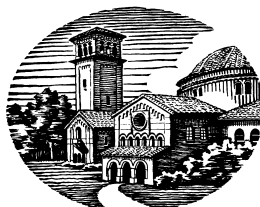


Durham Ranch Records

MSS 114



Special Collections • Meriam Library • California State University, Chico

Contact Information

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Collection Summary

Title

Durham Ranch Records, 1848-1916

Call Number

MSS 114

Creator

Durham Ranch

Language of Materials

English

Extent

Items: 2 boxes

Linear Feet: .5

Abstract

Robert Durham inherited a part of Samuel Neal's Rancho Esquon in 1859. William W. Durham, a nephew, inherited it from Robert and built up the ranch, adding a mill and almond orchards.

Information for Researchers

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research without restriction.

Usage Restrictions

No restrictions.

Publication Rights

The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

Alternate Form of Material

No other forms of material.

Acquisition Information

Gift.

Preferred Citation

Durham Ranch Records, MSS 114, Special Collections, Meriam Library,
California State University, Chico.

Online Catalog Headings

These and related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs.

Durham, Robert W., 1818-1872
Durham, William Wellington
Neal, Samuel, 1816-1859
Sierra Lumber Company (Calif.)
Lumber trade--California--Chico
Rancho Esquon (Butte County, Calif.)
Almond Industry--California

Related Collections

MSS 230 Sierra Lumber Company

Biographical/ Historical Note

The story of the Durham Ranch begins with Samuel Neal and David Dutton who first owned the Rancho Esquon. Robert W. Durham came to California in 1852 and became associated with Sam Neal, helping him with his accounts and managing his huge grant. When Sam Neal died, he left his 240 acre farm to Durham plus "all the land I own on the north side of Butte Creek..."

The land really became a ranch when Robert W. Durham's nephew, William Wellington Durham, inherited his uncle's land and purchased even more land on which to raise horses and cattle. In 1874, William married Minnie Van Ness and in 1878, a son Robert, was born to them. William represented Butte County in the legislature in 1879-80.

The Durham Milling Company was organized in 1895, with W. W. Durham as president. The first mill was a one-stone bur steam mill which was later destroyed by fire. A new mill was built in 1900 with a steam roller process.

Around this same time, O. C. Pratt was planting the first almond trees in Durham, Butte County became one of the leading almond-producing counties in the state. E. A. Epperson and Durham were responsible for the full-scale commercial growing of almonds in 1895.

When Minnie died, William married a school teacher Caroline Roesch. In 1906, William's son, Robert married Edna Reynolds and had three children—William W., Robert W. Jr., and Elizabeth Ruth. The marriage was an unhappy one due to Roberts's unpredictable fits of temper and irresponsibility toward his family and home. Robert finally left the ranch, his wife, and children and went to live alone in a solitary cabin. Because he had neglected his bills, the Durham home was forfeited and the land sold by the bank. In 1941, Robert died of cerebral hemorrhage.

Scope and Content/Collection Overview

Documents in the collection include land transfers, Samuel Neal's will, Caroline Roesch 1873 teaching certificate and an account book for the ranch.

Arrangement

Box 1: Wills, financials, lease agreements 1848-1916

Box 2: Robert W. Durham Probate Records

Material Cataloged Separately

Photos from this collection cataloged separately in Historic Photographs: sc3409, sc17563, sc17564, sc17565, sc17566, sc17567, sc17568, sc17569, sc17570, sc17571, sc17572

Map to be scanned

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box 1: Durham Ranch

Folder 1

Bill of sale date December 26, 1848. David Dutton sold to the firm of Ford, Chase, and Moon all of his stock, half of his farm and improvements, and his farming utensils.

Statement entitled "In Case of Death" signed by R. W. Durham. Dated January 17, 1864, discusses above bill of sale.

Folder 2

Typed copy of the Last Will and Testament of Samuel Neal. Dated August 17, 1859. Also included are letters of administration and oath of executors concerning Neal's estate.

Folder 3

Document containing map and detailed description of the Durham tract. Map dated 1866.

Folder 4

Agreement dated June 20, 1873 in which William W. Durham sells land in the Dayton Township to James Darland.

Folder 5

County teaching certificate awarded to Caroline Roesch, William Durham's second wife. Certificate is dated September 13, 1873.

Folder 6

Durham Ranch ledger 1872-1887. Expenses, Cash (income), miscellaneous accounts Hay, Barley, Mill, Logging, Sawing, Water, accounts and individuals (payroll and deductions).

Folder 7

Receipts 1877-1916

Folder 8

Lease agreement between Leland Stanford Junior University and R. W. Durham, extending his lease one year from December 1, 1915. Dated June 23, 1916.

Folder 9

C.C. Mason M.D., In Memory, July 15, 1889

Box 2

Robert W. Durham Probate Records

Folder 1

Will, 1871-1872

Folder 2

Appraisal 1872

Folder 3

Heirs

Folder 4

Real Estate Sales 1872-1876

Folder 5

Personal Property Sales 1874

Folder 6

Creditors 1872-1874

Folder 7 Final Accounts 1877-1879