

Guide to the Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers, 1896–1999

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Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers, 1896–1999 (bulk 1905–1945)

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Descriptive Summary

Title:

Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers, 1896–1999 (1905–1945 bulk)

Collection Number:

MS 97

Creator:

Trinkkeller, Edward G., 1872–1945

Abstract:

Gustaf Edward Trinkkeller was born in Germany in 1872 and immigrated to the United States about 1890 where he began a successful career in Los Angeles as a craftsman in decorative wrought ironwork. This collection of family papers, office records, and photographs documents his artistry and his extensive client list. This included producing ironwork for publisher William Randolph Hearst at his San Simeon estate where Trinkkeller collaborated with architect Julia Morgan; correspondence and photographs within the collection document their work together. Other noteworthy clients were oil magnate Edward Doheny; comedian Will Rogers; movie producer Cecil B. DeMille; and other well-to-do Southern Californians during the period 1896–1942, as reflected in Trinkkeller's original account ledgers. Once established in the U.S., he went by the name Edward G. Trinkkeller. His heirs donated his papers to Cal Poly in 2002.

Extent:

8 boxes

Language:

English

Repository:

Special Collections
Robert E. Kennedy Library
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0605

Administrative Information

Provenance:

Donated by his heirs in 2002, the collection is housed in and administered by Special Collections at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Access:

Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page.

Collection stored remotely. Advance notice for use required.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:

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Preferred Citation:

[Identification of Item]. Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Abbreviations Used:

c.: circa

n.d.: no date

l.f.: linear feet

Funding:

The National Endowment for the Humanities, along with matching funds from California Polytechnic State University, has generously funded the arrangement and description of this collection.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:

Architects -- California -- Correspondence
Architectural ironwork
Architecture, Domestic -- California -- San Simeon
Artisans--California -- Camarillo
Artisans--California -- Los Angeles
Artisans--California -- San Simeon
Arts and crafts movement -- California -- Exhibitions
Decorative arts -- California -- Exhibitions
Doheny, Edward Laurence, 1856-1935 -- Homes and haunts -- California
Farquhar, Robert David--Correspondence
Gage, William J--Correspondence
Grilles
Harrison, D. F. -- Correspondence
Hearst, William Randolph, 1863-1951 -- Correspondence
Hearst, William Randolph, 1863-1951 -- Homes and haunts -- California
Ironwork
Johnson, Reginald D. -- Correspondence
Loorz, George -- Correspondence
Los Angeles Examiner Building -- Architecture
Morgan, Julia, 1872-1957 -- Career in Architecture
Morgan, Julia, 1872-1957 -- Exhibitions
Morgan, Julia, 1872-1957 -- Correspondence
Neff, Wallace -- Correspondence
Orthopedic Hospital -- Los Angeles, CA -- Architecture
Rogers, Will, 1879-1935 -- Homes and haunts -- California
Rossi, Camille C. -- Correspondence
St. John's Seminary -- Camarillo, CA -- Architecture
San Simeon Ranch (Calif.) -- History
Singleton Court -- Los Angeles, CA--Architecture
Singleton, John -- Homes and haunts -- California
Trinkkeller, Edward G., 1872-1945
Trinkkeller, Edward G., 1872-1945 -- Exhibitions
Trinkkeller, Marie Vorweck

Genres and Forms of Material:

Family papers.
Business records.
Photographs.
Sketches.

Related Materials

Related Collections:

Special Collections, Cal Poly:

Julia Morgan Papers (MS 10)
Julia Morgan Papers: Series 9.A. Earl and Wright, Consulting Engineers (MS 125)
Julia Morgan-Sara Holmes Boutelle Collection, 1877-1958 (MS 27)
Sara Holmes Boutelle Papers, 1972-1999 (MS 141)
Camille Solon Collection, 1900-1952 (MS 106)

Biographical Note

Gustaf Edward Trinkkeller was born in Germany in 1872 and immigrated to the United States around the age of 18, after completing an apprenticeship in ornamental ironwork. He established a thriving practice in Los Angeles as an artisan in decorative ironwork for publisher William Randolph Hearst, oil magnate Edward Doheny, comedian Will Rogers, movie producer Cecil B. DeMille, and other well-to-do Southern Californians.

Trinkkeller set up his own metalsmithing workshop at 8th Street and Broadway in Los Angeles in 1896. He later relocated to 1720 South Main Street, where he maintained his workshop until his retirement in 1942. Once established in California, he went by the name Edward G. Trinkkeller. He promoted his business as "Ed Trinkkeller, Manufacturer of Ornamental Iron Work."

