

Guide to the John White Geary Mexican War Papers

WA MSS S-585



by Diana M. Smith

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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-585

CREATOR: Geary, John White, 1819-1873

TITLE: John White Geary Mexican War papers

DATES: 1846-1848

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.8 linear feet (4 boxes) + 2 broadside folders, 1 rolled item

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondence, military orders, muster rolls, and family material. Letters from John Geary's wife, Margaret, and brother, Edward, reflect political thinking on the national level. There is material from court martial proceedings, including the charges against Capt. Samuel H. Montgomery.

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

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.jwgeary>.

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

Gift of Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The John White Geary Mexican War Papers 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.

Preferred Citation

John White Geary Mexican War Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

Available on microfilm.

Associated Materials

Other Geary collections at the Beinecke are the [John White Geary Papers \(WA MSS 212\)](#), the [John White Geary Business Papers \(WA MSS S-209\)](#), and a letter from Geary to Major General Persifor Smith (WA MSS S-218).

JOHN WHITE GEARY

John White Geary was both soldier and politician; he served in the Mexican War and was later Territorial Governor of Kansas and Governor of Pennsylvania. At the outbreak of the Mexican War, Geary was Captain of the American Highlanders, which were attached to the "Cambria Legion." He and his company joined the 2nd Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers at Pittsburgh, where he was elected Lieutenant Colonel. The regiment arrived at Vera Cruz April 11, 1847, via New Orleans and the Lobos Islands, and participated in Scott's advance to Mexico City. Colonel Roberts, the commander of the Regiment, was in such bad health that his responsibilities were left primarily to Geary. In the attack on Chapultepec Geary led the assault upon the fortress, and was placed in charge of this fortress upon its capture. Geary remained there on duty until the end of the war, being elected Colonel of his regiment on the death of Roberts.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, military orders, muster rolls, and family material. Letters from Geary's wife, Margaret, and brother, Edward, reflect political thinking on the national level. Captain Samuel H. Montgomery, a brother officer, sent letters back to Pennsylvania from Mexico in which he discredited the commander of the 2nd Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, Colonel Roberts, and the officers under him, especially Geary. As these letters appeared in the *Pennsylvania Argus*, which was printed in Geary's home town of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Geary's wife and brother were able to convey the public sentiment and reaction to the letters.

These papers also include a number of courts martial proceedings and sentences, including the charges preferred against Samuel H. Montgomery by Geary. There are also general military orders and reports which list the names of many of the men who deserted, were wounded, or killed in Geary's regiment.

An [appended alphabetical listing of correspondents and dates of their letters](#) is taken from the description of the Geary Mexican War Papers that appears as entry #93 in *A Catalogue of the Frederick W. & Carrie S. Beinecke Collection of Western Americana* compiled by Jeanne M. Goddard and Charles Kritzler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). The correspondence is currently arranged chronologically; this appendix was included to enable readers to identify specific correspondents included in the collection.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence

0.2 linear feet

Series I, *Correspondence*, consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence filed together. Many of the letters are fragile; care should be taken in handling them.

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1846 Dec
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1847 Jan-Mar
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1847 Apr-May
b. 1, f. 4	Correspondence	1847 Jun-Jul
b. 1, f. 5	Correspondence	1847 Sep
b. 1, f. 6	Correspondence	1847 Oct-Dec
b. 1, f. 7	Correspondence	1848 Jan
b. 1, f. 8	Correspondence	1848 Feb
b. 1, f. 9	Correspondence	1848 Mar
b. 1, f. 10	Correspondence	1848 Apr
b. 1, f. 11	Correspondence	1848 May
b. 1, f. 12	Correspondence	1848 Jun-Aug
b. 1, f. 13	Correspondence	1848 Sep-Oct
b. 1, f. 14	Correspondence	1848 Nov-Dec
b. 1, f. 15	Correspondence	n.d.

Series II: Military Papers, 1846-1848*0.4 linear feet*

Series II, *Military Papers*, is arranged by document type. Many of these papers are fragile; care should be taken in handling them.

