

Yale University Library
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the John W. Dodd Papers

WA MSS S-1300



by Heather L. Holeman

September 1986

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

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition	3
Conditions Governing Access	3
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
JOHN W. DODD	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	6
Box and Folder List, 1845	6
Selected Search Terms	7

Collection Overview

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

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1300

CREATOR: Dodd, John W.

TITLE: John W. Dodd papers

DATES: 1845-1862

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain correspondence and other papers documenting John W. Dodd's service in the Mexican War and the effect the conflict had on his wife Eliza in Marion, Indiana.

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

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 <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.dodd>.

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.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The papers were purchased in 1970 from Edward Eberstadt and Sons on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The John W. Dodd 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.

Preferred Citation

John W. Dodd Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

JOHN W. DODD

In the spring of 1847 John W. Dodd of Marion, Indiana, enlisted for service in the Mexican War, joining Company A, Fourth Regiment of the Indiana Volunteers. He left at home his wife Eliza (b. 1822) and two small children, Kate and Willie (b. spring 1847). Mustered as a lieutenant on May 31, 1847, he traveled with his regiment from Jeffersonville, Indiana, to New Orleans between May 25 and June 3, 1847. The regiment sailed to Brazos Santiago, an island off the coast of southern Texas, in July. Dodd passed through Reynosa, Mier, Vera Cruz, and Perote, before arriving in Puebla, Mexico, in October 1847, where he remained stationed for the remainder of the war. The regiment did not see any combat, except for minor skirmishes with Mexican guerrillas. While stationed at Puebla, Dodd was promoted to adjutant to the regiment in October, assistant adjutant general of the brigade in December, and finally to captain of A Company in April 1848. In March, Dodd sustained an accidental, self-inflicted, gunshot wound in his groin. He left Puebla in June, reached New Orleans by the end of the month, and was formally discharged on July 20, 1848.

Scope and Contents

The John W. Dodd Papers cover the period between 1845 and 1862, but consist primarily of chronologically arranged [correspondence](#) between John W. Dodd and his wife Eliza Dodd from May 1847 to June 1848. The papers are concerned with Dodd's military experiences in the Mexican War and Eliza's feelings of loneliness and apprehension during his absence.

Dodd's early letters describe regimental life, focusing on modes of transport, quartering arrangements, methods of pay, election of officers, and health of the soldiers. In addition, Dodd provides detailed observations of Louisville, Cincinnati, and New Orleans.

From Mexico, Dodd writes about everyday military life, duties as an officer, Mexican guerrillas, and people with whom he associated. Dodd frequently mentions Colonel Willis Arnold Gorman (1816-1876), former Indiana state legislator and future territorial governor of Minnesota, as a fine commanding officer. Dodd, along with Gorman and other officers, traveled to Mexico City on a sightseeing tour in March 1848. Dodd also refers to General Henry Smith Lane (1811-1881), an Indiana Whig who was a staunch supporter of the war. Dodd considered Lane to be politically ambitious and regarded him highly.

Dodd and his wife carry on a dialogue concerning neighbors John Wallace and Oliver and Lois Carey. Wallace, captain of A Company, returned to Marion in September and by so doing suffered disgrace, which led ultimately to his resignation. Dodd and his wife provide insight into public opinion of men who returned home prematurely. The Dodds' discussion of Oliver and Lois Carey contains information on the relationship between the two couples. Eliza writes of Lois's sense of loss and solitude and Dodd of Carey's abandonment of responsibility for those at home.

Dodd described in detail his travels through Mexico. He observed the countryside, cities and towns, and people who inhabited them, thereby giving an excellent picture of life in Mexico during the war. He socialized with the Mexicans at Puebla and attended Mexican dances and dinners. He discussed the Puebla Mexicans' hopes for peace and their civil attitude toward the occupying Americans.

Eliza Dodd's letters are dominated by pleas for her husband's return home and fears about his possible death. She makes only occasional and cryptic references to their children, other family members, or the household. She does, however, describe in some detail the marriage on August 1, 1847, of Dodd's sister Mary. Also contained in the papers is a letter to Dodd from his sister Mary, a letter from an associate A. Staves, a short passage in his daughter Kate's hand, and a letter to Captain John Wallace from Dodd.

Collection Contents

Box and Folder List, 1845

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1845
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1846
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1847 May
b. 1, f. 4-5	Correspondence	1847 Jun
b. 1, f. 6-7	Correspondence	1847 Jul
b. 1, f. 8	Correspondence	1847 Aug
b. 1, f. 9-10	Correspondence	1847 Sept
b. 1, f. 11-12	Correspondence	1847 Oct
b. 1, f. 13	Correspondence	1847 Nov
b. 1, f. 14-15	Correspondence	1847 Dec
b. 1, f. 16-17	Correspondence	1848 Jan
b. 1, f. 18	Correspondence	1848 Feb
b. 1, f. 19	Correspondence	1848 Mar
b. 1, f. 20	Correspondence	1848 Apr
b. 1, f. 21	Correspondence	1848 May
b. 1, f. 22	Correspondence	1848 Jun
b. 1, f. 23	Correspondence	[1849?]
b. 1, f. 24-25	Correspondence: typescripts	1847 Sep-1848 Jun
b. 1, f. 26	Dodd, William: Notre Dame record	1862
b. 1, f. 27	Miscellaneous papers	n.d.
b. 1, f. 28	Miscellaneous envelopes	n.d.
b. 1, f. 29	Letter roll	n.d.

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
Husband and wife
Married women
Mexican War, 1846-1848
Soldiers -- Family relationships
Women

Geographic Names

Indiana -- History -- Mexican War, 1846-1848
Marion (Ind.)
Mexico -- Description and travel
Puebla de Zaragoza (Mexico)

Occupations

Soldiers -- Indiana

Names

Carey, Oliver
Dodd, Eliza, 1822-
Dodd, John W.
Gorman, Willis Arnold, 1816-1876
Lane, Henry Smith, 1811-1881
Wallace, John, fl. 1847

Corporate Bodies

United States. Army. Indiana Regiment, 4th
United States. Army (Military life)