Finding Aid for the William Heath Davis Papers, 1840-1891

Collection number: 2041

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division

Los Angeles, CA

Contact Information
Manuscripts Division
UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575
Telephone: 310/825-4988 (10:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., Pacific Time)
Email: spec-coll@library.ucla.edu
URL: http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/scweb/

Processed by:
Manuscripts Division staff, October 1974
Encoded by:
Caroline Cubé, 1999
Text converted and initial container list EAD tagging by:
Apex Data Services
Online finding aid edited by:
Josh Fiala, June 2002
© 1999 The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: William Heath Davis Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1840-1891
Collection number: 2041
Creator: Davis, William Heath, 1822-1909
Extent: 2 boxes (1 linear ft.)
Repository: University of California, Los Angeles, Library. Department of Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: William Heath Davis (1822-1909) was born in Hawaii. He learned merchandizing from his uncle Nathan Spear.
Davis was also a real estate developer and an author. The collection consists of correspondence, legal papers, accounts,
bills, business records, cash and cargo books, and miscellaneous papers.

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.

Language: English.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction
Property rights to the physical object belong to the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections. Literary rights,
including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who
holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or his or her heir for permission to publish where The UC Regents do
not hold the copyright.

Restrictions on Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Advance notice required for access.

Additional Physical Form Available
A copy of the original version of this online finding aid is available at the UCLA Department of Special Collections for in-house consultation and may be obtained for a fee. Please contact:
Public Services Division
UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575
Telephone: 310/825-4988 (10:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., Pacific Time)
Email: spec-coll@library.ucla.edu

Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], William Heath Davis Papers (Collection 2041). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 964622

Biography
William Heath Kanaka Bill Davis was born in Hawaii in 1822, the grandson of a Polynesian princess; accompanied his stepfather on voyages to Alaska, and when he was ten, to California; learned merchandizing from his uncle Nathan Spear, a wealthy merchant with stores in San Francisco and Monterey; operated store in San Francisco, served briefly on the town council, and became a millionaire by age 28; invested in 160 acre waterfront property, now located between Front Street and Broadway in San Diego; sent for six prefabricated buildings from Portland, Maine in 1849 and built a wharf and warehouse called New Town; however it did not attract sufficient business, and became known as Davis' Folly; Davis wrote Sixty Years in California (1889) and Seventy-Five Years in California (published posthumously in 1929); he died in 1909.

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1. Correspondence (Box 1).
2. Legal papers, accounts and business records (Boxes 1-2).

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:
Davis, William Heath, 1822-1909--Archives.
Real estate developers--California--Archival resources.
Merchants--California--Archival resources.
Online resources.

Related Material
Manuscripts in the California State Library, Sacramento (Collection 104). Available at Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

Correspondence, 1840-1891
Box 1, Folder 1

1840-1846.

Physical Description: 42 items.

Box 1, Folder 2
1847-1848.
Physical Description: 40 items.

Box 1, Folder 3

1849-1850.
Physical Description: 39 items.

Box 1, Folder 4

1851-1859.
Physical Description: 42 items.

Box 1, Folder 5

1860-1870.
Physical Description: 42 items.

Box 1, Folder 6

1871-1880.
Physical Description: 30 items.

Box 1, Folder 7

1881-1897.
Physical Description: 15 items.

Box 1, Folder 8

Drafts, 1843-1897.
Physical Description: 19 items.

Box 1, Folder 9

Miscellaneous correspondence, 1846-1886.
Physical Description: 11 items.

Box 1, Folder 10

Correspondence to Richard Sherman, 1846-1847.
Container List

Physical Description: 16 items.

Box 1, Folder 11

Legal papers, miscellaneous, 1848-1891.

Physical Description: 22 items.

Accounts and Business Records

Box 2, Folder 1

Accounts, bills, etc., 1843-1846.

Physical Description: 20 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folder 2

Accounts, bills, etc., 1847.

Physical Description: 42 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folder 3

Accounts, bills, etc., 1848.

Physical Description: 35 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folder 4

Accounts, bills, etc., 1849-1850.

Physical Description: 86 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folder 5

Accounts, bills, etc., 1856-1878, n.d.

Physical Description: 97 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folder 6

Miscellaneous papers, 1881-1911.

Physical Description: 5 items.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.

Box 2, Folders 7-11

Account, cash and cargo books.

Physical Description: 25 volumes.

Note

Ex Libris: Robert Ernest Cowan.