

# Guide to the Gold Rush Collection

WA MSS S-2865



by Alison Clemens

2013, last updated 2019 May

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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-2865

**TITLE:** Gold Rush Collection

**DATES:** 1847-1882

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** This collection encompasses accessions of single letters and small groups of letters and other manuscripts, pertaining to the California Gold Rush, which the library has chosen to group and list as an artificial collection. Letters discuss voyages to the Pacific coast, including journeys through Panama; mining life in California; the inhabitants of California, including Mormons; vigilance committees in San Francisco; and the establishment of a police force in Nevada City, California. Some letters include pictorial letterheads.

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

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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.goldrush>.

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

Collection of documents acquired by gift and purchase from various sources. Source information is recorded in the finding aid or on the folders. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Gold Rush 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

Gold Rush Collection. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection encompasses accessions of single letters and small groups of letters and other manuscripts, pertaining to the California Gold Rush, which the library has chosen to group and list as an artificial collection. Letters discuss voyages to the Pacific coast, including journeys through Panama; mining life in California; the inhabitants of California, including Mormons; vigilance committees in San Francisco; and the establishment of a police force in Nevada City, California.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically by creator.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 31	Baird, Samuel Autograph letter, signed, from Watertown, Wisconsin, to Henry Huntly Haight, later the tenth governor of California, regarding news about Baird's upcoming spring migration to California and his hopes of finding a patronage job.	1849 January 20
b. 1, f. 32	Bullock, J. J. Autograph letter, signed, from Flint Creek, Illinois, to Bullock's brother, telling of the expansion of the rail system in Illinois and of young men in the region preparing to travel to California and Oregon.	1852 February 24
b. 1, f. 33	Colburn, Adeline N. Autograph letter, signed, from Lowell, Massachusetts, to Sylvanus Knowlton, concerning the death of Colburn's uncle while he was sailing to California.	1849 October 19
b. 1, f. 1	Edmunds, A. C. and Cynthia Autograph letters, signed, from A. C. Edmunds from Downieville, California to his family in Michigan concerning his life in California, the Universalist faith, his work as a missionary preacher to Gold Rush miners, and the temperance movement. With three letters to Cynthia Edmunds from unidentified friends, a poem entitled "My Sister's Grave," and unidentified manuscript poems and speeches.	1852-1860
b. 1, f. 2	Field, Edward G. Autograph letters, signed, from Sacramento, California, to Field's sister, commenting on raising hogs during the Gold Rush and the high level of immigration to California.	1852-1854
b. 1, f. 3	Field, Henry B. Autograph letters, signed, from San Francisco to a "Mr. Merriman." The letters concern Field's efforts to sell newspapers, become a merchant, and work as a miner. Field gives lengthy descriptions of the process of mining and the life of miners.	1850
b. 1, f. 4	Fox, Peren V. Autograph letters, signed, from Mariposa, California to Fox's wife Ida, and a letter to Fox from an E. Leland regarding Leland's employment.	1853-1855
b. 1, f. 34	Gregory, D. S. Autograph letter, signed, from Santa Cruz, California, to Judge John McHenry, concerning continued legal issues regarding Gregory's purchase of a Mexican land grant.	1852 August 23
b. 1, f. 5	Hammond, John Henry Typescript copy of a letter from San Francisco to "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Conklin" regarding Hammond's journey to California, especially his travels through Yosemite.	1860
b. 1, f. 6	Hyde, C. C. Autograph letters, signed, from San Francisco concerning Hyde's financial and legal struggles, including his efforts to obtain money he is owed by selling Los Angeles gold stock.	1851

