George H. Mendell Correspondence: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Katrina Denman.
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Overview of the Collection
Title: George H. Mendell Correspondence
Dates: 1894-1899
Bulk dates: 1897-1899
Collection Number: mssHM 77770-77910
Creator: Mendell, George H. (George Henry), 1831-1902
Extent: 141 items in 2 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens Manuscripts Department
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Abstract: This collection consists of letters from George H. Mendell to D.D. Clarke, engineer of the Water Board for Portland, Oregon, between 1897 and 1899. Mendell writes detailed letters of instruction and advice for engineering issues raised by Clarke, particularly regarding drainage, wells, and the sinking of shafts.
Language: English.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. George H. Mendell Correspondence, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Purchased from Ian Brabner, Bookseller on May 1, 2012.
Biographical Note
Colonel George Henry Mendell was born in Pennsylvania in 1831 and graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1852. Mendell joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and served with a variety of topographical surveys before the Civil War, including the survey of the Northwestern Lakes (1852-1854) and various posts in the Oregon and Washington Territory (1855-1858). He was also an assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy from 1859-1863. During the Civil War he served under Colonel Miles in the Manassas Campaign (1861) and carried on siege operations in the Petersburg, Virginia area (1864); was Assistant Engineer of Defenses of Baltimore (1864); and was Superintending Engineer of the construction of the Defenses of New Bedford Harbor, Massachusetts (1865) and the Preservation of Plymouth Beach, Massachusetts (1866). He was made a Colonel for his war service in 1865 and subsequently became superintending engineer in charge of fortifications of Alcatraz Island and Lime Point, San Francisco Harbor (beginning 1867) and for defenses of the Columbia River (1867-1871). He later served on the board of engineers for fortifications of the Pacific Coast (1867-1886); on the commission for a system of irrigation for the San Joaquin, Tulare, and Sacramento Valleys (1873-1874); was Supervising Engineer of Districts in California, Oregon, and Washington in charge of junior officers (1884-1888); was Division Engineer for Inspection of Engineer Works in the Pacific territory (beginning in 1888); was Division Engineer of the Pacific Division (until 1895); and was in charge of construction of defenses of San Francisco Harbor (1890-1895). In civilian life he worked as Engineer to the Water Commissioners of San Francisco (1876-1878), was the author of a report on water supply for San Francisco (1877), and was Consulting Engineer for the State of California (1878-1880). Mendell retired from the Engineering Corps due to mandatory age requirements in 1895. Following his military retirement he worked as a consulting engineer in San Francisco, where he died in 1902. The Battery Mendell at Fort Barry was named in his honor.
Scope and Content
Collection of letters from George H. Mendell to D.D. Clarke - who was Engineer of the Water Board for Portland, Oregon - written between 1897 and 1899. Mendell writes detailed letters of instruction and advice for engineering issues raised by Clarke, particularly regarding drainage, wells, and the sinking of shafts. The majority of the letters were written from Mendell’s office in San Francisco, although some originated in Los Angeles or Springfield, Illinois, where Mendell had traveled “on account of mental illness of a relative” in 1897. He also mentions meeting with Clarke in Portland on his return trip from Illinois in September 1897. Also included in the collection are a few other pieces of miscellaneous correspondence from 1894-1899 relating to water engineering in Portland.

**Arrangement**
The collection is arranged chronologically in two boxes.

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

**Personal Names**
Clarke, D.D.
Mendell, George H. (George Henry), 1831-1902.

**Subject**
Drainage.
Shafts (Excavations)
Water-supply--Oregon.
Water-supply engineering--Portland--Oregon--History.
Wells.

**Geographic Areas**
Oregon--History--19th century.
Portland (Ore.)--History.

**Genre**
Letters (correspondence)--Oregon--19th century.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>Correspondence, 1894-1898, Apr.</th>
<th>HM 77770-77847.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895, January 5.</td>
<td>A.N. Gambell. Letter to Frank T. Dodge. Portland, Ore.</td>
<td>HM 77771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895, January 30.</td>
<td>Moore, ?. Letter to the Subcommittee on Construction. Portland, Ore.</td>
<td>HM 77773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896, June 22.</td>
<td>Letter to the Water Committee of the City of Portland, Oregon. Portland, Ore. [Appears to be incomplete].</td>
<td>HM 77776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897, August 17.</td>
<td>Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif.</td>
<td>HM 77789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1897, August 27. Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77793
1897-1898. Tabulated statement of Rainfall and Drainage...from area...west of Reservoir #3 and #4, City Park...between August 1897 and June 1898. HM 77819
1898, April 15. Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77844
Correspondence, 1898, May-1899. HM 77848-77910.

Box 2


1898, August 27. Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77864
1898, August George Henry Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77867
1898, October 1. Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77871
1899, February 27. Mendell. Letter to D.D. Clarke. San Francisco, Calif. HM 77892
1899, November 22. Testimony of G.H. Mendell in case of King Real Estate Company vs. The City of Portland. Portland, Ore. HM 77908
Undated. Testimony of D.D. Clarke. HM 77910