Mount Wilson Observatory Legal Papers: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Steven Collicelli, April 22, 2011.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
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Overview of the Collection

Title: Mount Wilson Observatory Legal Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1903-1938
Collection Number: mssMount Wilson legal papers
Creator: Mount Wilson Observatory.
Extent: 84 items in 1 box
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
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Abstract: The Mount Wilson Observatory Legal Papers comprise one box of material relating to the founding, construction, and operation of the institution dating from 1903 to 1939.

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]. Mount Wilson Observatory Legal Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Historical Note
Founded in December 1904 by George Ellery Hale and funded by the Carnegie Institution, the Mount Wilson Observatory quickly became one of the 20th century’s major astronomical research centers. Located just north of Los Angeles high atop the San Gabriel Mountains, the observatory took full advantage of Southern California’s clear nights and uniquely steady air. The observatory’s 60” telescope completed in 1908 was the largest then in existence. In 1917, another Mount Wilson telescope, 100” in diameter, claimed that title.

Hale was joined at Mount Wilson by a gifted group of earlier astrophysicists. Walter Adams, George Willis Ritchey, Francis Pease, Ferdinand Ellerman, and Edwin Hubble studied at the observatory, making important discoveries concerning sunspots, the composition of stars, and the architecture of the universe.

Scope and Content
The Mount Wilson Observatory Legal Papers comprise one box of material relating to the founding, construction, and operation of the institution dating from 1903 to 1939. The bulk of the papers are legal documents: deeds, leases, utility contracts, and permits. Two folders contain documents relating to legal actions taken against Mount Wilson and the Carnegie Institution. Also included are three letters from John D. Hooker, a Los Angeles industrialist, philanthropist, and founder of the California Academy of Science, announcing his donation to fund the 100” telescope that would bear his name. Other participants include George Ellery Hale, Walter S. Adams and Francis G. Pease.

Arrangement
The papers are arranged alphabetically according to the person, company, or institution that created them.

Indexing: Added Entries
• Author in George Ellery Hale, 1868-1938 and Evelina C. Hale items to Mount Wilson Observatory. Box 1 (8).
Pease, F. G. (Francis Gladheim), b. 1881
Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Carnegie Institution of Washington.
Mount Wilson Observatory.
Mount Wilson Observatory -- History -- Sources.
Astronomical observatories -- California -- Wilson, Mount (Mountain)
Astronomy -- United States -- History -- 20th century -- Sources.
Telescopes -- Design and construction -- History -- Sources.
Los Angeles (Calif.) -- History -- 20th century -- Sources.

Forms/Genres
Legal documents -- United States -- 20th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 20th century.

Additional Contributors
Hale, George Ellery, 1868-1938.
Hooker, John D. (John Daggett), 1838-1911.
Pease, F. G. (Francis Gladheim), b. 1881.
Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Documents and correspondence

Folder 1  Baker Iron Works. 2 items (1926, July 27) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 2  California Highway Commission. 4 items (1923) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 3  Carnegie Institution of Washington. 4 right-of-way agreements (1906-1912).
Folder 4  Carnegie Institution of Washington. 2 items (1909-1910) concerning an insurance settlement.
Folder 5  Carnegie Institution of Washington. 1 letter (1911, Oct. 30) to Anderson & Johnson.
Folder 6  County of Los Angeles. 1 item (1933, Feb. 15) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 7  Edison Electric Company. 1 item (1909, May 22) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 8  Hale, George Ellery, 1868-1938 and Evelina C. Hale. 2 items (1904-1918) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 9  Industrial Accident Commission of the State of California. 1 item (1916, Apr. 7) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 10 J.D. Hooker Company. 3 items (1906) to George Ellery Hale, 1868-1938.
Folder 11 Justice's Court, Pasadena Township. 3 items (1906) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 12 Machinery and Electrical Company. 2 items (1913, Apr. 2) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 13 Miscellaneous. 13 land contracts, deeds, and leases (1905-1918) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 14 Monroe Calculating Machine Company, Inc. 2 items (1933-1939) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 15 Mount Wilson Observatory. 1 letter (1925, Dec. 7) to Strong & Dickens.
Folder 16 Office of the Planning and Building Inspector, Pasadena. 1 item (1911, Nov. 27) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 17 Pacific Coast Elevator Company 2 items (1909, Jan.) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 18 Pasadena Home Telephone and Telegraph Co. 2 items (1910-1912) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 19 Precipice Canyon Water Company. 6 items (1914-1923) to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 20 Roberts, H.M. 1 item [undated] to Mount Wilson Observatory.
Folder 21 Simons, Seward A. 2 letters (1909, Aug.) to P.J. McNally, Esq.
| Folder 23 | Title Guarantee and Trust Company 5 item (1903-1919) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |
| Folder 24 | United States Department of Agriculture, Weather Bureau. 1 item (1932, May 27) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |
| Folder 25 | United States Department of State. 3 items (1904, Apr. 28) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |
| Folder 26 | Western Casualty and Surety Company. 7 items (1910) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |
| Folder 27 | William R. Staats, Company. 11 items (1905-1909) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |
| Folder 28 | Los Angeles County Tax Collector. 1 item (1918, Dec. 2) to Mount Wilson Observatory. |