
Guide to the Ray Billingsley papers MS.R.013

Finding aid prepared by Carole McEwan, 2010.

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Contributing Institution: Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine Libraries

Title: Ray Billingsley papers

source: Meadows, Don

Creator: Billingsley, Ray, 1854-

Identifier/Call Number: MS.R.013

Physical Description: 5.2 Linear Feet(13 document boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1870-1928

Date (bulk): 1886-1900

Abstract: This collection comprises the professional and personal papers of Ray Billingsley, a prominent lawyer in Santa Ana, California from the late 1800s to early 1900s. Included are records from his legal practice and his business interests in the Villa Park Orchards.

Language of Material: English .

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Ray Billingsley papers. MS-R013. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California. Date accessed. For the benefit of current and future researchers, please cite any additional information about sources consulted in this collection, including permanent URLs, item or folder descriptions, and box/folder locations.

Processing History

Processed by Carole McEwan, 2010. This collection was obtained as part of the Don Meadows Papers, MS-R001 in 2003. It was incorrectly labeled "Otto" Billingsley papers.

Historical Background

Ray Billingsley, a prominent lawyer and orchardist in Santa Ana, California at the turn of the 20th century, was born in 1854 at Richmond, Iowa. He attended the University of Iowa and in 1879 received his LL.B. and began practicing law in Vinton, Iowa. He married Eleanor A. Patterson in 1882 and they moved to Orange County, California in the summer of 1886. They settled on 84 acres of land in Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana and named their house "Villa Park". The land was bought at \$125 to \$225 an acre and about 2/3rd was eventually planted in orchard oranges, lemons, apricots, and walnuts and olives. The Billingsleys had seven children: William Patterson, Helen May, Harlowe Ray, Carey Val, Hester Sophia and Maynard John (who died at 12 years).

In 1886, Ray Billingsley opened a law office in Santa Ana, about 9 miles from his home. He had various partners over the years (Painter and Cooke) and specialized in real estate including mortgages. By 1904, he stepped back from his law practice and concentrated on his orchard business - Villa Park Orchards - and worked for grower cooperatives for better fruit handling and prices. He also devoted time to his many civic interests (e.g. Orange County College, Serrano Water District), and business investments (e.g. Orange Auto Power Company, Mission Film Corporation). He was also instrumental in the foundation of the First Congregational Church of Villa Park in 1889 and served as an official for 20 years. He was a progressive Democrat and was a founder of the first Bryan Club in Santa Ana in 1896 to support the Presidential candidacy of William Jennings Bryan. He was an Orange County delegate to the Democratic State Convention in 1908.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

This collection consists primarily of the professional records from Ray Billingsley's law practices from 1886-1904 in Santa Ana, California and his personal records from his other business interests, specifically Villa Park Orchards from 1887. Included are legal forms, handwritten notes and transactions, receipts, correspondence, and ephemera.

Collection Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 3 series:

Series 1. Professional papers, law practices 1879-1904, 4.0 linear feet

Series 2. Personal papers, 1870-1918, 1.0 linear feet

Series 3. Ephemera, 1886-1918, 0.2 linear feet

Related Collections

Related archives can be found in the following collection:

Ray Billingsley Papers, ca. 1875-1930, collection number 227, at UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections, Manuscript Division, Los Angeles, California.

Bibliography

For further biographical information, see *History of Orange County California*. Los Angeles : Historic Record Company, 1911.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Fruit growers -- California -- Orange County -- 20th century
Lawyers -- California -- Santa Ana -- 19th century
Real estate lawyers -- California -- Santa Ana -- 19th century
Citrus fruit industry -- California -- 19th century
Fruit growers -- California -- Orange County -- 19th century
Meadows, Don
Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana (Calif.) -- History-Sources
First Congregational Church of Villa Park -- Archives
Billingsley, Ray, 1854- -- Archives

Professional papers Series 1. 1879-1904 1888-1891

Physical Description: 10 Linear Feet(10 boxes)

Series Scope and Content Summary

These records consist primarily of certificates of title, deeds, mortgages and foreclosures, indentures and agreements for sale of real estate and accounts. There are also court transactions, wills and settlements, insurance documents and the firm's ledger from the late 1880s.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically.

box 1, folder 1	Varis & Billingsley Attorneys at Law records, 1879-1886
box 2, folder 1, box 1, folder 2-6	Law office of Ray Billingsley records, 1886-1914 1888-1891
box 2, folder 2-5, box 3, folder 1-2	1886-1897
box 4, folder 1-4, box 3, folder 3-6	1888
box 4, folder 5-6, box 5, folder 1-5	1889
box 5, folder 6, box 6, folder 1-6	1890
box 7, folder 1-7	1891
box 8, folder 1-7	1892-1893
box 9, folder 1-7	1893-1895
box 10, folder 1-4	1896-1901
box 10, folder 5	1902-1912
box 10, folder 6	Undated
box 10, folder 7	Ledger, 1887-1890
box 10, folder 8	Journal, 1887-1893
box 11, folder 1	Day Book, 1887-1889
box 11, folder 2	Check Book, 1888
	Receipt Book, 1899-1904

Personal papers Series 2. 1870-1918

Physical Description: 3 Linear Feet(3 boxes)

Series Scope and Content Summary

Billingsley's personal financial records contain correspondence, receipts, technical information, county tax receipts, handwritten agreements, checkbooks and titles to his Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana property. There is also a collection of stamped envelopes to Ray Billingsley from 1889-1913. The records for Villa Park Orchards contain receipts, correspondence, technical information and handwritten documents regarding grower cooperatives. There are also the founding records for the First Congregational Church of Villa Park, California which consist of handwritten promises to support the Church financially and the Certificate of Articles of Incorporation from the State of California. Trustee meeting minutes, reports, resolutions, decisions, Treasurer's reports, invoices for payment and pastoral correspondence make up the rest of the records. Other personal papers include handwritten letters from his family.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically.

box 11, folder 3-5
box 11, folder 6

box 11, folder 7,
box 12, folder 1-2
box 13, folder 3
box 12, folder 4
box 12, folder 5

box 12, folder 5-6
box 13, folder 1
box 13, folder 2
box 13, folder 3
box 13, folder 4
box 13, folder 5
box 13, folder 6-7

Family correspondence, 1870-1922

Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana: Legal papers, 1876-1915

Villa Park Orchards financial papers and other information, 1887-1922

Undated

Day book, 1910-1912

Check book, 1896

Financial records 1874-1930

Financial records, 1874-1930

Receipt book, 1889-1900

Receipt book, 1896-1899

William Billingsley, Stock ledger, 1908

William Billingsley, Check book, 1888-1889

Stamped envelopes. 1888-1913

First Congregational Church of Villa Park, California records 1889-1908

Ephemera Series 3. 1881-1918

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet(1 box)

Series Scope and Content Summary

The ephemera consists of handwritten notes, technical information, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, event programs, a citrus recipe book and blank legal forms.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically.

box 13, folder 8
box 13, folder 9
box 13, folder 10
box 13, folder 11

Citrus and fruit industry ephemera, 1886-1900

Legal ephemera, undated

Political ephemera, 1896-1918

General ephemera, 1881-1918

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet4 folders