b. 1, f. 7	Jones, George Warren Seventeen autograph letters, signed, to Jones' father from a steamship, Crescent City, California, and Smith River Valley, California. Letters concern mining, lumber, an 1860 massacre at Carson Valley of white people by Native Americans, and Indian rain dances.	1859-1861
b. 1, f. 7a	Kendall, George A. Autograph letter, signed, to his brother-in-law, Benjamin Moors Stanley, describing his life as a miner in Diamond Springs, California, particularly his mining work and social interactions.	[1850?] April 10
b. 1, f. 8	Kerr family Autograph letters, signed, to James and Hetty Ann Kerr from members of the Kerr-Johnston family. Letters describe the Gold Rush, Fort Laramie, Fort Kearney, crossing the plains to California, and mining life.	1850-1853
b. 1, f. 9	Latimer, L. D. Autograph statement, signed, by Latimer as U.S. Attorney, District of California, San Francisco, that no indictment has been found against any persons for collecting the Foreign Miners License Tax.	1877
b. 1, f. 10	Leibee, Daniel Autograph letters, signed, from Peru and Sacramento, Sonora, and San Francisco, California to Leibee's wife and other family members describing mining and life in California, his fellow miners, moving to Peru to mine, religious matters, and the American Civil War.	1850-1866
b. 1, f. 11	Lewis, Joseph E. Autograph letter, signed, to Lewis from an unidentified writer from San Francisco regarding a book order and mining.	1854
b. 1, f. 12	Lippincott, Benjamin S. Autograph letter, signed, from Stockton regarding a local precinct election, with a small sketch of the San Joaquin River and a report of a journey passing the river.	1849
b. 1, f. 13	Lott, Charles F. Autograph letters, signed, from the Steamer Panama, a letter to Lott from an unidentified friend, a 1867 circular on mining claims, a land indenture on Feather River, and an IOU.	1854-1882
b. 1, f. 14	McDougall, Walter Autograph letter, signed, from New York regarding establishing a household in San Francisco and obtaining enough capital to do so.	1849
b. 1, f. 35	McElroy, R. M. Autograph letter, signed, from Murphy's Camp, California, to McElroy's brother, briefly mentioning the business climate and investment in grains.	1853 August 22
b. 1, f. 36	McLellan, Josiah Autograph letter, signed, from Murphy's Camp, California, to McLellan's sisters in Maine, with news about people they know living in California.	1854 October 29
b. 1, f. 15	McRay, Thomas Autograph letter, signed, from San Francisco to a friend about life in California.	1853

b. 1, f. 16	<p>Marcy, William L.</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, from Marcy, U.S. Secretary of War, from Washington, D.C. regarding reports of gold in California.</p>	1849
b. 1, f. 17	<p>Mathews, L. M.</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, from Marysville, California to "Maggie" on economic conditions, getting his photograph taken in a "Photographie Saloon," and attempting to convince "Maggie" to come to California.</p>	1861
b. 1, f. 18	<p>Morrow, William H.</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, to Morrow's sister regarding his life in California and the vigilance movement in San Francisco.</p>	1851
b. 1, f. 19	<p>Morris, William P.</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, from Bristol, Rhode Island to William Bonney, a sailor, regarding gold mania.</p>	1849
b. 1, f. 20	<p>Morrison, John H.</p> <p>Autograph letters, signed, from Rio de Janeiro and San Francisco to Morrison's family regarding his stay in Rio de Janeiro and his voyage to California via Cape Horn, as well as the population explosion and high cost of living in San Francisco.</p>	1849-1850
b. 1, f. 37	<p>Parker, Manuel</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, from San Francisco, California, to Parker's brother, mentioning the San Francisco Fire of 1851 and opportunities to take over operation of a bar on a river steamer.</p>	1851 May 29
b. 1, f. 21	<p>The People of Nevada City to the County Court of Yuba County</p> <p>Autograph petition to establish a police force, written in an unidentified hand and signed by eleven men.</p>	1849
b. 1, f. 22	<p>Pond, Benjamin Franklin</p> <p>Autograph letters, signed, from San Francisco and Greenwood Ranch, California to Pond's parents regarding mob law, violence, and vigilance committees during the Gold Rush, as well as family matters and expenses.</p>	1847-1853
b. 1, f. 23	<p><a href="#">Scranton, Joel G.</a></p> <p>Autograph letters, signed, from Sacramento to Scranton's brother regarding gold, crops, "yellow boys," and a flood.</p>	1852
b. 1, f. 24	<p>Shumway, S. A.</p> <p>Autograph letters, signed, from Georgetown, California concerning Shumway's work in the gold mines.</p>	1853-1854
b. 1, f. 25	<p>Southwick, Benjamin and Lawson</p> <p>Autograph letters, signed, from Sacramento regarding the brothers' business supplying goods to miners, including milk, and Lawson's 1852 death by bilious colic or cholera.</p>	1851-1863
b. 1, f. 25a	<p>Smith, H. P. A.</p> <p>Autograph letter, signed, to James Guthrie, Secretary of the Treasury, Custom House, San Francisco, regarding Smith's work and pay as a clerk in the Custom House</p>	1856 March 19

