
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MS 978
Chamizal Title Company
Papers, 1733-1908

DESCRIPTION

The collection consists of material relating to the Mexican land titles in the Chamizal District of El Paso, Texas. The bulk of this assortment is made of deeds, legal contracts, business correspondence, maps and publications documenting William Warder and Brewster Cameron's activities in the dispute over the United States-Mexico boundary between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. There is also a small amount of Cameron's personal and business correspondence.

8 boxes, 4 linear ft.

ACQUISITION

Unknown

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

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Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Archives Department.

PROCESSING

The collection was processed by Ricardo Quiroz under the supervision of Riva Dean in September 1998

LANGUAGE NOTE

The majority of the collection is handwritten or typewritten in Spanish.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 ending the Mexican War with the United States, also marked the international boundary along a line established by the Rio Grande channel in 1848. In 1884 and 1886, the United States and Mexico agreed to treaties relocating the international boundary line to conform to the existing river channel which, through floods and erosion in the years since the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, had shifted its course south. A 370-acre area bounded on the north by the Rio Grande channel of 1852 and on the south by the 1907 river channel became known as "El Chamizal". The disputes of El Chamizal dated back to August 1827 when the Mexican Government granted 210 acres of land to Ponce de Leon. In 1906 the El Paso, Texas Chamizal Title Company which was involved in settling border disputes, purchased all of the underlying Mexican titles and one-third of the overlying titles putting an end to the contention.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is made up of six series of Brewster Cameron's assortment of correspondence, legal documents, newspaper clippings, maps, surveys, publications and miscellaneous financial papers while his position as a trustee in the Chamizal Title Company. Original order of the collection was maintained because it was well organized, while the title of the collection was changed from the Brewster Cameron collection to the Chamizal Title Company collection. The collection was more relevant to the Chamizal Title Company than Cameron's life, since it contained much more Chamizal company papers than a biographical view of Cameron's life.

Series one is the correspondence between Cameron's company and landowners and legal officials involved in the Chamizal land dispute cases. Included in the correspondence is Cameron's personal business interests and investments in ranching, farming, real estate and mining. The correspondence spans from 1852 to 1908. In the collection the main bulk is this series of legal documents that are made up of land deeds, leases and contracts with related family genealogy affidavits, powers of attorney and promissory notes that date from 1733-1908. This can be considered the main strength of the collection. News articles, public notices advertisements, editorials and letters to the editor from El Paso and Juarez newspapers all dealing with the Chamizal Title Co. and the detailed history of the disputes are included in the third series. Series four is composed of the Chamizal maps and surveys. The maps and survey depict the shifts of the Rio Grande shifts over the years. The Disputed Lands Publication, 1900-07 make up the fifth series. It is composed of pamphlets, Supreme Court decision and a lengthy booklet. The Sixth and final series are miscellaneous financial records.

One of the main strengths of this collection is the abundance of legal documents and land deed, leases and contracts that can be considered valuable in assisting settling land disputes. Throughout the assortment no evidence is given on how and exactly when the Chamizal Title Company was created. This collection is a valuable component for documenting United States and Mexican international boundary problems in Texas and the lengthy international negotiations needed by shifts in the Rio Grande Channel after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848.

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Series 1: Correspondence 1852-1908

Sub Series 1: Chamizal Land Dispute, 1852-1908

- F.1 Chamizal Titles 1906-07
- F.2 Brewster Cameron Titles 1907
- F.3 Dr. Jose A. Samaniego Property and Canal 1889-1907
- F.4 Chamizal Maps, Surveys and Abstracts 1905-07
- F.5 International Boundary Line Fence 1907
- F.6 Cotton vs. Eddy lawsuit 1906-08
- F.7 Newspaper Advertisements 1906-07
- F.8 U.S. Mail Fraud Charges 1907-08
- F.9 International Boundary Commission 1852-1908

Sub Series 2: Chamizal Title Company 1905-08

- F.10 Furniture, Supplies, and Equipment 1905-08

F.11 Reorganization and Incorporation Proposals 1907-08

Sub Series 3: Brewster Cameron 1905-08

- F.12 Personal Correspondence 1906-08
- F.13 General Business and Investments 1905-08
- F.14 Arizona Ranching, Farming and Government 1905-08
- F.15 Financial Correspondence 1905-08

Boxes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Series 2: Chamizal Legal Documents 1733- 1908

- F.16-55 Lands, Deeds, Leases and Contracts. #'S 1-535

Box 7

- F.56 Land Promissory Notes, Miscellaneous 1904-06
- F.57 Land Surveys, McGaffin Addition 1854-58
- F.58 Juarez City Council Resolution against the Atichison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. June 13, 1881
- F.59 Attorney's Contracts with Mexican land owners.1895-1907
- F.60 Land Title Abstracts 1905-07
- F.61 Petitions to Acquire "Island" Lands. 1905-06
- F.62 Inventories of Mexican Lands 1906-07
- F.63 Chamizal Title Co. Lawsuits 1889-1907
- F.64 Eviction Notices to Mexican Tenants. April 27, 1906
- F.65 Affidavits, Rio Grande channel shifts. 1907
- F.66 Depositions against W.W. Mils 1907
- F.67 Samaniego Irrigation Canal Agreements 1906-07

Box 8

Series 3: Newspaper Clippings 1895-1907

- F.68 International Boundary Commission; Warder Claims 1895-1907

Series 4: Chamizal Maps and Surveys 1907-08

- F.69 Maps and Survey Notes 1907-08

Series 5: Disputed Lands Publications 1900-07

- F.70 Missouri vs. Nebraska 1904
- F.71 "Water of the Rio Grande" 1906
- "Bancos in the Rio Grande River" 1907
- "Mexico-Bancos in the Rio Grande River" 1907
- F.72 "Lands in Dispute" vols. I and II ca. 1900
- F.73 " In the Matter of the Claim of Certain Mexican Citizens to lands on the Rio Grande Known by the Name of the District of El Chamizal" 1905

Series 6: Miscellaneous Financial Records 1902-07

- F.74 Chamizal Title Company Stock Certificate
- F.75 Chamizal Title Company receipts 1902, 05-07
- F.76 Prospectuses 1907
- F.77 Personal Receipts, Brewster Cameron 1906-07