Finding Aid for the Joseph Le Compte Davis Papers, 1899-1957

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Finding Aid for the Joseph Le Compte Davis Papers, 1899-1957

Collection number: 476

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Joseph Le Compte Davis Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1899-1957

Collection number: 476

Creator: Davis, Joseph LeCompte, b. 1864

Extent: 8 boxes (4 linear ft.) 4 oversize boxes

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: Joseph Le Compte Davis (1864- ) was an assistant district attorney of Los Angeles county (1893-95). The collection consists of Davis' business and personal correspondence, legal materials, scrapbooks with newspaper clippings, photographs, greeting cards and other memorabilia.

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.

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Restrictions on Access
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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:

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Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Centre College, Danville, Kentucky, indefinite loan, 1960.

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[Identification of item], Joseph Le Compte Davis Papers (Collection 476). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

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Biography
Davis was born in Mercer County, Kentucky in 1864; received B.L. from Centre College, Danville, Kentucky in 1887; admitted to Kentucky bar in 1887, then moved west to practice law in Los Angeles; assistant district attorney of Los Angeles county, 1893-95; assisted Clarence Darrow in defense of John and James McNamara, accused of the bombing of the Los Angeles Times building in 1910; assisted in defense of Darrow in 1912, when Darrow was accused of bribery in the McNamara case; defended Henry New, the illegitimate son of Senator Harry S. New of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Scope and Content
Collection consists of Davis' business and personal correspondence, legal materials, scrapbooks with newspaper clippings, photographs, greeting cards and other memorabilia. Includes the personal correspondence of Joseph's wife, Edythe Gilman Davis. Also includes papers related to his property holdings in the Los Angeles area, and legal materials relating to his role in the Los Angeles Times bombing trial and the Clarence Darrow bribery trial.

Expanded Scope and Content
Le Compte Davis, for most of his life a Los Angeles lawyer, was born in Mercer County, Kentucky, in 1864. He received his B.L. from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, in 1887. After being admitted to the Kentucky bar in 1887, he moved west and for the rest of his career practised law in Los Angeles. Early in his career, from 1893 to 1895, he was assistant district attorney of Los Angeles County. In his most famous case, he assisted Clarence Darrow in the defense of John and James McNamara, accused of the bombing of the Los Angeles Times building in 1910. He also assisted in the defense of Darrow in 1912 when Darrow was accused of bribery in the McNamara case. In 1919 Davis defended Harry New, the illegitimate son of Senator Harry S. New of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The collection includes the business and personal correspondence of Davis from 1899-1957, but most of the letters are concentrated in the period from 1930-1957. The personal correspondence of Davis' wife Edythe Gilman Davis dates from 1907 to her death in 1957. Also included in the collection are papers relating to Davis' legal cases. Among these is a confession by John B. McNamara and a statement by his brother, James J. McNamara, dated December 5, 1911. Other material relating to the Times bombing, McNamara trial, and Clarence Darrow bribery trial is contained in four unboxed scrapbooks of newspaper clippings. There are also papers relating to Davis' personal business and to his property holdings in the Los Angeles area, as well as memorabilia and family photographs.

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1. Business correspondence (Box 1).
2. Personal correspondence (Box 2).
3. Personal correspondence of Edythe Gilman Davis (Box 3).
4. Legal cases and papers (Box 4).
5. Papers relating to personal business (Box 5).
6. Memorabilia, mainly greeting cards (Box 6).
7. Miscellaneous printed material, personal and family photographs (Boxes 7-8,12).
8. Four scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings (Boxes 9-11).

