

# Guide to the Malick Family Papers

WA MSS S-1298



by Diane J. Ducharme

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P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-1298

**CREATOR:** Malick family

**TITLE:** Malick family papers

**DATES:** 1848-1869

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers contain letters written by family members in Washington Territory to Mary Ann Malick Albright.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.malick>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.malick>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased in 1965 on the William Robertson Coe Fund for Western Americana.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Malick Family Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Malick Family Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## MALICK FAMILY

George W. Malick ( -1854) m. Abigail J. (1801-1865)

Mary Ann Malick m. Michael Albright

Ann Albright

Homer Albright [boy 1850-1852?]

Esther Abigail Albright (1853?-)

George Albright (1854-)

Charles Malick (-1850?)

Hiram Malick ( -1849)

Rachel Henrietta Malick (1836?-1855) m.1852 John Denormandie Biles

Charles Esmond Biles (1853-)

twins (1855)

Peter Shindel Malick m. 1859 Sarah Armstrong (d. bef. 1865 Jun)

2 children (d. bef. 1865 Jun)

Abigail Jane Malick (1840- )m. 1856 Henry Pearson (-1860)

boy (1858)

Frank E. Pearson (1859-)

Hattie Emma Cornwell (1862- )

Daisy Cornwell (1864-)

girl (1866-)

MALICK FAMILY (cont.)

George W. Malick (-1854) m. Abigail J. (1801-1865)

Nancy Susan Malick (1844?- ) m. 1860 Levant Moulton (-1865)

Nettie Moulton (1866-)

Alonso Hill (1868-)

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## Scope and Contents

The Malick Family Papers consist of 147 letters written by family members in Washington Territory to Mary Ann Malick Albright, the eldest daughter of Homer and Abigail Malick. The principal correspondents are Abigail J. Malick and her second daughter, Rachel Malick Biles, but there are also letters by the younger Malicks and by Rachel's husband John Denormandie Biles. The letters span the dates 1848-1869, and the majority date from between 1851 and 1857.

The Malicks emigrated from Illinois to what was then Oregon Territory in the summer of 1848; the first letter in the collection, by Hiram Malick, describes their preparations. There are no letters documenting their journey, although letters written shortly after their arrival at Fort Vancouver mention the death of Hiram and the difficulties of their trip. The Malicks's letters contain extensive descriptions of the new territory's climate, agriculture, and settlements; the arrival of parties of emigrants; and social life and relations among the settlers, including descriptions of holiday celebrations, weddings, and meetings. They also provide comments on such events as the proclamation of Washington Territory, the disaster of the steamship *Golden Gate*, and the Vancouver fire of 1859. There are frequent lists of wages, prices, and available goods for the entire decade of the 1850s.

Discussion of politics and religion occurs throughout the letters. An 1853 note by George Malick rebukes his son-in-law for "torn[ing] from a wig to a abilishe[n]es." Two early 1855 letters discuss the various churches to which the settlers belonged. Popular suspicion of Mormons is reflected in Abigail Malick's approval of an 1857 attack on Mormon preachers in Olympia because "Mormonism destroys famlies and tricks womin into runing away with them." The letters of John Biles often comment on both national and territorial politics.

Indian relations are another important topic of discussion. A May 1852 letter by John Biles describes the Indian attack on Port Orford and includes a sketch of the battle. Many letters from 1855 and 1856 contain information on the current Indian wars, including descriptions of Snake Indian attacks on emigrants; fighting in the Rogue River Valley, Cascades and the Dalles; and the reactions of the settlers to the news of the conflict. In addition, there are frequent references to Indian servants and farmhands. Abigail Malick was careful to reassure her daughter that the family was in no danger from the Indians: "we heer the Indians holler every hour in the knight passing the rode drunk but we hant afrade of them." She also described the internment of the "friendly Indians" at the end of 1855: "They was as scared as bad as the white people they said they were glad that the white people come for them...but it was not that they card enney thing About them they were Afraid that they would turn traiters and Murder us all."