b. 1, f. 26	Smith, James J. Autograph letter, signed, from San Francisco about the lumber trade and commerce.	1850
b. 1, f. 27	Steele, William Autograph letter, signed, from Sacramento about trying to make his fortune in gold mining.	1849
b. 1, f. 28	Thorndike, A. Autograph letter, signed, from San Francisco to a "Captain I. Snow" about Thorndike's passage to California and arrival in San Francisco.	1851
b. 1, f. 38	Vincent, Achmet Autograph letter, signed, from the Buckeye District in California to Vincent's wife, Mary, providing travel details for Mary and their daughters to join him.	1853 January 4
b. 1, f. 29	Wetmore, E. Autograph letter, signed, from Benicia, California requesting to send \$250 home in gold dust.	1849
b. 1, f. 30	Unidentified Letters from unidentified authors from San Francisco, Panama, New York, and Peoria on a variety of subjects, including mining, a voyage through Panama from New York to San Francisco, a description of the city of San Francisco, and Mormons. Also includes a letter on Levi pictorial letterhead advertising denim pants to miners.	1849-1850
b. 1, f. 39	Unidentified Letter, unsigned, from Mokelumne Hill, California, to "Louisa", the writer's wife, providing justification for mining in California and being separated from family.	1853 June 23



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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

Frontier and pioneer life -- California  
Gold mines and mining -- California  
Indians of North America -- Religion -- 19th century  
Miners -- California  
Mormons -- California  
Overland journeys to the Pacific  
Overland journeys to the Pacific -- 1851  
Vigilance committees -- California -- San Francisco  
Voyages to the Pacific coast

### Geographic Names

California -- Description and travel  
California -- Economic conditions  
California -- Emigration and immigration  
California -- Gold discoveries  
California -- History -- 1846-1850  
California -- Religious life and customs  
California -- Social life and customs -- 19th century  
Murphys (Calif.) -- Description and travel  
Nevada City (Calif.) -- Politics and government  
Panama -- Description and travel  
Sacramento (Calif.) -- Description and travel  
San Francisco (Calif.) -- Description and travel  
San Francisco (Calif.) -- Politics and government  
West (U.S.) -- Description and travel  
Yosemite -- Description and travel  
Yuba County (Calif.) -- Politics and government

### Genres / Formats

Pictorial lettersheets -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century

### Occupations

Miners -- California -- 19th century

### Names

Baird, Samuel, active 1849  
Bullock, J. J.

Colburn, Adeline N.  
Edmunds, A. C.  
Edmunds, Cynthia  
Field, Edward G.  
Field, Henry B.  
Fox, P. V., 1821-  
Gregory, D. S., active 1852  
Guthrie, James, active 1856  
Haight, Henry H., 1825-1878  
Hammond, John Henry, 1833-1890  
Hyde, C. C.  
Jones, George Warren  
Kendall, George A.  
Kerr, Hetty Ann  
Kerr, James, active 1850-1853  
Latimer, L. D.  
Leibee, Daniel  
Lewis, Joseph E.  
Lippincott, Benjamin S.  
Lott, Charles F.  
Marcy, William L. (William Learned), 1786-1857  
Mathews, L. M.  
McDougall, Walter  
McElroy, R. M.  
McHenry, John, 1809-1880  
McLellan, Josiah  
McRay, Thomas  
Morrow, William H.  
Morris, William P., active 1849  
Morrison, John H.  
Parker, Manuel  
Pond, Benjamin Franklin  
Scranton, Joel G.  
Shumway, S. A.  
Smith, H. A. P.  
Smith, James J., active 1850  
Southwick, Benjamin, active 1851-1863  
Southwick, Lawson  
Stanley, Benjamin Moors  
Steele, William, active 1849  
Thorndike, A.  
Vincent, Achmet  
Wetmore, E.