

# Guide to the Joseph Libbey Folsom Collection

WA MSS S-2394



by Diana Smith

December 2000

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
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**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-2394

**CREATOR:** Folsom, Joseph Libbey, 1817-1855

**TITLE:** Joseph Libbey Folsom collection

**DATES:** 1849-1855

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3.02 linear feet (6 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, documents, bills and receipts and writings by or relating to Joseph Libbey Folsom. The collection appears to have been formed by the executors of his estate, the San Francisco firm Halleck, Peachy & Billings. The correspondence contains approximately twenty letters to and from Joseph Folsom. These include correspondence with Suydam, Reed & Co., lawyers in New York who represented Folsom in a legal battle over land in California. There are approximately 150 letters to and from Halleck, Peachy & Billings. Principal correspondents are Peter Morris and James B. Wilson, who write about troubles with squatters, miners, and woodcutters on Folsom estate land. There are approximately 160 leases, many of them duplicates, for property in San Francisco owned by Folsom. The Bills and Receipts, most of them made out to Folsom, record both personal and professional purchases, including daguerreotypes, laundry services, materials used in constructing various buildings. The writings consist of two miscellaneous one page essays, probably by Folsom.

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

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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.folsom>.

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

Gift of Lindley Eberstadt, 1959.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Joseph Libbey Folsom Collection is 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

Joseph Libbey Folsom Collection. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## JOSEPH LIBBEY FOLSOM (1817-1855)

Joseph Libbey Folsom was born May 19, 1817, in New Hampshire. He was a graduate of West Point and went to California in 1846 as Captain and Assistant Quartermaster of Stevenson's Regiment of New York Volunteers. After the Mexican War, he settled in San Francisco and was the Collector of the Port of San Francisco. He invested in real estate in San Francisco and beyond, notably purchasing rights to William A. Leidesdorff's large estate, the Rancho Rio de los Americanos in Sacramento County. Folsom died in San Jose, California on July 19, 1855, at the age of 38. At the time of his death, he was developing Leidesdorff estate land into town lots, and the resulting town, Folsom, was named in his honor. The executor of his estate was the San Francisco law firm Halleck, Peachy & Billings.

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## Scope and Contents

The Joseph Libbey Folsom Collection consists of correspondence, documents, bills and receipts and writings by and relating to Joseph Libbey Folsom, a California pioneer who invested in real estate in San Francisco and beyond soon after gold was discovered in California. The collection appears to have been formed by the executors of his estate, the San Francisco firm Halleck, Peachy & Billings, as it includes both material belonging to Folsom shortly before his death in 1855 as well as material addressed to the executors after his death. The collection is organized into four series: *Correspondence*, *Documents*, *Bills and Receipts* and *Writings*, and spans the dates 1849-1862.

[Series I, Correspondence](#), is organized into three subseries: Joseph Libbey Folsom; Halleck, Peachy & Billings; and Others. The correspondence is organized alphabetically in each subseries; individuals or businesses with more than three letters are listed alphabetically. Folsom's correspondence (including drafts of letters from Folsom) consists of about twenty letters. Among the letters are six between Folsom and Suydam, Reed & Co., lawyers in New York who represented Folsom during his legal battle with Anna Maria Spark, the mother of William A. Leidesdorff, from whom Folsom purchased the rights to Leidesdorff's estate in California. The Halleck, Peachy & Billings subseries contains approximately 150 letters to (and occasional drafts of letters from) the firm. This correspondence concerns Folsom's legal affairs before his death and the disposition of the estate. Principal correspondents with Halleck, Peachy &

Billings include Peter Morris and James B. Wilson. Morris purchased land from the Folsom estate and writes of troubles with squatters and miners encroaching on his lots. Wilson, apparently an administrator of the estate in Folsom, also writes of squatters and problems with woodcutters operating illegally on the estate lands.

