Contributing Institution: The Huntington Library
Title: Frederick Kesler papers
Creator: Kesler, Frederick, 1816-1899
Identifier/Call Number: mssHM 63493-63537
Physical Description: 2 Linear Feet (3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1852-1898
Abstract: A collection of correspondences and journals of the American master millwright and Mormon Bishop, Frederick Kesler.
Language of Material: Materials are in English.
Conditions Governing Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Frederick Kesler papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Purchased from Zion Bookstore, December 1962.
Biographical / Historical
Frederick Kesler (1816-1899) was born in Meadville, Pennsylvania. At the age of 15 he was apprenticed to Abram Clark, a master millwright and builder. When Kesler was 19 he began his own career as a master millwright. He married Emeline Parker in 1836 and both became Mormons in 1840. In the spring of 1851, Kesler and his family migrated to Salt Lake City, Utah. After arriving there, Kesler was set to work by Brigham Young to build mills for the territory. He served as bishop of the Sixteenth Ward from April 7, 1856 until his death in 1899. In addition to Emeline Parker, Kesler had two other wives: he married Jane Elizabeth Pratt in 1854 and Abigail Dow Snow in 1857, and was the father of 30 children; in 1872, both Emeline and Abigail divorced him.
Scope and Contents
A collection of 184 items from 1852 to 1898; it consists of correspondence and journals relating to Frederick Kesler and his duties as a master millwright and bishop of the 16th Ward, as well as financial papers and newspaper clippings. Correspondents in the collection include John M. Bernhisel, George Reynolds, Joseph F. Smith, and Brigham Young. A major portion of the correspondence and manuscripts relate to the divorce between Frederick Kesler and Jane Elizabeth Pratt Kesler and Abigail Dow Snow Kesler. The material covers the reasons for the divorces as well as the financial compensation they would receive from Kesler per the instructions of Brigham Young. The 58 journals written by Frederick Kesler primarily contain notes on mills, tithing records and receipts for expenditures in the ward. A journal written by Alexander Ott includes the names of and provisions provided to Mormon immigrants.
Processing Information
Arrangement
Existence and Location of Originals
The Huntington Library holds a microfilm copy (Mss Film 700) of the Frederick Kesler Diaries (1857-1899), held at the University of Utah; microfilm received on May 27, 1975.
Related Materials
The Frederick Kesler papers form part of the Mormon File, approximately 1805-1995.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Flour mills -- History -- 19th century
Mills and mill-work -- History -- 19th century
Millwrights -- Utah
Mormon Church -- Bishops
Mormon Church -- Finance
Mormons -- Archival resources
Mormons -- Correspondence
Mormons -- Economics
Mormons -- History -- 19th century -- Sources
Mormons -- Law and legislation
Mormons -- Social conditions
Mormons -- Social life and customs
Mormons -- Utah -- History -- 19th century
Mormons -- Utah -- Salt Lake City
Utah -- Description and travel
Clippings (information artifacts) -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century
Journals (accounts) -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century
Letters (correspondence) -- Utah -- 19th century
Bernhisel, John M. (John Milton), 1799-1881
Kesler, Abigail Dow Snow, 1837-1907
Pratt, Jane Elizabeth
Reynolds, George, 1842-1909
Smith, Joseph F. (Joseph Fielding), 1838-1918

Box 1, Folder 1-44  Manuscripts and correspondence 1852-1897
   Scope and Contents
   Box contains manuscripts and correspondence by Brigham Young and others (HM 63493-63537).

Box 2, Folder 1-37  Journals 1855-1879
Box 3, Folder 1-48  Journals, financial papers, and newspaper clippings 1852-1898