear Brother.” 1 item.
Folder 4  Guinn, Elizabeth. 1 letter (1824, Dec. 25) to “Dear Sister.” 1 item.
Folder 5  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. 1 letter (1869 Oct. 13) to “Dear Brother.” 1 item.
Folder 6  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. 30 letters (1861-1863) to his mother, brother, and sister. Nearly all manuscript letters (excepting 1863 Apr. 17 and 1863 June 27) have an attendant typescript copies. Two typescript copies (1861 Apr. 14 and 1861 Aug. 29) are missing their autograph originals. Contains nine letter fragments. 39 items.
Folder 7  Guinn, James Miller, 1834-1918. 1 letter [undated] to an unidentified addressee. 1 item.
Folder 8  Ephemera: Certificate (1916) appointing James Miller Guinn to the California Historical Survey Commission. 1 item.
Folder 9  Ephemera: Grand Army of the Republic Civil War memorabilia (1890-1904). 3 items.
Folder 10  Ephemera: Invoices/Business contracts (1870-1883). 9 items.
Folder 13  Ephemera: Wallet belonging to James Miller Guinn. 1 item.
Folder 14  Newspaper Clipping: Obituary for Dapsileia Guinn [undated]. 1 item.
Folder 15  Newspaper Clippings: Obituaries for James Miller Guinn (1918). 5 items.

Oversize Folder
Two certificates (1896-1910) to James Miller Guinn from the Grand Army of the Republic.