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 contains two handwritten letters from 1891.

One letter is addressed to Daniel W. Steams (of Elkton, Oregon) dated November 4, 1891. In the letter Hermann protests changes in the Oakland-Looking Glass postal route and asks that the Stephen’s post office be continued.

The second letter written on the same day is addressed to the Post Master General and is also about postal routes.

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**Preferred Citation**

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**Administrative Information**

**Processing Note**

Collection processed by staff.

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**Related Materials**

Other collections relating to Binger Hermann at Special Collections and University Archives include: Binger Herman papers, Ax 045; Binger Herman letter, CA 1925 Feb 2; Binger Herman manuscript of the Baltimore Colony pioneers, CB H426; Binger Hermann letter, CA 1886 Jan 29.

**Names and Subjects**

- **Subject Terms:** Legislators--Oregon--Correspondence
- **Personal Names:** Hermann, Binger, 1843-1926
- **Form or Genre Terms:** Correspondence

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