

5-16-2016

Cartographic Records Pertaining to California Private Land Claims, U.S. National Archives, NA-1, Grim 2-19-82.

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Recommended Citation

"Cartographic Records Pertaining to California Private Land Claims, U.S. National Archives, NA-1, Grim 2-19-82." (2016). *National Archives Documents*. 2.
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Cartographic Records
Pertaining to
California Private Land Claims

The cartographic records pertaining to California Private Land Claims consist of the following six series. Each series has a different numbering sequence and consequently a different index or finding aid.

1. Complete expedientes. See list D.
Expediente means case file. The case file contains a variety of textual documents, all in Spanish. Most expedientes include a diseño or rough sketch map of the particular grant. The diseño included in the case expedientes should be the original drawing.
2. Incomplete expedientes. See list E.
Includes a copy of the diseño.
3. Case expedientes. See list F. (Also called Board expedientes)
Includes a copy of the diseño.
4. Board of Commissioners. Three volumes of diseños. These diseños are copies from the originals, but in most cases are more colorful. They have the same numbering sequence as the Case Expedientes. Use either list F or the "Doc" number in list A.
5. Maps separated from General Land Office docket files. Use "GLO" number in list A. See also list C, which is a shelf list of the dockets represented in NNTS custody. The textual part of the docket files are in the custody of NNG. The oversize maps in NNTS were separated from the textual records when they were microfilmed.
6. General Land Offices plats of survey. Twenty-five volumes of survey plats of grants after they were confirmed. Three volumes of rejected plats. Use "Vol. and page" numbers found in list A. List B also indexes the plats. The page number usually corresponds to the "GLO" number, also in list A. Also includes a few items in "Loose" file (mostly copies and tracings of plats in volumes) never included in a volume.

The following are good reference works when researching California Private Land Claims.

1. Warren A. Beck and Ynez D. Haase, Historical Atlas of California (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974). Contains county maps which show the location of individual grants. This book is in NNTS in reference book collection, filed under California. G1526.S1 B4
2. Robert H. Becker, Designs on the Land: Diseños of California Ranchos (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1969). Provides background information about the individuals who compiled or drew the diseños. NNTS has a "Xerox" copy of this book; see reference supervisor.
3. Jacob N. Bowman, "Index of the Spanish-Mexican Private Land Grant Records and Cases of California." (typescript, University of California Berkeley). Provides a comprehensive index to private land claim records in California and NARS. Complete "Xerox" copies are available in NNG and NNFN. "Xerox" copies of excerpts are available in NNTS.

4. Ralph G. Lounsbury, "Records of Mexican Land Claims in California" (typescript). Provides good administrative background of private land claim records. "Xerox" copy in these binders.
5. RG 49: Standard Published Maps, California. General Land Office published maps of California for the last half of the nineteenth century show the location of confirmed private land claims. Each map has an alphabetical listing of grants and a list of grant numbers (which serve as map location numbers). This number also appears in the left margin of list A (and as the grant number in Beck and Haase-see above). The number does not refer to the file number of any series of maps; it does serve as a map locator number and as a double check that you have the correct grant.