

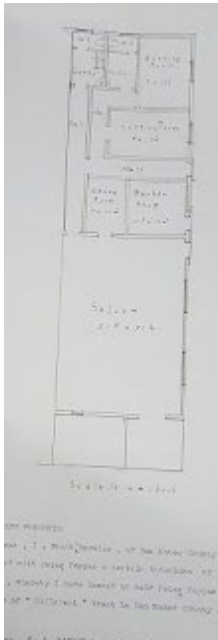
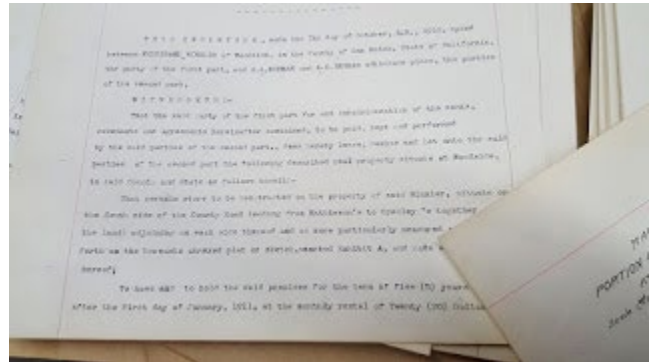
SMCGS Databases Online: Leases



So, you found your family in census records but you can't find a deed? Maybe you haven't found them at all, although the family insists they were in San Mateo County before the turn of the century.

Perhaps they leased the property they farmed or the shop they ran rather, than owning the land or building. The newest addition to the SMCGS database collection is an [Index to Leases](#) from the beginning of the county through 1921. The early leases were recorded in Miscellaneous books but by the 1870's dedicated lease books were used. Occasionally leases were recorded in the Miscellaneous volumes after that date, and a few are found in the Deed books. The lease books end with #9 as does the index we used as the basis for our index. Most likely leases continued to be recorded in either Miscellaneous books or Official Records after that date.

Not every lease was recorded, and many were recorded sometime after they went into effect. Sometimes, there was a problem on one side with meeting the terms of the lease. Other reasons might include: one of the parties assigning their rights to someone else, the surrender of the original lease, or the death of the lessor with the estate taking over. Many properties were continuously leased by the administrators of estates and you will find copies of court permissions to lease said properties in the volumes indexed. Be sure to check who asked for the lease to be recorded as that might give a clue as to the reason it was.



While many of the leases are short and give little information beyond the location of the property, and even that is sometimes missing, others are full of information. The lease of a restaurant or hotel might include a full inventory of every item included in the lease, right down to salt and pepper shakers. Farm leases might include buildings, equipment and livestock. There might be already-sown fields that are not included or agreements that crops would belong to lessee even if the lease was terminated.

Some lucky researchers will find property maps and building plans.

Some individuals can be followed from farm to farm, as they expand operations, change partners or move to a different area of the county.

There are a number of "mineral" and "timber" leases, many of which were "assigned" (transferred to others) numerous times. There are a few equipment leases. Besides a possible description of the equipment, terms often included restrictions on where the equipment could be used.

Our index includes: **Name** of each party and their **Role**, the **Date of the original lease** and the **Date it was recorded**, **Fee book number** if given, **Notes** (description of property, location of additional records, etc.), **record location** (record set (book) Pages). When a corporation or fraternal organization was one of the parties, the principals are included and identified by role, if the corporation or organization appeared to be based in San Mateo County.