[Series II, Documents](#), is organized into two subseries: Leases and Other Papers. There are approximately 160 leases for property in San Francisco owned by Folsom, many of them duplicates. Each lease carries the name of the renter, address, and amount of the rent. Some of the renters are Chinese men, some are women; some leases include other information, such as the one for Samuel Hort which has a schedule of furniture included. The leases for 1851 are made out as indentures between Anna Maria Spark of Saint Croix, Danish West Indies, by her Attorney-in-fact Joseph L. Folsom. The leases have been arranged alphabetically, by name of renter. Those names represented by more than three leases are listed individually.

The Other Papers housed at the end of the series include an account of sale of "grey domestics" (plain cotton cloth) from Leidesdorff's estate, costs claimed in the case of Folsom vs. Sands & Lewis, and proposals to the executors to purchase land in Folsom and on the Rancho Rio de Los Americanos.

[Series III, Financial Papers](#), is organized into Bills and Receipts and Other Financial Papers. The Bills and Receipts are organized into two sections: Joseph Libbey Folsom and Others, and then arranged alphabetically by the name of the individual or business issuing the bill or receipt. Individuals or businesses are listed individually if they are represented by more than three items. The Bills and Receipts record both personal and professional purchases, including daguerreotypes from Hamilton and Starr, the services of R. W. Laine, a night watchman, laundry service by D. Landis, materials used in constructing various buildings Folsom owned in San Francisco, and receipts from the hotel Tehama House, also in San Francisco. Other papers include canceled checks written by both Folsom and the executors.

[Series IV, Writings](#) consists of two miscellaneous one page essays, probably by Folsom.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1849-1860

0.64 linear feet (1.5 boxes)

Series I, *Correspondence* is organized into three subseries: Joseph Libbey Folsom, Halleck, Peachy & Billings, and Others. The correspondence is organized alphabetically in each subseries, with individuals or businesses with more than three letters listed individually.

#### FOLSOM, JOSEPH LIBBEY

b. 1, f. 1	"B" general	1851-52
b. 1, f. 2	"C-H" general	1851-52
b. 1, f. 3	Halleck, Peachy & Billings	1852 Jul 17
b. 1, f. 4	Rogers, L.	1851 Feb 5
b. 1, f. 5	Smith, William L.	1851
b. 1, f. 6	Suydam, Reed & Co.	1851-54
b. 1, f. 7	Tobin & Duncan	1852
b. 1, f. 8	Webb, Henry	1852 Jun 10
b. 1, f. 9	Unidentified	1849 Sep 16

#### HALLECK, PEACHY & BILLINGS

b. 1, f. 10	"A" general	1851-52
b. 1, f. 11	"B" general	1852-56
b. 1, f. 12	Bradley, L.	1857
b. 1, f. 13	"C" general	1853-[60]
b. 1, f. 14	Catlin, A. P.	1857-60
b. 1, f. 15	"D" general	1856-58
b. 1, f. 16	"E" general	1856-57
b. 1, f. 17	"F" general	1855-60
b. 1, f. 18	Forrest, Sallie L.	1855-57
b. 1, f. 19	"G" general	1856
b. 1, f. 20	"H" general	1853-60
b. 1, f. 21	Hartsaugh, D. B.	1857
b. 1, f. 22	Hoskins, E. D.	1857
b. 1, f. 23	Janson Bond & Co.	1856 Feb 6

## HALLECK, PEACHY &amp; BILLINGS (continued)

b. 1, f. 24	Lewis, O. C.	1857
b. 1, f. 25	Livermore, H. G.	1857
b. 1, f. 26	"M" general	1856-57
b. 1, f. 27	Morris, Peter	1857
b. 1, f. 28	"N-R" general	1855-57, n.d.
b. 1, f. 29	"S" general	1856-57
b. 1, f. 30	Smith, William L.	1855-56
b. 1, f. 31	Sunderland, Thomas	1856-57, n.d.
b. 1, f. 32	Suydam, Reed & Co.	1858 Feb 19
b. 2, f. 33	"T" general	1857
b. 2, f. 34	"W" general	1852-60
b. 2, f. 35-36	Wilson, James B.	[1855]-57
b. 2, f. 37	Unidentified	1859, n.d.
b. 2, f. 38	Empty folder	n.d.
OTHERS		
b. 2, f. 39	Correspondence	1849-55

**Series II: Documents, 1850-1859***0.8 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Series II, *Documents*, is organized into two subseries: Leases and Other Papers. The subseries are organized alphabetically; those names represented by more than three leases are listed individually.