In 1915, Trinkkeller crafted an elaborate grille and other ornamental ironwork for the main lobby for publisher William Randolph Hearst's Los Angeles *Examiner* building, which was designed by architect Julia Morgan. In 1921, Morgan asked Trinkkeller to produce ornamental ironwork for Hearst's estate at San Simeon. Trinkkeller worked for the next 14 years to craft window and bookcase grilles, fireplace screens and utensils, gates, lighting fixtures, and other significant pieces in iron for San Simeon.

To appreciate the skill of wrought iron artisans like Ed Trinkkeller, one must note the difference between the production of wrought iron and cast iron, which are often confused. Wrought iron consists of bending, cutting, or hammering (usually heated, but sometimes cold) rods or sheets of iron into curves, leaves, dragonheads, and other fanciful shapes as directly manipulated by the metalsmith. In contrast, cast ironwork entails the pouring of molten iron into previously designed and fabricated molds. The hammering necessary to the production of wrought iron has the added benefit of pounding out impurities in the iron, making it stronger and more resistant to rust. Wrought iron is then coated with a layer of tung oil or other similar protectant, which brings out the natural luster of the metal. Cast iron has a higher carbon content, which makes it very vulnerable to rust, necessitating periodic coats of paint.

In 1925, four years into his collaboration with Morgan, Trinkkeller undertook an extensive journey to research historic wrought ironwork in Germany, France, Austria, Great Britain, and Italy. In Spain, he toured sites with ornamental Spanish ironwork with Arthur and Mildred Stapley Byne, curators and dealers who purchased art for Hearst. Trinkkeller's research notebook from this trip is included in the collection.

One of Trinkkeller's masterpieces is a pair of gates designed by Morgan for the entrance to Casa del Sol guesthouse ("C" House) at San Simeon. Trinkkeller used repoussé, the process of ornamenting metallic surfaces with designs in relief hammered out from the back by hand, to produce 26 unique profiles of his fellow artisans at San Simeon. Trinkkeller included his own image, complete with ever-present goatee, in the center row at the bottom of the north gate.

Among the many commissions from Mrs. Edward L. Doheny were the large entrance gate to her Chester Place estate and 34 window grilles for the Doheny Memorial Library at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California. Trinkkeller's

grandson, Paul E. Trinkkeller, who helped in the metal shop from 1938 to 1941 while attending UCLA, worked on this large commission.

When not creating ironwork for his distinguished list of clients, Trinkkeller would make bowls, sconces, tables, and other items for family members and friends. His own home at 208 South Highland in Los Angeles had decorative grilles on windows. Ed Trinkkeller also liked to work in copper and brass and in a variety of styles, from Beaux Arts to Arts and Crafts.

Trinkkeller closed his business in 1942 and died September 6, 1945, at the age of 73. His wife, Marie, their children, Elsa and Edward P., and two grandsons survived him.

Other clients included:

Beverly Wilshire Hotel
William H. Bliss, Montecito, Calif.
California Furniture Co.
F. W. Flint
J. J. Haggarty
A. E. Hanson
Harold Lloyd
Thomas C. Marlowe
Mrs. Antonio Moreno
Pasadena Furniture Co.
Charles S. Quinn
J. W. Robinson
Will Rogers
Santa Barbara Club
John Singleton Estate
W. and J. Sloan
New York Cloak and Suit House
Victor Hugo Restaurant, Laguna, Calif.

Sources

"A Beautiful Street." *Los Angeles Times* 5 Sept. 1909: V22.

"Edward G. Trinkkeller." [obituary] *Los Angeles Times* 8 Sept. 1945: 5.

Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers, Special Collections, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

"Tourist Cars Still Running." *Los Angeles Times* 9 Nov. 1913: ST1.

Scope and Content Note

The Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers contains the family papers, office records, and photographs of the work of wrought ironwork artisan Gustaf Edward Trinkkeller. After immigrating to the United States from Germany, he began using the names Edward G. Trinkkeller or Ed Trinkkeller.

Project files are organized by the client's name (either a surname or a company name). Because architect Julia Morgan subcontracted with Trinkkeller for the work on W. R. Hearst's San Simeon, the files relating to that project are filed under Morgan, not Hearst. Most of the correspondence includes original letters; others are transcripts of originals, which were typed by Trinkkeller's daughter, Elsa.

