



PRESS RELEASE

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ASSESSOR

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A Glimpse into L.A. County's Past through Historic Journals

Los Angeles, CA—In a small library, deep in the basement of the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration, Assessor Jeffrey Prang discovered 20 historic journals that will now become part of the collections at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM). Dating from 1934 to 1951, the red-covered journals are packed with a remarkable collection of handwritten notes, newspaper clippings, Assessor related documents, and personal mementos. These were all compiled by the late D.G. Cathcart, Chief Personal Property Appraiser and Pasadena resident.



“I knew they belonged at the Natural History Museum,” said Assessor Prang. “They offer a fascinating window into life in Los Angeles during the first half of the 20th Century. Mr. Cathcart seemed like a civically engaged person that cared about the political structure and growth of the County. In the journals, he kept articles and comics that dealt with assessment and property tax issues, giving insight into how the Assessor’s Office functioned prior to Proposition 13. In fact, there are many amusing references to how household furniture and even livestock used to be assessed.”

As the County Assessor, Mr. Prang leads that largest assessment agency in the nation, valuing over 2.57 million real estate and business assessments. Known as a history and genealogy buff, Assessor Prang was thrilled to make this discovery. “I recognize the significance of these historical documents and find it remarkable how they capture the evolution of the Assessor’s Office. As a County elected official, it is imperative to know the history of the very area I represent and I encourage all to take a visit to the Museum to view the journals. I’m sure everyone will be just as intrigued and find something related to the area of the County they live in.”



Once the preservation process is complete, the journals will be available to view by appointment at the NHM’s Seaver Center for Western History Research Center.

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