

Binger Hermann papers, 1888-1920

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Hermann, Binger, 1843-1926
Title	Binger Hermann papers
Dates	1888-1920 (inclusive) 1888 1920
Quantity	3.25 linear feet, (6 containers, 1 volume)
Collection Number	Ax 045
Summary	Binger Hermann (1843-1926) was a Roseburg attorney and politician who represented Oregon in the U.S. House of Representatives for sixteen years, and served as commissioner of the General Land Office (GLO) under presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. The collection (1888-1920) contains Hermann's personal and professional papers.
Repository	University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SPC, 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 Fax: 541-346-3485 spcarref@uoregon.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections & University Archives Reading Room.
Additional Reference Guides	Paper finding aid with additional information is available in Special Collections & University Archives.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for production of this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Historical Note

Binger Hermann (1843-1926) was a Roseburg attorney and politician who represented Oregon in the U.S. House of Representatives for sixteen years and served as commissioner of the General Land Office (GLO) under presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. His public career ended in scandal with his indictment in the Oregon Land Frauds, although in time he was acquitted of all charges.

Born in Maryland on February 19, 1843, Hermann migrated as a teenager with his family to Oregon's Coquille River Valley, where his father, Dr. Henry Hermann, established a community of pioneer settlers known as the Baltimore colony. Binger Hermann spent several years as a public schoolteacher

before studying law in the office of Stephen Chadwick. In 1865, he accepted a commission as first lieutenant in the U.S. Army, but the Civil War ended before he could recruit a full company of volunteers.

In 1866 Hermann began his political ascent with election to the state legislature. Over the next two decades, he was state senator, tax collector, and judge advocate in the Oregon militia. In 1884, he became Oregon's sole representative in Congress. After serving six terms in the House, a determined opposition defeated him at the 1896 Oregon Republican convention and nominated Thomas Tongue to replace him. A year later, President McKinley appointed Hermann commissioner of the GLO.

In 1903, Hermann resigned as commissioner at the request of Secretary of the Interior Ethan A. Hitchcock following revelations of fraud in the GLO. Despite the scandal, Hermann won re-election to his former congressional seat four months later. Critics attributed his victory to a photograph published in the Oregonian of Hermann and an unwitting Theodore Roosevelt during the popular president's recent tour of Portland.

In 1905, a federal grand jury in Portland filed indictments against Hermann on charges ranging from destruction of evidence to conspiracy to commit fraud. He was one of several prominent politicians under investigation, and the subsequent trials scandalized the state for the remainder of the decade. While other members of the Oregon congressional delegation were found guilty, including Senator John H. Mitchell, two separate juries failed to convict Hermann.

Source: Oregon Encyclopedia online: http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/hermann_binger_1843_1926/

Content Description

The collection (1888-1920) contains personal and professional correspondence, including congressional letters, journals and notebooks, legal and financial records, historical pamphlets and postcards, school notebooks and autograph books, a memoir, scrapbooks, clippings, and photographs.

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The correspondence is filed by date and includes incoming and outgoing personal and professional letters, including congressional correspondence, 1913-1920. Many personal letters are written to his son Schiller B. Hermann, and are free with advice on a variety of subjects, among them how to survive the drought of the Eighteenth Amendment.

There are a few loose journals and notebooks that include diary entries, appointments, clippings and other writings. Some of these notebooks may have belonged to Hermann's son, Schiller B. Hermann.

Legal and financial documents include deeds, contracts, timber reports, receipts and other miscellaneous records.

Historical pamphlets and postcards include pamphlets from Oregon schools, businesses and societies, and photograph postcards, Christmas cards, and postcards of Oregon destinations and attractions, especially harbors and rivers. There is a small group of racist postcards depicting African-American children that were a part of the "Cute Coons" series, and of Spokane, Washington area Native Americans.

With the collection are a few school notebooks and autograph books that may have belonged to Hermann's son, Schiller B. Hermann.

There is an autobiographical manuscript of handwritten memoirs by Hermann about his congressional career and associations. The file also includes many of Hermann's handwritten speeches.

The collection contains five scrapbooks. One scrapbook may have belonged to one of Hermann's daughters. The other four scrapbooks cover Hermann's congressional career and his years as commissioner of the GLO and include correspondence and telegrams, mementoes, county and state voting records, photographs, and news clippings. Clippings inside the scrapbook are mostly about Hermann's political activities including his trial for fraud, Oregon and national political society news, and Oregon's rivers, canals, and harbors. There is a separate small box of clippings mostly about the fraud trials.

The photographs contain family prints and picture postcards, small albums, and prints of Oregon's harbors, canals, and rivers.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Property rights reside with Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries. Copyright resides with the creators of the documents or their heirs. All requests for permission to publish collection materials must be submitted to Special Collections and University Archives. The reader must also obtain permission of the copyright holder.

Archival material may contain materials with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal and/or state right to privacy laws and other regulations.

Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in this collection without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g. a cause of action for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the University of Oregon assumes no responsibility.

If a researcher finds sensitive personal information in a collection, please bring it to the attention of the reading room staff.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Binger Herman papers, Ax 045, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Material within this collection may have little to no intellectual or physical arrangement. Any arrangement may have derived from the records' creators or custodians. It may be necessary to look in multiple places for the same types of materials.

Processing Note

Collection processed by staff.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

This collection received a basic level of processing including minimal to no organization and rehousing.

Description information is drawn in part from information supplied with the collection and initial surveys of the contents.

Related Materials

Other collections relating to Binger Herman at Special Collections and University Archives include: Binger Hermann letter, CA 1886 Jan 29; Binger Hermann letters, CA 1891 Nov 4; Binger Herman letter, CA 1925 Feb 2; Binger Herman manuscript of the Baltimore Colony pioneers, CB H426.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Lawyers--Oregon--Roseburg
Legislators--Oregon
Legislators--Oregon--Correspondence
Legislators--United States
Legislators--United States--Correspondence
Political corruption--Oregon
Politicians--Oregon
Politicians--Oregon--Correspondence
Postcards--Oregon
Public lands--Oregon
Rivers--Oregon--Photographs

Personal Names :

Hermann, Binger, 1843-1926
Hermann, Binger, 1843-1926--Correspondence

Corporate Names :

United States. Congress. House.
United States. General Land Office.

Geographical Names :

Oregon--Photographs
Oregon--Politics and government--1859-1950
United States--Politics and government--1865-1900
United States--Politics and government--1901-1909

Form or Genre Terms :

Correspondence
Financial records
Photographs
Postcards
Scrapbooks
Speeches

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Project Team and Tanya Parlet.
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