The papers also amply document the reactions of family members to their changed surroundings and circumstances. Apparently neither wealthy nor well-educated, the Malicks were initially delighted by the new territory. Many early letters urge the Albrights to emigrate, pointing out that "you could make ten dolers whare you can not make one thare, and not frees nor shiver." Rachel Malick Biles wrote in 1854 that "we have plenty to eat, drink, and wear and everything in plenty," while her new husband referred to Washington Territory as "This enterprising country."

The letters of the mid-1850s document a series of difficulties for the family, including the deaths of George Malick and Rachel Malick Biles and John Biles' departure from the Territory. Abigail's letters vividly describe the problems she faced in attempting to farm their claim alone, and a prolonged legal dispute with an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company who claimed title to the Malick's homestead. She comments continually on the scarcity of money, the high prices, and the bad market for grain.

The younger Malick children, however, are the most frequent subjects of Abigail's letters. As she explained in a letter of October 1857: "I have so mutch trouble with the children they are not like children raised in the States." She complained that they refused to help in the farm work and expected her to support them financially. Shindel Malick's fondness for gambling and "flashy cloose" were constant sources of tension, as were his attempts to sell part of her livestock to pay his debts. His marriage in 1859 to an Irish girl did not improve the situation.

Many of the letters from the late 1850s concern the Malick daughters. Susan Malick refused to live with her mother and eloped with Levant Moulton in 1860. Although Abigail supported the marriage at first,

by October of that year she referred to Moulton bitterly as a "worthless wretch" and praised Susan for leaving him. Subsequent letters report Susan's engagement as an "Actress in a Theater Troupe...for \$ 23.00 a week clear of all expenses"; her later attempts to settle in Walla Walla; Moulton's murder in 1865; and her remarriage to a Boise miner.

Abigail's relations with Jane Malick were even more difficult. The letters detail her 1856 marriage to Henry Pearson; his bankruptcy, drinking, and horse-racing; Jane's return to her mother's house with a baby who soon died; and the difficulties of caring for Jane during a violent period of "insanity and the brain fever." Pearson was killed by Indians in October of 1860, and shortly thereafter Jane joined her sister in the "Theater Troupe."

Abigail's final letters describe her ill-health, her desire to sell the claim and move back to Illinois, and her poverty. She died in October 1865. The final letters in the collection are from the younger children and are mostly concerned with personal news and allegations that Shindel mishandled the estate and retained all of the funds.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1848, 1850
b. 1, f. 2-5	Correspondence	1851
b. 1, f. 6-9	Correspondence	1852
b. 1, f. 10-15	Correspondence	1853
b. 1, f. 16-22	Correspondence	1854
b. 1, f. 23-26	Correspondence	1855
b. 1, f. 27-30	Correspondence	1856
b. 1, f. 31-34	Correspondence	1857
b. 1, f. 35	Correspondence	1858
b. 1, f. 36-37	Correspondence	1859
b. 1, f. 38	Correspondence	1860
b. 1, f. 39	Correspondence	1861, 1865
b. 1, f. 40	Correspondence	1866
b. 1, f. 41	Correspondence	1867-69
b. 1, f. 42	Correspondence	n.d.

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Families  
Frontier and pioneer life -- Washington (State)  
Indians, Treatment of -- Washington (State)  
Indians of North America -- Northwest, Pacific  
Indians of North America -- Wars -- 1815-1875  
Marriage  
Mental illness  
Mother and child  
Women  
Women pioneers

### **Geographic Names**

Northwest, Pacific  
Washington (State) -- Economic conditions  
Washington (State) -- History  
Washington (State) -- Social life and customs

### **Occupations**

Farmers -- Washington (State)

### **Names**

Biles, John Denormandie  
Pearson, Henry E.

### **Families**

Malick family