Where possible, the provenance, or original organization, of the papers has been preserved. However, in order to simplify access to the collection for researchers, some materials in specific formats and topics were reorganized and refoldered to more accurately reflect their contents.

There are five series in the Edward G. Trinkkeller Papers:

1. Personal Papers
2. Professional Papers
3. Office Records
4. Project Records
5. Career Assessment

The collection is housed in 8 boxes, with Series 3 Office Records and Series 4 Project Files containing the most extensive portions of the collection.

Series Description/Folder List

Series 1. Personal Papers, 1896–1945

Contains two subseries: A. Personal Records and B. Photographs.

A. Personal Records, 1896–1945

Contains marriage, travel, citizenship, passport and funeral service records, California state hunting and driver's licenses, and a personal calling card, arranged chronologically. 2 folders.

Box 1 Folder 1

Marriage, Travel, Funeral, and License Records, 1896, 1906, 1912, 1925, 1945

Box 1 Folder 2

Buick Memorabilia, 1913, 1937, 1945

B. Photographs, 1916–1925

Contains black-and-white photographs of Ed Trinkkeller, Trinkkeller family members, and his longtime home in Los Angeles, arranged chronologically within each folder and with undated photos at the end of each subseries. Includes multiple photos mounted on scrapbook pages. 3 folders.

Box 1 Folder 3

Trinkkeller, Ed, 1925

Box 1 Folder 4

Trinkkeller Family, 1916, 1925

Box 1 Folder 5

Ed Trinkkeller residence, 208 S. Highland Ave., Los Angeles

Series 2. Professional Papers, 1925–1944

Contains two subseries: A. Contractor's Licenses and B. Research Notes and Photographs.

A. Contractor's Licenses, 1930–1941

Contains contractor's licenses. 1 folder.

Box 2 Folder 1

Contractor's Licenses, State of California, 1930, 1930/31, 1937/38, 1940/41

B. Research Notes and Photographs, 1925–1944

Contains Trinkkeller's pocket book with fragmentary notes and sketches of ironwork made during his trip to Europe in 1925 and snapshots of ironwork designs in situ (buildings unidentified and photos undated). 2 folders.

Box 2 Folder 2

Leather pocket book, European trip, 1925 and sketches of urns, 1944

Box 2 Folder 3

Photographs of ironwork, 1920s

Series 3. Office Records, 1905–1998

Contains five subseries: A. Correspondence, B. Letterhead and Business Cards, C. Financial Records, D. Photographs, and E. Published Material on Trinkkeller Commissions.

A. Correspondence, 1929–1946

Contains correspondence to and from clients that is not project-specific, arranged alphabetically by client surname. 3 folders.

Box 2 Folder 4

Hearst, William R. to Ed Trinkkeller, 1929
Blank stationary, Casa del Mar and Casa del Monte

Box 2 Folder 5

Morgan, Julia to Ed Trinkkeller, 1939, 1942

Box 2 Folder 6

Morgan, Julia to Mrs. Ed Trinkkeller, 1946

B. Letterhead and Business Cards, 1920s

Contains Trinkkeller's business cards and stationary. 1 folder.

Box 2 Folder 7

Business cards and stationery, undated

C. Financial Records, 1905–1941

Includes two original account ledgers for the period listing client names, work performed, and amount billed. 4 folders.

Box 2 Folder 8

Property Records, Consuelo and Broderick [now Main St.], City of Los Angeles, 1922

Box 2 Folder 9

Insurance and Customs Records, German bronze statues, 1925–1926

Box 3 Folder 1

Ledger, Payroll and Accounts, 1905–1923

Box 3 Folder 2

Ledger, Accounts, 1923–1941

D. Photographs, 1900s–1920s

Includes black-and-white exterior and interior photographs of Trinkkeller's three Los Angeles ironwork shops during the course of his career from 1896–1942.

Note that the address for the second and third shops is the same as he rebuilt a new structure on the same site. The subseries also contains photos of individual completed ironwork pieces in his studio before placement. 4 folders.

Box 4 Folder 1

First Shop, 8th and Broadway, Los Angeles, CA

Box 4 Folder 2

Second Shop, 1720 S. Main St., Los Angeles, CA

Box 4 Folder 3

Third Shop, 1720 S. Main St., Los Angeles, CA (rebuilt on same site)

Box 4 Folder 4

Wrought Ironwork

E. Published Material on Trinkkeller Commissions (c. 1936–1998)

Contains published materials on Trinkkeller commissions, including the former estate of mine owner John Singleton, which became the Orthopaedic Hospital in Los Angeles and retained the ironwork gates and other decorations crafted by Trinkkeller on its grounds. *The Architectural Digest* Vol. 9, No.3 (c. 1936) features a photo of a Beverly Hills gateway by Trinkkeller (p. 74) and a printed business card ad for him (p. 162). The souvenir publication *The Centennial 1840–1940*, celebrating the history of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, contains photos of Doheny Memorial Library, St. John's Seminary, where Trinkkeller produced iron window grilles. 3 folders.