## LEASES

b. 2, f. 40	Ackley, J. T.	1851 Aug 29
b. 2, f. 41	"B" general	1851-53
b. 2, f. 42	"C" general	1851
b. 2, f. 43	Engelvaart, John and John Bosboom	1851 Nov 16
b. 2, f. 44	"F" general	1851-53
b. 2, f. 45-47	"H" general	1851-55
b. 2, f. 48	Heddon, James T.	1851-52
b. 2, f. 49	Hobe, George J.	1852-53
b. 2, f. 50	"I-J" general	1850-51
b. 2, f. 51	Jackson, William	1853
b. 2, f. 52	"K" general	1851-55
b. 3, f. 53	"L" general	1851-55
b. 3, f. 54-56	"M" general	1851-55
b. 3, f. 57	"N-O" general	1853-55
b. 3, f. 58	"P" general	1853-54
b. 3, f. 59	"Q-R" general	1851-55
b. 3, f. 60-61	"S" general	1851-55
b. 3, f. 62-63	"T" general	1852-55
b. 3, f. 64	"V" general	1851-52
b. 4, f. 65-66	"W" general	1851-54

## OTHER PAPERS

b. 4, f. 67	Account of sale of grey domestics from Leidesdorff's estate	1850 Aug 17
b. 4, f. 68	Articles of agreement between Folsom and J. H. Atkinson [to build a safe]	n.y. Jun 5
b. 4, f. 69	Costs claimed in the case Folsom vs. Sands & Lewis	1852 Mar 31
b. 4, f. 70	Proposals to purchase land in Folsom and on Rancho Rio De Los Americanos	1856-57
b. 4, f. 71	Settlement of accounts of Folsom's executors	1859 Mar 9



OTHER PAPERS (continued)

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b. 4, f. 72	Subdivision of 50 "Vara" Lots	n.d.
b. 4, f. 73	Miscellaneous documents Stored also in: Oversize, box 6, folder 132	1853-57, n.d.

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**Series III: Financial Papers, 1850-1862***0.66 linear feet (1.5 boxes)*

Series III, *Financial Papers*, is organized into Bills and Receipts and Other Financial Papers. The Bills and Receipts are organized by those belonging to Joseph Libbey Folsom and those belonging to Others. They are arranged alphabetically, with more than three items for an individual or business listed individually.

## BILLS AND RECEIPTS

Folsom, Joseph Libbey

b. 4, f. 74	"A" general	1851-52
b. 4, f. 75	"B" general	1851-52, n.d.
b. 4, f. 76	Barker & Paddock	1852
b. 4, f. 77	Blackburn & Thompson	1851-52, n.d.
b. 4, f. 78	Brittingham & Co.	1851
b. 4, f. 79	Brown, J. H.	1852
b. 4, f. 80	Buckley, John P.	1851-52
b. 4, f. 81	"C" general	1851-55, n.d.
b. 4, f. 82	California Courier	1851
b. 4, f. 83	Cany, E.	1850-51
b. 4, f. 84	Crowne & Travers	1852
b. 4, f. 85	"D" general	1851-52, n.d.
b. 4, f. 86	Dorr, R. S.	1851
b. 4, f. 87	"E" general	1852, n.d.
b. 4, f. 88	Easterly, House and Ship Plumber & Tin and Sheet Iron	1851-52, n.d.
b. 4, f. 89	Eddy, William M.	1851-52, n.d.
b. 4, f. 90	Endicott, Greene & Oakes	1851
b. 4, f. 91	"F" general	1851-52
b. 4, f. 92	Frank Baker	1852
b. 4, f. 93	"G" general	1851-53
b. 4, f. 94	G.O. Whitney	1851-52
b. 4, f. 95	Genella, Joseph	1851-52
b. 4, f. 96	"H" general	1851-52, n.d.
b. 5, f. 97	Halleck, Peachy & Billings	1851-52, n.d.

