

Paul J. Pelz Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2009

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79035808>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010236>

Prepared by S. Nieminen

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2019 July

Collection Summary

Title: Paul J. Pelz Papers

Span Dates: circa 1800-1921

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1890-1917)

ID No.: MSS35808

Creator: Pelz, Paul J., 1841-1918

Extent: 900 items

Extent: 3 containers

Extent: 1.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79035808>

Summary: Architect. Correspondence, memoranda, reports, testimonials, pictorial representations of buildings, printed material, and photographs relating primarily to the planning and construction of the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress and other buildings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Clephane, Allen O.--Correspondence.

Davis, Eugene--Correspondence.

Elkins, Stephen B. (Stephen Benton), 1841-1911--Correspondence.

French, Owen Bert, 1865-1951--Correspondence.

Hurdle, Julian--Correspondence.

Pelz, Eduard, 1800-1876.

Pelz, Henriette.

Pelz, Paul J., 1841-1918.

Robertson, William A.--Correspondence.

Smithmeyer, John L., -1908--Claims vs. United States.

Woods, Elliott, 1864-1923--Correspondence.

Organizations

Honduras Aurora Mining Company.

Library of Congress.

Library of Congress. Library of Congress archives.

Smithmeyer & Pelz.

Subjects

Agriculture--Latin America.

Architecture--Washington (D.C.)

Libraries--Washington (D.C.)

Mines and mineral resources--Honduras.

Mines and mineral resources--Latin America.

Occupations

Architects.

Provenance

The papers of Paul J. Pelz, architect, were given to the Library of Congress by Mrs. Harry G. Meem in 1963 and 1966.

Processing History

The papers of Paul J. Pelz were processed in 1967. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Paul J. Pelz is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Paul J. Pelz are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Paul J. Pelz Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1841, Nov. 18	Born, Seitendorf, Waldenburg, Silesia
1854	Educated in Breslau, Germany, colleges of St. Elizabeth and Holy Spirit
1858	Emigrated to New York
1864	Chief draftsman, New York architectural firm
1866	Became member of American Institute of Architects
1867	Civil engineer, United States Lighthouse Board
1872-1877	Chief draftsman, United States Lighthouse Board
1873	First prize for architectural plans for Library of Congress
1892	Submitted final plans for the Library of Congress
1895	Married Mary Eastbourne Ritter Meem
1918, Mar. 30	Died, Washington, D. C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Paul Johannes Pelz (1841-1918) span the years circa 1800-1921. Included are several pieces of family correspondence, written after his death, as well as a number of tributes to him published posthumously. The bulk of the material, however, covers the period 1890-1917. The collection also contain general correspondence, business and financial records, drawings, reports, printed material, photographs, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia.

General correspondence and subject files constitute the main part of the collection and relate to Pelz's career as an architect rather than to his private life. Pelz is best known as architect of the main building of the Library of Congress, and included are papers and drawings pertaining to the construction of that building. Also included are papers regarding his claims for compensation against the United States for services rendered in preparing plans for the Library of Congress. Papers concerning his investments in various Latin American agricultural and mining ventures and in a United States hotel company are prominent in the collection. Many testimonials are included referring to contracts completed satisfactorily.

Prominent correspondents include Stephen B. Elkins, Elliot Woods, Eugene Davis, William A. Robertson, Owen Bert French, Allen O. Clephane, and Julian Hurdle.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is organized alphabetically by type of material or file and therein by topic.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Biographical material, 1858-1918
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Family, 1918-1921, undated
BOX 1	General, 1890-1917, undated
BOX 1	Subject file
BOX 1	Claims against United States Government, correspondence and documents, 1889-1913 (4 folders)
BOX 1	Construction of Library of Congress, correspondence, reports, album, and documents, 1892-1906, undated (4 folder)
BOX 2	Construction of Library of Congress, correspondence, reports, album, and documents, 1892-1906, undated (1 folder)
BOX 2	Honduras Aurora Mining Co., 1901-1904
BOX 2	Old Point Comfort Hotel Co., 1890-1893
BOX 2	Mexican Mining and Exploration Co., correspondence and documents, 1903-1915, undated (6 folders)
BOX 2	Vista Hermosa Sugar and Mercantile Co., correspondence and documents, 1902-1910, undated (3 folders)
BOX 3	Miscellany, including accounts, addresses, memorabilia, and photographs, circa 1800-1908 (3 folders)
BOX 3	Printed matter, circa 1890-1910 (3 folders)