Box 4 Folder 5

Booklet, *Celebrating 80 Years of Leadership, Excellence & Service*. [Los Angeles] Orthopaedic Hospital, 1998

Box 5 Folder 1

The Architectural Digest, Vol. 9 No.3, c. 1936

Box 5 Folder 2

Archdiocese of Los Angeles. *The Centennial, 1840–1940*

Series 4. Project Records, 1899–1940

Contains three subseries: A. Files, B. Photographs, C. Drawings and Oversize Photographs of Trinkkeller commissions.

A. Project Files, 1899–1940

Contains project files – primarily correspondence, arranged alphabetically by client surname or company name. Folder 3 includes thirteen transcriptions of letters to Julia Morgan and her on-site project managers at San Simeon, Camille Rossi and George Loorz. 4 folders.

Box 6 Folder 1

Correspondence Surnames, A–H

Box 6 Folder 2

Correspondence with Clients Surnames, J–Mi

Box 6 Folder 3

Correspondence with Clients Surnames, Morgan

Box 6 Folder 4

Correspondence with Clients Surnames, N–S

B. Project Photographs, 1920s–1930s

The subseries includes undated black-and-white photographs, exterior and interior views, of Trinkkeller's ironwork commissions. Arranged alphabetically by client surname. The bulk of the subseries is made up of photos of the Morgan

commissions at San Simeon; one photo in Folder 9 has a holographic note from Morgan on the verso. 12 folders.

Box 6 Folder 5
Doheny, Edward L.

Box 6 Folder 6
Farquhar, Robert D.

Box 6 Folder 7
Mitchel, H.

Box 6 Folder 8
Morgan, Julia – Los Angeles Examiner Building

Box 6 Folder 9
Morgan, Julia – San Simeon, Casa Grande

Box 6 Folder 10
Morgan, Julia – San Simeon, "A" House

Box 6 Folder 11
Morgan, Julia – San Simeon, "B" House

Box 6 Folder 12
Morgan, Julia – San Simeon, "C" House

Box 6 Folder 13
Neuhoff, Mrs. Charles

Box 6 Folder 14
Rogers, Mrs. Will

Box 6 Folder 15
Singleton, John, Singleton Court

Box 6 Folder 16
Unidentified ironwork projects

C. Drawings and Oversized Photographs, 1920s, 1930s
Contains sketches, drawings, and oversized photographs of Trinkkeller commissions arranged alphabetically by client name. 4 folders.

Box 7 Folder 1
Banks, Miss M.

Box 7 Folder 2
Beverly-Wilshire Hotel

Box 7 Folder 3
J. J. Haggarty [company]

Box 7 Folder 4
Trinkkeller, Edward

Series 5. Career Assessment, 1961–1999

Contains three subseries: A. Exhibition, B. Publicity, and C. Clippings. Folder 4 contains "List of Ornamental Iron Work by Ed Trinkkeller for Hearst Castle" compiled by his heirs from account ledgers.

A. Exhibitions, 1992–1997

Contains background material on Trinkkeller prepared by his heirs and correspondence with the exhibit curator in preparation for the 1997 exhibition on his work, *Ed Trinkkeller: Gentleman of Iron*. 3 folders.

Box 8 Folder 1

Exhibit Biographical information

Box 8 Folder 2

Correspondence – Curator Mimi Manning and P. E. Trinkkeller, 1992, 1997

Box 8 Folder 3

Exhibit Publicity, 1992, 1997

B. Correspondence, 1961–1987

Contains correspondence between Trinkkeller family members and Hearst Castle staff re Trinkkeller's work at San Simeon. 1 folder.

Box 8 Folder 4

Correspondence – Elsa Trinkkeller, Paul E. Trinkkeller and Hearst–San Simeon State Historical Monument Staff, 1961-62, 1967-68, 1973, 1986-87.

C. Clippings, 1980–1999

Contains clippings from various sources about Julia Morgan's career accomplishments and life. 1 folder.

Box 8 Folder 5

Secondary sources, 1980, 1985, 1992, 1995, 1999.