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

Davis, Joseph LeCompte, b. 1864--Archives.
Lawyers--California--Los Angeles--Archival resources.
Anderson, William H., letter from: Box 1 folder 3
Arguello, Tomas, reference: See Box 4 folder 1
Bayou Vista Ditch Company, reference: See Box 4 folder 2
Beck, Violet, see: Golden Hill Improvement Association
Blakey, H.B., letter from: Box 2 folder 4
Bryson, Myrtle Frances, reference: See Box 4 folder 2
Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, letters from: Box 1 folder 7
Chovan, Carl, reference: See Box 4 folder 4
Darrow, Clarence, references: see Darrow, Ruby, Box 2 folder 9, 11; Scrapbooks, unboxed
Darrow, Ruby, letters from: Box 2 folder 9, 11
De Laveaux, Gustave. Will: See Box 4 folder 3
Dold, George J., reference: See Box 4 folder 4
Duncan, Blanton, letter from: Box 3 folder 11
Entler, Norman, letters from: Box 4 folder 5
Golden Hill Improvement Association, letters from: Box 1 folder 7
Haas, Marie Antoinette, letters from: Box 1 folder 7, 8, 9
Hanawalt, William C., Jr., reference: See Box 4 folder 2
Johnson, Hugh, reference, see: Darrow, Ruby, Box 2 folder 9
Ku Klux Klan, letter from: Box 2 folder 12
Lawler, Oscar, letter from: Box 1
Lentz, William, letters from: Box 1 folder 7
Maas, A., letter from: Box 2 folder 2
McConnell, Ward E., letter from: Box 1 folder 7
McNamara, James J., statement: Box 4 folder 6; References: see scrapbooks (unboxed)
McNamara, John B., confession: Box 4 folder 6; References: see scrapbooks (unboxed)
McPherrin, R.D., letter from: Box 1 folder 2
Munger, Alfred C., letter from: Box 1 folder 8
Oser, Nettie, reference: See Box 4 folder 4
Palmer, William H., letter from: Box 1 folder 4
Pascoe, Garfield Richard, letters from: Box 2 folder 12
Rainbow Oil Company, letter from: Box 1 folder 2
Rockefeller, Eunice, letter from: Box 4 folder 7
Rockefeller, Rosemary Capitain, letters from: Box 2 folder 9
Rush, Jud R., letter from: Box 2 folder 1
Schenk, Paul, reference: see Box 2 folder 13
Schmidt, Hattie, references: See Box 4 folder 4
Scott, Joseph, letter from: Box 1 folder 8
Stone, Irving, references: see: Darrow, Ruby, Box 2 folder 9, 11
Strader, Burns, letter from: Box 1 folder 3
Strong, A.F., reference: Box 4
Strong, Alice V. Will, Box 4 folder 8; Reference: see Strong, A.F., Box 4; Strong, Hattie, Box 4 folder 9
Strong, Hattie M. Will, Box 4 folder 9; Reference: see Strong, A.F., Box 4; Strong, Alice V., Box 4 folder 8
Thomas, Sadie Martin, letters from: Box 4 folder 7
Veterans' Association, letter from: Box 2 folder 12
Willis, Frank R., references, see: Box 2 folder 13
Young, Robert, see Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company

- Brooks, J. Marion. Bound scrapbook of newspaper clippings, mainly from Kentucky papers and Los Angeles papers with stories about Kentucky or Kentuckians.
- Armytage, J.C. Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon. Engraving from painting by W.Q. Orchardson.
- California missions. Series of 20 watercolors of California missions, landscapes, and other scenes.
- San Juan Bautista mission and San Miguel Mission. Two drawings in black ink on white paper.
- California missions. Five blue-tinted photographs of California missions, four mounted on white cardboard, one mounted on heavy white paper.
- California mission. Black and white photograph.
- Avalon Bay and Sugar Loaf, Catalina Island, California. Color photograph.
- Los Angeles County Courthouse. Black and white photograph mounted on gray cardboard
- Why Californians Don't Want Hearst. Political cartoon showing Stephen M. White on a pedestal with figures labelled Hearst, Ned Hamilton, and Blinker Murphy throwing mud at him. In lower right hand corner a corpse marked Lane with a knife marked The Examiner in his back.
- Burkhart, Lillian. Black and white photograph of Lillian Burk hart in ermine stole for her role in The Lady of the Rowan Tree.
- 3 black and white photographs of woman in various costumes; one in long gown and pearl headdress, two in tunic and tights (one full length, one bust).
- Large Photo in Box 12 (June 1999) 2 photographs of woman in long, sequined dress with pearl headdress; in larger photo, she is seated in carved wooden chair; in smaller standing.
- Box 12 (June 1999) Photograph of man costumed in leopard skin with shield, sword, and helmet.

