
William G. Merchant Collection, 1934-1941

Collection Number: 1962-2

Environmental Design Archives

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

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Date Completed:

November 1998

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Funding:

Arrangement and description of this collection was funded by a grant from the Getty Foundation.

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: William G. Merchant Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1934-1941

Collection Number: 1962-2

Creator: Merchant, William G., 1889-1962

Extent: 1 box, 7 oversize folders, 6 tubes

Repository: Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Director.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], William G. Merchant Collection, (1962-2), Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design. University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California

Access Points

Architects--California.

Architecture--California.

Golden Gate International Exposition (1939-1940 : San Francisco, Calif.)

Maybeck, Bernard R., 1862-1957

Biography

William G. Merchant was a native of Healdsburg, California, but lived in San Francisco most of his life. In 1909, he graduated from Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts, San Francisco. He received his state certificate to practice architecture on July 6, 1920. His early training was in the offices of Bernard R. Maybeck and John Galen Howard. As Assistant Designer of the Palace of Fine Arts, he worked with Bernard Maybeck in building the Palace for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915. In 1960 he was called upon again to advise on the rehabilitation of the structure (some of his drawings were used during the building's rehabilitation). He also worked with Maybeck on a number of residences

Under the name of W. G. Merchant and Associates, Merchant practiced from approximately 1946 until shortly before his death in 1962. He was a member of the Architectural Commission of Golden Gate International Exposition (1939) and architect for three structures at the Exposition: the Temple of the East, the Pacific Building and the Recreation Building.

Merchant's work included many projects for the Pacific Gas & Electric Company, including the Sub-station at 8th and Mission Street (1957) and the Morro-Bay Power Plant (1953). Some of his San Francisco projects included the San Francisco Medical Society building (1954) and Irving Memorial Blood Bank, San Francisco State College (1951), and the Sailors Union of the Pacific (1946). Also among his projects were the World Trade Center (1946-1957), which was incorporated into the Ferry Building by his firm, the Lick Wilmerding School (1955), and the Acme Brewery (1941-1945). In addition, as consultant for the Recreation and Parks Department he drew up plans for a variety of San Francisco recreational areas and centers, among them were the Chinese and Garfield Recreation centers, the development for the Camp Mather in the Sierras (1952), the masterplan for MacLaren Park (1959), and various swimming pools.

From 1949-1961 he served as Regent of the University of California. In addition, he was president of the Mechanics' Institute, and president of the Downtown Association. As a member of the Board of Governors of the San Francisco Opera Association he designed settings for the annual Opera ball, Fol-De-Rol.

Sources:

"William G. Merchant Dies at 72," San Francisco Chronicle, February 27, 1962.

Biographical Record compiled by the American Institute of Architects, San Francisco, California.

Biographical Record compiled by the California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

Scope and Content

The William G. Merchant papers span the years 1934-1941 and are arranged into four series: Personal Papers, Golden Gate International Exposition, Project Records, and Additional Donations. The collection contains correspondence, reports, drawings, financial records, articles, blueprints and meeting minutes. The papers primarily relate to the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) held in 1939 in San Francisco, California. The drawings are primarily from the GGIE, however there are a few of private residences (one in Sonoma), a mausoleum in San Mateo County and a drawing of St. Mary's Square in San Francisco.

Title: Bernard Maybeck Collection,

Identifier/Call Number: 1956-1,

Contributing Institution: Environmental Design Archives

Box 1

I. Personal Papers, n.d., 1935-1936

Scope and Content Note

Contains an undated photograph of Merchant and correspondence from Bernard Maybeck to Merchant.

Box 1, Flat Files, II. Golden Gate International Exposition, n.d., 1934-1941

Tubes

Scope and Content Note

Contains a variety of materials concerning particular committees and general fair topics. Includes correspondence and documents regarding the early planning for GGIE, reference materials and reports of lectures discussing other fairs, correspondence and contractual agreements with sculptors, and correspondence related to planning for a stadium facility at GGIE.

Also included are reports regarding rules and regulations, correspondence of the Architectural Commission and other GGIE committees, and reports and correspondence created by the San Francisco Recreation Commission. There are also blue prints of the Temple of Music and the Monolith Figures and Sculptural Models at East Towers and Lagoon and a photograph of the Pacific House.

The financial records include GGIE ledger books from 1936-41, the 1939 Bay Exposition Expense Account and the Redwood Empire Expense Account. In addition, there is correspondence regarding Merchant's financial claim against the San Francisco Bay Exposition.

A. Administration

B. Projects

Flat Files, Tubes III. **Project Records, n.d.**

Scope and Content Note

Includes drawings for a residence, (A.J. Callahan), a Mausoleum and Chapel and St. Mary's Square in San Francisco.

IV. Additional Donation, 1940

Scope and Content Note

Bergerot Residence Drawings