Los Angeles Land Papers

Finding aid prepared by Gerardo Licón.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
© 2009
The Huntington Library. All rights reserved.
Descriptive Summary

Title: Los Angeles Land Papers
Dates: 1850-1889
Collection Number: mssLos Angeles Land papers
Collector: Greenburg, Kenneth S.
Extent: 237 items in 1 box
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: These papers document the transfer of land during the first few decades of American ownership of Los Angeles, California. This collection consists of the original documents certifying the sale, purchase, pre-emption, or surveying of land by sheriffs, clerks, notary publics, and surveyors of Los Angeles County between 1850 and 1889.

Language of Material: The records are in English and Spanish.

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

Publication Rights
The Huntington Library does not require that researchers request permission to quote from or publish images of this material, nor does it charge fees for such activities. The responsibility for identifying the copyright holder, if there is one, and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.

Preferred Citation

Provenance
The collection was given to the Huntington Library by Kenneth S. Greenburg from May 1968 to July 1970.

Scope and Content
These papers document the transfer of land during the first few decades of American ownership of Los Angeles, California. This collection consists of the original documents certifying the sale, purchase, pre-emption, or surveying of land by sheriffs, clerks, notary publics, and surveyors of Los Angeles County between 1850 and 1889. Some of these legal proceedings partially document the transfer of land ownership from California to American hands. Many of these documents are “pre-emption” claims to land made mostly by new American immigrants to California under the Possessory Act of April 20, 1852 which gave individuals the right to claim 160 acres of public lands for the purposes of mining or agriculture. The “inventories of women’s separate property” were a result of the California State law enacted on April 17, 1850 entitled “Act defining the rights of Husband and Wife.”

Arrangement
This collection includes 237 items organized into nine folders which include: mortgage agreements and releases; inheritances and wills; certificates of sale due to taxes owed, law suits, and foreclosure; claims of preemption; land documents of individuals significant to Los Angeles history including: Abel Stearns, Pío Pico, Ignacio del Valle, and Francis P.F. Temple; lease agreements; and additional miscellaneous legal documents relating to land transfer.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.
Del Valle, Ignacio.
Pico, Pío, 1801-1894.
Stearns, Abel, 1798-1871.
Temple, Francis Pliny F., 1821-1880.

Subjects
Mexicans -- California -- Los Angeles.
Real property -- California -- Los Angeles.
Women -- California.

**Geographic Areas**
California -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History -- 19th century -- Sources.

**Genre**
Agreements California 19th century.
Bills of sale California 19th century.
Claims California 19th century.
Deeds California 19th century.
Land deeds California 19th century.
Leases California 19th century.
Maps California 19th century.
Mortgages California 19th century.
Wills California 19th century.

---

**Box 1 Papers**

**Women’s Separate Property 1853-1889**
- Physical Description: 34 items
- Scope and Content Note
  The bulk of these items are documents entitled “Inventories of Women’s Separate Property.” In addition to inventories, this folder also includes other legal documents relating to female ownership of land and property including deeds of sale, wills and leases.

**Certificates of Sale because of Taxes 1852-1854**
- Physical Description: 12 items
- Scope and Content Note
  These items document the loss of land by individuals who owed property taxes. Their land was sold at public auction by the Sheriff for a fraction of the value of the property.

**Certificates of Sale because of Law Suits 1852-1874**
- Physical Description: 37 items

**Certificates of Sale, Deeds to Properties 1855-1883**
- Physical Description: 20 items
- Scope and Content Note
  This folder also includes mortgage agreements, mortgage releases, inheritance and foreclosure.

**Preemption Claims 1851-1854**
- Physical Description: 34 items
- Scope and Content Note
  The first half of the most numerous type of legal land document in this collection.

**Preemption Claims 1855-1868**
- Physical Description: 39 items
- Scope and Content Note
  The second half of the most numerous type of legal land document in this collection.
Documents Relating to Del Valle, Pico, Stearns, and Temple 1852-1875

Physical Description: 28 items
Scope and Content Note
This folder includes legal land documents relating to some of the most famous individuals relating to Los Angeles history. While the documents of many significant individuals are included in this collection, this folder focuses on 24 items relating to Francis P.F. Temple, Abel Stearns, Pío Pico, and Ignacio Del Valle.

Miscellaneous Legal Documents 1850-1884

Physical Description: 33 items
Scope and Content Note
This folder various types of legal documents not included in other folders such as: affidavits, leases, and by-laws.

Oversized Documents 1861-1889

Physical Description: 7 items
Scope and Content Note
Includes: maps and United States land grants.