## BILLS AND RECEIPTS &gt; Folsom, Joseph Libbey (continued)

b. 5, f. 98	"J" general	1851-52
b. 5, f. 99	J. & C. Grant	1852, n.d.
b. 5, f. 100	John S. Eagan	1851-52
b. 5, f. 101	"K" general	1851-52
b. 5, f. 102	"L" general	1851-52
b. 5, f. 103	Laine, R. W.	1852
b. 5, f. 104	Landis, D.	1851-52, n.d.
b. 5, f. 105	"M" general Stored also in: Oversize, box 6, folder 133	1851-52, n.d.
b. 5, f. 106	Macondray & Co.	1851
b. 5, f. 107	Naylor, Peter	1852 Jul 17
b. 5, f. 108	Neagle, William	1851
b. 5, f. 109	"O" general	1851-52
b. 5, f. 110	Onderdonk, G.	1851-52
b. 5, f. 111	"P" general Stored also in: Oversize, box 6, folder 134	1851-54
b. 5, f. 112	"R" general	1851-53
b. 5, f. 113	Roby, William	1851
b. 5, f. 114	"S" general	1851-60, n.d.
b. 5, f. 115	Sanford, F. C.	1851
b. 5, f. 116	Sirick & Co.	1852
b. 5, f. 117	Smith & Wells	1851-52
b. 5, f. 118	Starkweather, McClenachon & Co.	1851
b. 5, f. 119	"T" general	1851-53
b. 5, f. 120	Tehama House	1853-54
b. 5, f. 121	"V" general	1851-52
b. 5, f. 122	"W" general	1852-53
b. 5, f. 123	Wilson's Exchange	1852-55, n.d.
b. 5, f. 124	Wyman & Huntington	n.d.
b. 5, f. 125	"Y-Z" general	n.d.

Others

## BILLS AND RECEIPTS &gt; Others (continued)

b. 5, f. 126	Bills and receipts	1851-52, n.d.
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OTHER FINANCIAL PAPERS

b. 5, f. 127	Canceled checks	1854
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b. 5, f. 128	Canceled checks	1855-62
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b. 5, f. 129	Rates of wharfage	n.d.
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b. 5, f. 130	Miscellaneous papers Stored also in: Oversize, box 6, folder 135	1851-52
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**Series IV: Writings, n.d.**

b. 5, f. 131

Miscellaneous writings

n.d.

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**Oversize***0.92 linear feet (1 box)*

Oversize contains oversize materials from series I and III, arranged in box order.

b. 6, f. 132	Miscellaneous documents (in Series I)	1856-57, n.d.
b. 6, f. 133	"M" general (in Series III)	1851-52, n.d.
b. 6, f. 134	"P" general (in Series III)	1851-54
b. 6, f. 135	Miscellaneous papers (in Series III)	1851-52

## **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**

Real property -- California

### **Geographic Names**

California -- Gold discoveries

San Francisco (Calif.) -- Buildings, structures,  
etc.

San Francisco (Calif.) -- Commerce

### **Genres / Formats**

Leases -- California

Receipts (financial records)

### **Names**

Folsom, Joseph Libbey, 1817-1855

Morris, Peter, fl. 1857

Wilson, James B.

### **Corporate Bodies**

Halleck, Peachy & Billings (San Francisco, Calif.)

Suydam, Reed & Co.