Postmark Collection

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**Postmark Collection**

**Collection number: MS 284**

The University Library  
Special Collections and Archives  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
Santa Cruz, California  

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Postmark collection  
**Dates:** 1922-1971,  
**Bulk Dates:** 1922-1952  
**Collection number:** MS 284  
**Creator:** Sawyer, Preston  
**Collection Size:** 2 boxes, 207 cards  
**Repository:** University of California, Santa Cruz. University Library. Special Collections and Archives  
Santa Cruz, California 95064  

**Abstract:** This small collection contains post cards with special day stamps, place stamps, and opening & closing day stamps collected by Preston Sawyer.

**Physical location:** Stored in Special Collections & Archives: Advance notice is required for access to the papers.  
**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English  

**Access**  
Collection open for research.

**Publication Rights**  
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**Preferred Citation**  
Postmark collection. MS 284. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

**Acquisition Information**  
Purchase from R. Ariel Sawyer, 1964

**Biography**  
Preston Sawyer, collector, proofreader and historical writer, was born in Santa Cruz on December 6, 1899. He was a life-long bachelor who lived with his brother Ariel, also a bachelor, who ran the Sawyer Tile Company. As a youth, Preston Sawyer worked as a movie extra in the very early movie industry located in the Santa Cruz Mountains. A prolific amateur photographer, he snapped hundreds of pictures of the movie stars and the sets while waiting for work. In addition to taking his own, including, for example, a series of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, taken from a 16 year old's point of view, he also collected pictures covering early Santa Cruz and the surrounding areas.

In 1935 he was hired at the Santa Cruz Sentinel as a proofreader, a job he held for almost three decades, except for a stint in the Army during World War II. In 1948, he began a weekly feature "Santa Cruz Yesterdays" which appeared in the Sunday Sentinel. The articles were based on his extensive collection of photographs and reference materials, many culled from local second-hand shops he visited on his lunch hours. By 1955, approximately 364 historical picture-stories had been printed. Sawyer retired from the Sentinel in 1962.
Sawyer was also a stamp collector and over the years amassed a large collection of first day postal stamps and last day postal stamps with cancellations of every single post office in California. He collected postcards depicting just about anything from anywhere he went, including ones with cancellations which when put together would make a sentence. He also made sure he had postmarks from Preston, Alabama and Sawyer, Michigan.

In the late 1960s Sawyer's treasure trove of Santa Cruz and California history, collected over the course of his life, was purchased by and split between the Santa Cruz Public Library and the University Library at UCSC. The reference materials and books went to the Public Library while the University received the postal collections and correspondence, as well as photographs, glass plate and film negatives, and films.

Preston Sawyer died in October of 1968 in a rest home in Watsonville, after a five year illness.

Scope and Content of Collection
This small collection contains post cards with special day stamps, place stamps, and opening & closing day stamps collected by Preston Sawyer.

Arrangement
The cards are arranged by year.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Sawyer, L. Preston (Lemoine Preston)--archives
Santa Cruz (Calif.).--History

Related Material
MS 82 Preston Sawyer Collections

| box 1     | 1922-1929 |
| box 1     | 1931     |
| box 1     | 1933     |
| box 1     | 1934     |
| box 1     | 1935     |
| box 1     | 1936     |
| box 2     | 1937     |
| box 2     | 1938     |
| box 2     | 1939     |
| box 2     | 1942     |
| box 2     | 1952     |
| box 2     | 1971     |
| box 2     | undated  |