**Related Material**
A Collection of Photographs on the Los Angeles Times Bombing (Collection 1616). Available at Department of Special Collections, UCLA.

**Business Correspondence, 1919-1957 and n.d.**

Box 1

Includes three letters from Senator Harry S. New, member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1919.

**Personal Correspondence, 1899-1957 and n.d. Speeches and Essays**

Box 2, Folders 1-11

**Personal Correspondence, 1899-1957 and n.d.**

Scope and Content Note
Includes two letters from Mrs. Ruby Darrow re: biography of Clarence Darrow by Irving Stone, 1950 and n.d.

Box 2, Folder 12 **Crank Letters.**

Box 2, Folder 13 **Speeches. Eulogies and speech entitled The Independent Man.**

Box 2, Folder 14 **Essay on the white and Negro races.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Correspondence of Edythe Gilman Davis (Mrs. Le Compte Davis), 1907-1957 and n.d. Letters addressed to Mrs. Lida Gilman (mother of Mrs. Le Compte Davis); Unidentified Correspondence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 3, Folder 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Legal Cases and Papers

| Box 4, Folder 1 | Arguello Estate. Ruling of Mexican Supreme Court and clippings related to estate in Tijuana, Mexico. |
| Box 4,_folder 3 | Gustave DeLaveaux. Holograph will. Los Angeles, January 21, 1904. |
| Physical Description: | 1 leaf. |
| Box 4, Folder 4 | George J. Dold et al. vs. Carl Chovan et al. |
| Physical Description: | 3 items. |
| Box 4, Folder 5 | Norman Entler Case. Letters and other papers by Norman Entler re: appraisal of his land in Los Angeles and Fontana by the Edison Company. |
| Box 4, Folder 6 | James B. McNamara and John J. McNamara Case. Confession of John B. McNamara and statement by James J. McNamara, December 5, 1911. |
| Physical Description: | 1 leaf. |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | Candace M. Martin Estate. Letters, photographs, maps, deed relating to dispute over Cuyama ranch of Candace M. Martin |
| Physical Description: | 16 items. |
| Box 4, Folder 8 | Alice B. Strong. Will (6 leaves). |
| Box 4, Folder 9 | Hattie M. Strong. Wills (8 items). |
| Box 4, Folder 10 | Miscellaneous legal papers including probate forms, affidavits, draft of will, and notes of testimony taken from witnesses (10 items). |

### Papers Relating to Personal Business

| Box 5, Folder 1 | Edythe Davis Estate. Agreements concerning property of Edythe Davis. Marriage License of Edythe Gilman and Le Compte Davis. |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Certificate of admittance of Le Compte Davis to the bar in Oregon. |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | Certificate of membership of Le Compte Davis in Society of Sons of the Revolution. |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | Inventory of library. |
| Box 5, Folder 5 | Miscellaneous business papers, including financial statement of Le Compte Davis, 1930. |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Notebooks containing miscellaneous business records, including itemized expenditures for trips and household items. |
| Box 5, Folders 7-14 | Papers relating to property holdings of LeCompte Davis. Deeds, insurance policies, and miscellaneous business papers relating to property owned by Davis. |

### Memorabilia

| Box 6 | Mostly greeting cards and Christmas cards from friends. |

### Miscellaneous Printed Material; Personal and Family Photographs
| Box 7, Folder 1 | Newspaper clippings from Los Angeles and Marysville, California, newspapers. |
| Box 7, Folder 2 | Miscellaneous pamphlets and printed matter. |
| **Personal and Family Photographs** |
| Box 8 | 4 scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings of the Los Angeles Times. |
| Boxes 9-11 | Bombing (1910), trial of John B. and James J. McNamara (1911), and Clarence Darrow bribery trial (1912). |
| Box 12 | 1 package family photographs and certificate: In the Charter Members Court of Los Angeles, mock complaint Old Timers' Club vs. William H. Cline. |
| Box 12 | 2 photographs of a group on a rock on Catalina Island. |
| Box 12 | Photograph of man in a leopard skin toga with shield, sword and helmet. |
| Box 12 | Photograph of woman in long sequined dress with pearl headdress, seated in carved wooden chair. |