

## Finding Aid to the Dorothy Mutnick Collection

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Dorothy Mutnick Collection

**Date Range:** 1862-1980s

**Collection number:** [Accession #89-20](#)

**Extent:** 18 boxes, 9 card-file drawers, 5 spiral bound books, 3 books, and 3 red binders.

**Repository:** County History Center, Contra Costa County Historical Society, 724 Escobar Street, Martinez, CA 94553, 925-229-1042

**Legal status:** public

### Information for Researchers

**Access:** Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights:** [Contact the Contra Costa County Historical Society for publication permission.](#)

**Preferred Citation:** Suggested citation of these records is: [Identification of item], Dorothy Mutnick Collection, Contra Costa County Historical Society.

**Abstract:** The collection has a wide assortment of material pertaining to local history from the time of the California missions to the 1930s, plus a few items from the 1940s to 1980s.

**Scope and Content:** Dorothy Gittinger Mutnick of Lafayette CA did extensive research into the history of central and western Contra Costa County from the mission period (1769-1833), to the ranchos or land grants that emerged from the missions, into the twentieth century. She donated the collection to CCCHS in 1989 and died later that year at age 81. The collection includes histories of the ranchos in what became Contra Costa County, photocopies of mission records (including baptisms, marriages and deaths), copies of military records from the San Francisco Presidio, land title cases and property transfers, applications for pensions by veterans of the Mexican War, clippings from the *Contra Costa Gazette* from 1862-1872 and 1899, copies of the census of Contra Costa County from 1852 and 1860, and copies of manuscripts and books Mutnick wrote on the genealogies of prominent rancho families. There are also photographs and maps of the towns of Moraga and Lafayette, and of Contra Costa County from the 1940s, 1970s and 1980s.

The three books are [Some Alta California Pioneers and Descendants](#), [A Profile of the Moraga-Bernal Rancho](#), and [Some California Poppies and Even A Few Mommies](#) (the latter two are stored in the library rather than the Special Collections Room). The collection also includes three red binders that contain explanations and indices for the collection. According to her obituary in the *Contra Costa Times* (November 30, 1989), Mutnick spent 15 years doing her research at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. She undertook the research when a new public library opened in

Lafayette in the early 1960s and she realized there wasn't any published history of the local area. A resident of Lafayette for forty years, she worked as a school teacher and librarian.

**Arrangement of Materials:**

Materials are in 18 boxes, 5 spiral-bound books, 3 books, 8 metal card-catalog drawers with index cards, and 3 red binders with indices and explanations of the collection. Following is an explanation of the boxes.

**Box "H-9 Vol. 1"**

Typed manuscript of Mutnick's book, "Some California Poppies and Even a few Mommies, A History of Upper California During the First Hundred Years, volume 1".

**Box "H-9 Vol. 2"**

Typed manuscript of volume 2 of Mutnick's book named above.

**Box "Mutnick Land Cases H-8 Laguna de Palos Colorados"**

Three sets of copies of a lawsuit by Moraga vs. the United States, mid-1800s.

**Box "Manuscripts Dorothy G. Mutnick"**

Various manuscripts typed by Mutnick in the 1970s and 1980s, and her typed index of clippings from the *Contra Costa Gazette* from the 1860s (the clippings themselves are in Box "Mutnick #6," described below).

**Box "Mutnick H-6 [ A – C ]"**

Copies of newspaper clippings, election reports, maps and Census documents from the mid-1800s to the 1980s, copies of Chapter III of Theodore Hittell's *History of California*, 1897, copies of court decisions from the mid-1800s and Department of Interior land decisions from the 1880s. Alphabetical by subject's last name.

**Box "Mutnick H-6 [ C- H ]"**

Similar to previous listing.

**Box "Mutnick H-6 [ I – T ]"**

Similar to previous listing.

**Box "Mutnick #6 Clippings from Contra Costa Gazette"**

Newspaper clippings, mostly from the 1870s on court cases and decisions.

**Box "Mutnick (loose pages) genealogies"**

Mutnick's typed and handwritten genealogies which she entitled "Some Alta California Pioneers & Descendants," in five volumes.

**Three Boxes "H-5 [ A – H ], H-5 [ L – Mo ], H-5 [ Mu – V ]"**

Within each box, files organized alphabetically by subject's last name; includes copies of newspaper clippings, legal documents such as marriage licenses, reprints of history papers and books.

**Three Boxes "H-7 [ B – P ], H-7 [ P – San F ], H-7 [ San J – W ]"**

Similar to previous listing.

**Box “Mutnick – Leagues & Bounds / Mutnick Lafayette Inc H–9”**

Correspondence from 1952 on political issues, copies of papers and clippings from 1959 relating to the planned incorporation of Lafayette, and twelve typed copies of Mutnick’s manuscript called “Leagues & Bounds In the Case Of Mark West,” dated 1969.

**Box “Mutnick Div. I & II Pioneers Original”**

Bound volumes of handwritten genealogies, for her work entitled “Some Alta California Pioneers & Descendants,” which she has divided into two sections, Division I and Division II.

**Box “Vol. 1–5 Mutnick Gazette Clippings 1862-1872”**

Newspaper clippings from the listed years, focusing on a variety of topics.

*A note to researchers: the three red binders and nine card-catalog drawers contain Mutnick’s own explanation and indices to the collection. However, these are not very helpful in locating material within the collection. The explanations in the red binders are confusing and voluminous. Many entries in the card catalog indices don’t include any information stating where the material is located. The index cards contain handwritten numbers and letters that appear to relate to her cataloging system. Researchers using this collection will need to devote an extensive amount of time and effort.*

**Indexing Terms:** California missions, census, early Spanish, family papers, genealogy, history, Lafayette, Mexican War, maps, Moraga, Native Americans, newspaper clippings, ranchos, vital records.