1164
Alcalde/Los Angeles County Court Records, 1830-1863

Repository:

Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Span Dates:

1830 – 1863, with one item dated 1882

Extent:

8 legal boxes; 18 bound volumes

Language:

English and Spanish

Abstract:

Los Angeles area court records; civil, criminal and probate cases, 1830 – 1863, with one item from 1882. Also the first minutes book of the County Board of Supervisors, dated 1852.

Conditions Governing Use:

Permission to publish, quote or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder

Conditions Governing Access:

Research is by appointment only

Preferred Citation:

Alcalde/L.A. County Court Records, 1830-1863, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

Related Collections:

Archives of the Prefecture Records, 1825-1840
Los Angeles area court records, 1850-1907 (held at The Huntington Library, San Marino, California)

Historical Note:

Los Angeles was established in 1781 as a pueblo in Alta California, a result of Spanish colonization. Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, and in 1834 the Mexican congress elevated the town of Los Angeles to a *ciudad* or city.

During the years 1846 through 1848, the U.S. war with Mexico endured with the heaviest battles taken place in southern Mexico (including Buena Vista, Veracruz, and Mexico City). In Los Angeles (January, 1847 – August, 1848) the city fell under American military rule. In 1848, following the end of the U.S. war with Mexico, the United States purchased California from Mexico. Los Angeles and its residents came under American laws and governing bodies, with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in place to mete out terms of protections, in particular to the land and property belonging to *Californio* residents.

The formation of the local government began taking place although California would not be admitted to the Union until September, 1850. Los Angeles County was created after the first American legislature of California divided the state into 27 counties in February, 1850. But in 1851 the boundaries of Los Angeles County expanded to include parts of present-day Kern County (est. 1866); all of present-day San Bernardino County (est. 1853); parts of present-day Riverside County (est. 1893); present-day Orange County (est. 1889); and parts north of former limits to San Diego County.

The first Los Angeles County election took place in April, 1850. The following positions of public office were filled resulting from 377 votes:

Augustín Olvera, County Judge
Benjamin D. Wilson, County Clerk
Benjamin Hayes, County Attorney
John R. Conway, County Surveyor
Manuel Garfias, County Treasurer
Antonio F. Coronel, County Assessor
Ignacio Del Valle, County Recorder
George F. Burrill, County Sheriff
Charles R. Cullen, County Coroner
William C. Ferrell, District Attorney for the state's first district (District 1 covered Los Angeles & San Diego Counties)

The Los Angeles County government also handled judicial, legislative and executive powers until 1852. During that time, the Court of Sessions was presided by the County Judge; under this judge were two Justices of the Peace.

The County Board of Supervisors was established in 1852 to act as a legislative and executive body.

Scope and Content Summary:

Los Angeles area court records; civil, criminal and probate cases, 1830 – 1863, with one item from 1882. Also the first minutes book of the County Board of Supervisors, dated 1852. Organized in four series:

Series 1. 8 boxes contain loose, folded records in chronological order. 1850-1863, with one item from 1882.
Series 2. 7 volumes of criminal court records; 2 volumes of civil court records; handwritten in Spanish. 1830-1850.
Series 3. 6 volumes of the Minutes of the Court of Sessions. Civil and criminal records. 1850-1863.
Series 4. Additional volumes, labeled other than Court of Sessions. 1850-1856.

Contents:

Series 1. 8 boxes contain loose, folded records in chronological order. 1850-1863, with one item from 1882.

Boxes 1-7: Civil and criminal files, 1850-1863, with one from 1882. Container list for box 1 only (see 1164 Series 1 Box 1)

Box 8: Probate files from 1850-1860. Container list available (see 1164 Series 1 Probate)

Series 2. 7 volumes of criminal court records; 2 volumes of civil court records; handwritten in Spanish. 1830-1850.

Bound volumes 1-7: Los Angeles City Archives Criminal Volumes, 1830-1850. Index and container list in English (see 1164 Series 2 Index-Container List)

Bound volumes 8-9: Los Angeles City Archives Civil Volumes, 1840-1850. Index and container list in English (see 1164 Series 2 Index-Container List)

Series 3. 6 volumes of the Minutes of the Court of Sessions. Civil and criminal records. 1850-1863. No container list available.

Minutes Court of Sessions Civil & Criminal Business No. 1 Los Angeles County, June 24, 1850 to Feb. 16, 1852

Minutes Court of Sessions County Business No. 2 Los Angeles County, Apr. 20, 1852 to Feb. 5, 1855

Minutes Court of Sessions Criminal Business No. 2 Los Angeles County, Apr. 6, 1852 to Feb. 5, 1856

Minutes Court of Sessions No. 3 Los Angeles County, Feb. 5, 1856 to July 23, 1859

Court of Sessions Vol. 4 Special Term Los Angeles County, Aug. 5, 1859 to May 6, 1863

Minutes Court of Sessions No. 5 Los Angeles County, Aug. 5, 1859 to Dec. 16, 1863

Series 4. Additional volumes, labeled other than Court of Sessions. 1850-1856. No container list available.

Minutes of Proceedings in the District Court. Los Angeles District Court, 1st Judicial Dist. Los Angeles County, 1850-1851

Record of the Board of Supervisors. Board of Supervisors No. 1 Los Angeles County, 1852-1855

Minutes Probate Court No. 2 Los Angeles County, July 1, 1852 to Aug. 12, 1856