Finding Aid for the F. Oskar Martin papers 0311

Finding aid prepared by Rebecca Hirsch
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USC Libraries Special Collections
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July 2010
**Title:** F. Oskar Martin papers  
**Collection number:** 0311  
**Contributing Institution:** USC Libraries Special Collections  
**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** 3.1 Linear feet 7 boxes  
**Date (inclusive):** 1891-1947  

**Language of Materials:** Martin's business papers are mostly in English; a few reports from Colombia are in Spanish. His personal correspondence is in German.

**Abstract:** This collection contains the papers of Frederick Oskar Martin, a German who moved to the United States in 1891 and worked as a mining engineer and geologist for a variety of employers over the course of his career. He spent a year working on the Panama Canal and explored the holdings of Union Oil of California in Panama and Colombia in the 1920s. His papers include mining reports, correspondence with his fiancé and brother in the late 1890s, and scrapbooks of his travels in South and Central America.

**creator:** Martin, F. O., (Frederick Oskar), 1871-1951

**Biographical Note**  
F. O. (Frederick Oskar) Martin was born in Mittweida, Germany in 1871. He came to the United States in 1891 after spending several years at sea. Upon his arrival in the US, he worked as a mining engineer and geologist in the mines of Alaska, California, Idaho, and Montana. He studied at George Washington University from 1900-02, worked for the US Departments of Agriculture (1901-05) and Interior (1909-19), and also spent a year working on the Panama Canal. He married his wife, Agnes Elisabeth Riese, in Missoula, Montana, in 1908. They had three daughters, Anna Elisabeth, Fritzi, and Margaret (who married Charles Calvin Hamer).

After leaving the Department of the Interior, Martin worked for Union Oil of California as a geologist. His work for Union Oil included exploring the company's holdings in Colombia and Panama. In 1927, Martin was involved with the founding of the German American Savings Bank of Los Angeles. In 1930, he went into private practice in Pasadena, and from 1932-33, Martin served as the Austrian Honorary Consul at Los Angeles for California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. In 1933, he again entered the service of the Department of the Interior as a mining engineer. He retired in 1941 and became a private consultant in South Pasadena. Martin passed away in Pasadena, California, in 1951.

**Acquisition**  
F. O. Martin's business papers and scrapbooks were donated in 1999 by his daughter, Margaret Hamer.  
F. O. Martin's personal correspondence was donated by John G. Tomlinson in 2002.

**Scope and Content**  
This collection contains F. Oskar Martin's personal correspondence, the minutes of the board meetings of the German American Savings Bank of Los Angeles, and paper and photograph scrapbooks documenting his career as a geologist and mining engineer for the United States and for the Union Oil Company. Also included in this collection are clippings documenting his appointment as Consul for Austria in anticipation of the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics and the honorary medal given to him by Austria upon the Games' conclusion. Of especial note are the scrapbooks with photographs of his travels in the undeveloped regions of Colombia and Panama in the 1920s. Please see the Scope and Content notes for individual series for more information.

**Conditions Governing Access**  
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. Advance notice required for access.

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**Preferred Citation**  
[Box/folder# or item name], F. Oskar Martin papers, Collection no. 0311, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**  
German American Savings Bank of Los Angeles. -- Archives  
Martin, F. O., (Frederick Oskar), 1871-1951 -- Archives
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Martin, F. O., (Frederick Oskar), 1871-1951 -- Correspondence
Olympic Games (10th : 1932 : Los Angeles, Calif.). -- Archives
Union Oil Company of California. -- Archives
Colombia--Discovery and exploration--Archival resources
Correspondence
Geologists--Archival resources
Geologists--California--Archival resources
Geologists--Colombia--Archival resources
Geologists--Idaho--Archival resources
Geologists--Montana--Archival resources
Geologists--Panama--Archival resources
Geology--Colombia--Archival resources
Geology--Panama--Archival resources
Mining engineers--Archival resources
Mining engineers--California--Archival resources
Mining engineers--Idaho--Archival resources
Mining engineers--Montana--Archival resources
Panama Canal (Panama)--History--Archival resources
Panama--Discovery and exploration--Archival resources
Petroleum--Colombia--Archival resources
Photographs
Savings banks--California--Archival resources
Scrapbooks

**Personal Correspondence**
Scope and Content
Series contains Martin's correspondence with his brother Hugo Martin in Dresden from 1891-1898 and his correspondence with his fiancé Elisabeth Riese in Mittweida in 1907 and 1908. Also included with Martin's correspondence with his fiancé (and later wife) is her German bank book from the late 1920s.

**Box 1**

**Correspondence from Hugo Martin**

**Box 1**

**Correspondence from Elisabeth Riese**

**Work & Business Papers**
Scope and Content
Series contains Martin's business papers, including the minute books from board meetings of the German American Savings Bank of Los Angeles, Martin's federal appointments, his field notebooks and his reports to the Union Oil Company about his explorations of the Guyabero River in Colombia. Also included in Union Oil Company sub-series are a few offprints of geology articles and a few Union Oil Company employee bulletins from the mid-1920s.

**Box 1-2**

**Union Oil Company**
Box 2 **Federal Appointments**

Box 2-3 **Field Notebooks**

Box 4-5 **German American Savings Bank of Los Angeles**

Box 6 **1932 Los Angeles Olympics**
  **Scope and Content**
  Series contains an honorary 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Medal awarded to Martin by the Austrian government for his services as their consul in the Western United States and newspaper clippings documenting the games and Martin's tenure as Austria's consul.

Box 6-7 **Photograph Scrapbooks**
  **Scope and Content**
  Series contains scrapbooks of photographs of Martin and his family in Southern California and traveling around South and Central America in the 1920s.