Finding Aid for the Robert E. Cowan collection of early California manuscripts, 1551-1932

Erika Perez in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT) with assistance from Kelley Bachli, 2007; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575
Email: spec-coll@library.ucla.edu
URL: http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/scweb/
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Robert E. Cowan collection of early California manuscripts

Date (inclusive): 1551-1932

Collection number: 2048

Creator: Cowan, Robert

Extent: 10 boxes (5 linear ft.)

Abstract: Collection consists of miscellaneous manuscripts pertaining to California history.

Language: Finding aid is written in English.

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

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Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Part purchase, part gift of Robert Cowan, 1936.

Processing Note

Processed by Erika Perez in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT) with assistance from Kelley Bachli, 2007.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Robert E. Cowan collection of early California manuscripts (Collection 2048). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

UCLA Catalog Record ID

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4232749

Biography

Robert Ernest Cowan was born in Toronto, Canada in 1862. He arrived in San Francisco in 1870 and was best known for the publication of bibliographies and other works on early California history including: A bibliography of the history of California, 1510-1930, Bibliography of the Chinese question in the United States (with Boutwell Dunlap), and The Spanish press of California, 1833-1845. Robert Ernest Cowan collected a wide-array of materials on early California history that would later form the nucleus of the UCLA Department of Special Collections's holdings in Californiana. Cowan was a former student at UC Berkeley from 1882-84, a San Francisco bookseller from 1895-1920, and a librarian for William Andrews Clark, Jr., from 1919-1933. Robert Cowan married Marie Margaret Fleissner in 1894 and they had one child, Robert Granniss Cowan. Robert Ernest Cowan died in Los Angeles in May 1942.

Scope and Content

Collection consists of early California manuscripts collected by Robert Ernest Cowan. Researchers on 19th century California may be especially drawn to the collection's extensive legal documents, property records, San Francisco materials, and documents relating to Spanish-Mexican California. The collection is comprised of materials mainly written in English, with a fair amount of documents written in Spanish and a few items written in Chinese and French. A few of the more interesting items in this collection are two manuscripts from 16th century Mexico, a deposition written in Chinese that was submitted as an exhibit in a U.S. District Court case, account ledgers showing mercantile transactions involving Spanish-Mexican families, requests for reimbursements stemming from the Mexican-American War, and property transactions involving women.

Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in the following series:

1. Fremont Ackerman correspondence, ca. 1888-1895
2. Alta California, ca. 1834-1914
3. Attorneys, court, and legal records, ca. 1841-1896
4. Mexico, ca. 1551-1855
5. Newspaper clippings & manuscripts, ca. 1844-1892
6. Northern California, ca. 1845-1932
7. Pacific Northwest, ca. 1845-1890
8. Property records, ca. 1847-1877.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects
Ackerman, Fremont -- Correspondence.
California --History -- Sources.

Genres and Forms of Material
Manuscripts, Spanish --Mexico.

Related Material
Robert Ernest Cowan Papers (Collection 232) . Available at the Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

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Physical Description: photographs

Box 6, Folder 16  Correspondence n.d.

Physical Description: photographs

Box 6, Folder 17  Correspondence 1847 August 4 - 1848 April 10

Physical Description: photographs
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