



Mennonite Library & Archives Fresno Pacific University

Julius Siemens An Inventory of Family Papers

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Creator: Siemens, Julius, 1863-1953
Title: Papers of the Siemens family.
Inclusive dates: 1879-1943.
Quantity: 2.3 linear ft.
Record Group No.: M239

BIOGRAPHY OF JULIUS SIEMENS

Julius Siemens, banker and real estate agent, was born 4 February 1863 in Alt-Schönwiese, Chortitza Colony, South Russia, to Peter and Helena Siemens. He migrated with his parents to Mountain Lake, Minn., in 1879. He was baptized and joined the First Mennonite Church of Mountain Lake in 1882.

As a young man, Siemens worked in his father's store. Later he and two of his brothers, Jacob P. and Henry, moved to Gretna, Man., where they opened the Siemens Brothers & Company Bank in 1887. This was one of the first banks in the Gretna area. In addition to regular banking services, the Siemens brothers also were active in land sales. They focused their real estate business particularly on Russian and German immigrants seeking land in the area.

During the Panic of 1893, the Siemens Brothers Bank declared bankruptcy and was sold. Shortly thereafter, Julius Siemens moved to Ritzville, Wash., a small German community in the eastern part of the state. There he continued to real estate and colonization work that he had begun in Manitoba. For some years Siemens worked for land department of the Great Northern Railroad.

In 1910 Siemens began his first large-scale colonization effort in California, when he attempted to bring Mennonite families to Los Molinos, in the northern Sacramento Valley. Few Mennonites responded to Siemens's offer, especially after an outbreak of malaria in Los Molinos became public knowledge. Siemens was somewhat more successful in settling a small community of Mennonite families at Fairmead, in northern Madera County, beginning in 1913. Enough Mennonites settled there to establish a congregation, today known as the Madera Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church.

By at least 1912 Siemens had moved to Fresno, Calif., where he maintained a residence until his death in 1953. He continued in the real estate business for the rest of his career, working out of various downtown Fresno offices. Though he did not limit himself to work on behalf of

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Mennonites, he remained interested in Mennonite settlement projects throughout his career.

Julius Siemens married his childhood friend Anna Janzen in 1894 at Mountain Lake, Minn. Anna Janzen Siemens was born 31 December 1866 at Alt-Schönwiese to Henry and Margaretha Entz Janzen. The Janzen family migrated to Mountain Lake in 1877. Anna was baptized and joined the First Mennonite Church there in 1886.

Julius Siemens died 30 July 1953 in Berkeley, Calif., where he had gone to spend the summer with a daughter. Anna Siemens followed him in death on 1 January 1954 at Fresno. Both Julius and Anna Siemens were members of the First Mennonite Church in Reedley, Calif., at the times of their deaths.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This record group contains correspondence, business records, financial records, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other miscellaneous material of Julius Siemens, 1884-1943. It also contains correspondence of Julius Siemens's wife, Anna Janzen Siemens, and his father, Peter Siemens. Most of the correspondence is of family or business nature. Given that the Siemens family conducted many of their business ventures together, the distinction between those two kinds of correspondence is often blurred. Other family members who appear prominently in the correspondence include brothers Abram Siemens and Jacob P. Siemens, and brother-in-law Herman Dirks.

ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION

This record group is organized into two subgroups: I. The papers of Julius and Anna Siemens, 1884-1934; II. The papers of Peter Siemens, 1879-1911. Each subgroup is arranged chronologically by form of material. Some of the letters came to the archives tied together in bundles; these have been kept together and the folders marked accordingly, even though the reason for them being tied together is not always clear.

LANGUAGES APPEARING IN THE COLLECTION

Most of the correspondence and some of the other material is in German Gothic script or typewritten German.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Box 1

Subgroup I: Papers of Julius and Anna Siemens
Correspondence, 1886-1942
Alameda District (Alberta) settlement, 1900
Articles of Copartnership, 1888-1889
"Das Bank-Kunde"
Becker, C. J., 1919-1921
Clippings re: Julius Siemens, ca. 1900-1937
Couer D'Alene Champion Mining Co., 1921

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Cooperative Land and Trust Co., 1913-1920
Deeds and titles, 1884-1919
Dresdner Bank, 1921-1922
Fairmead settlement promotional material, ca. 1913
Federal Land Bank, 1934-1935
First National Bank, Ritzville, Wash., 1911-1927

Box 2

Holland Bank, 1920
Income tax records, 1916-1943
Los Molinos settlement, 1910
Mennonite Book Concern, 1895-1896
Mennonites indebted to Waterloo (Ont.) Society, 1899
Mennonitische Rundschau, 1895-1902
Miller & Lux, Inc., 1920
Naturalization papers, 1885-1892
Neil Land Co., 1921
Neufeld, K. G., 1920-1921
Notebooks
Ost-Washington Herald, 1906-1907
Outstanding open accounts due to the Siemens Brothers & Co., 1890
Photographs
Pioneer National Bank of Ritzville, 1912-1926
Poetry by Jakob and Abram Siemens
Promotional material
R. S. King and Co., 1910
Russian Study Commission, 1920
San Joaquin Light & Power Corp., 1916
Siemens, Abram ("private correspondence"), 1901-1904
Siemens, Peter ("last days of"), 1912-1913
"Tatsachen über das Land bei Firebaugh, California," ca. 1923
Umbsen, Kerner & Eisert, 1920
Wheat crop, 1920-1921
"Zur Wahl in Rosenfeld"
Miscellaneous

Subgroup II: Papers of Peter Siemens

Correspondence, 1895-1912
Legal documents, 1879-1888

Box 3 (flat)

Subgroup I: Papers of Julius and Anna Siemens
Letter books, 1888-1893

Box 4 (flat)

Ledger book, 1905-1911

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Box 5 (flat)

Newspaper clipping collection, ca. 1900-1937