

California Gold Rush Collection
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2011085598>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms015023>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2015
Revised 2023 February

Collection Summary

Title: California Gold Rush Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1849-1900

Bulk Dates: 1849-1854

ID No.: MSS85598

Extent: 30 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: .2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2011085598>

Summary: Correspondence, travel journal, and typescripts of notes by various authors who participated in the California Gold Rush.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Edwards, Ogden Ellery--Correspondence.

Wason, Lyman P. Lyman P. Wason journal. 1849-1852.

Subjects

Gold miners--Correspondence.

Gold mines and mining--California

Indians of North America--Wars--California.

Mines and mineral resources--California.

Mining camps--California.

Pacific Coast Indians, Wars with, 1847-1865.

Voyages and travels.

Voyages to the Pacific coast.

Women's rights.

Places

California--Description and travel.

California--Discovery and exploration.

California--Gold discoveries.

California--History--19th century.

California--Politics and government--19th century.

California--Social life and customs--19th century.

Downieville (Calif.)--Description and travel.

El Dorado County (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Foster's Bar (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Georgetown (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Horn, Cape (Chile)--Description and travel.

Log City (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Mariposa (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Nevada City (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Placerville (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Rose's Bar (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Rough and Ready (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Sacramento (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Saint Joseph (Mo.)--Description and travel.

San Francisco (Calif.)--Description and travel.

Acquisition Information

The California Gold Rush Collection was purchased by the Library of Congress in 2011.

Processing History

The California Gold Rush Collection was arranged and described by Connie L. Cartledge in 2015. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the California Gold Rush Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The California Gold Rush Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, California Gold Rush Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The California Gold Rush Collection spans the years 1849 to 1900, with the bulk of the material dating from 1849 to 1854. It consists of correspondence, a travel journal, and typescripts of notes. The majority of the correspondence is from miners and individuals working in mining camps to family members and friends documenting their experiences during the California Gold Rush. The authors describe the hardships of mining, discuss methods of mining, convey feelings of homesickness at being separated from their families, and relate impressions of mining camps and cities. Towns and camps represented are Downieville, Foster's Bar, Georgetown, Log City, Mariposa, Nevada City, Placerville, Rose's Bar, Rough and Ready, and Sacramento. Also featured is Saint Joseph, Missouri, the starting point for many miners. A letter dated 5 February 1852 by Ogden Ellery Edwards includes an accompanying lithograph illustrating mining techniques and life in mining camps. Also filed with the Edwards correspondence are typescripts of anecdotes by Edwards, circa 1900, about his experiences in California. Other topics referenced in the collection's correspondence are women's rights, California politics, and the Mariposa War between Native Americans and miners. The collection also features a journal of Lyman P. Wason, kept while sailing around Cape Horn to San Francisco, 1849-1852, and while mining for gold at the Georgetown mining camp in El Dorado County, 1850-1852.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material and therein alphabetically by name of person.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Barnes, John B., 1853-1854
BOX 1	Bullock, Melvin, 1860
BOX 1	Edwards, Ogden Ellery, 1851-1852, circa 1900
BOX 1	Gleason, S. W., 1851
BOX 1	Lucy, Simon, 1855
BOX 1	Pope, Alanson, 1849-1854 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Wyman, Edward, 1856
BOX 1	Journal, Lyman P. Wason, 1849-1852 (2 folders)