b. 1, f. 16	Accounts, receipts, refunds	1846
b. 1, f. 17	Accounts, receipts, refunds	1847
b. 1, f. 18	Accounts, receipts, refunds	1848
b. 1, f. 19	Accounts, receipts, refunds Stored also in: Oversize, box 4, folder 64	n.d.
b. 1, f. 20-24	Courts-Martial and Sentences Against	1847
b. 1, f. 25	Courts-Martial and Sentences Against	1848 Apr
b. 1, f. 26	Courts-Martial and Sentences Against	n.d.
b. 2, f. 27-30	Election papers Lists of votes polled for Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel and Major of the Regiment Stored also in: Oversize box 4, folder 65 Stored also in: Oversize broadside, folder 71	1847-48
b. 2, f. 31	List of prisoners	n.d.
b. 2, f. 32-38	Orders	1847
b. 2, f. 39	Orders	1848
b. 2, f. 40	Orders	n.d.
b. 2, f. 41	Promotions and recommendations	1847-48
b. 2, f. 42	Promotions and recommendations Stored also in: Oversize, box 4, folder 66	n.d.
b. 2, f. 43	Reports, morning and monthly Stored also in: Oversize, box 4, folder 67	1847-48, n.d.
b. 2, f. 44-45	Other Reports: absences, desertions, discharges, killed, resigned, sick and wounded	1847
b. 2, f. 46	Other Reports: absences, desertions, discharges, killed, resigned, sick and wounded	1848, n.d.
b. 2, f. 47	Supplies	1847 Dec 27

b. 2, f. 48-50	Regimental rolls Stored also in: Oversize, box 4, folders 68-70 Stored also in: Oversize, broadside folder 72 Stored also in: Oversize, art folder 73	1847-48, n.d.
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Series III: Additional Papers, Date: 1848, 1856*0.2 linear feet*

Series III, *Additional Papers*, is arranged
by format.

WRITINGS BY JOHN WHITE GEARY

b. 3, f. 51	Address delivered to the soldiers of his regiment before its discharge from the Mexican War With typescript	[1848]
b. 3, f. 52	Draft of a political speech in support of Lewis Cass	n.d.
b. 3, f. 53	Draft of a speech on behalf of the "Cambria Volunteers"	n.d.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS

b. 3, f. 54	Petition by Geary for advancement in Masonry	1848 Jul 12
b. 3, f. 55	Second Annual Circular of The Montezuma Society	[1856]
b. 3, f. 56	Mr. Hervey Sparks' calling card	n.d.

PHOTOGRAPHS

b. 3, f. 57-60	Cartes-de-visite	n.d.
b. 3, f. 61-63	Cabinet card photographs	

Oversize*2 linear feet*

Oversize contains material from Series II,
arranged in box order.

b. 4, f. 64	Accounts, receipts, refunds (from Series II)	1846-48, n.d.
b. 4, f. 65	Election papers (from Series II)	1847-48
b. 4, f. 66	Promotions and recommendations (from Series II)	n.d.
b. 4, f. 67	Reports, morning and monthly (from Series II)	1847-48, n.d.
b. 4, f. 68-70	Regimental rolls (from Series II)	1847-48, n.d.
b. bsd, folder 71	Election papers	1847-48
b. bsd, folder 72	Regimental rolls	1847-48, n.d.
b. art, f. 73	Regimental rolls	1847-48, n.d.

Appendix: Alphabetical List of Correspondents

This listing is taken from the description of the Geary Mexican War Papers, entry #93 in *A Catalogue of the Frederick W. & Carrie S. Beinecke Collection of Western Americana* compiled by Jeanne M. Goddard and Charles Kritzler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). The correspondence is currently arranged chronologically; this appendix was included to enable readers to identify specific correspondents within the collection.

Geary, John White. Copy of a letter to General George Gibson. July 20, 1847. Unsigned. 1 p.

---- Letter to Captain J. Hooker. January 31, 1848. 2 pp.

---- Charges and specifications preferred against Captain Samuel H. Montgomery, Assistant Quartermaster, U.S. Army. December 29, 1847. Signed by eight witnesses. 3 pp. With copy. 2 pp.

---- Copy of a letter to Major General Winfield Scott. October 31, 1847. Unsigned. 1 p.

---- Letter to His Excellency Francis Rawn Shunk. December 10, 1846. 1 p.

---- Copy of a letter to Daniel Sturgeon. 1847. Unsigned. 2 pp.

---- Letter to Major General Worth. October 29, 1847. 1 p.

---- Copy of a letter to Major General Worth. [n.d.] Unsigned. 2 pp.

---- Copy of a letter to George C. K. Zahm. [n.d.] Unsigned. 3 pp.

---- Report of the battle of Chapultepec to Lieutenant Lovell. September 15, 1847. 9 pp.

---- Copy of a letter for a plan for the consolidation of the 2d Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. January 20, 1848. Unsigned. 1 p.

---- Anecdote of Santa Anna. [n.d.] Unsigned. 2 pp.

Armstrong, I. L. Letter to Geary. December 13, 1848. 1 p.

Armstrong, James. Letter to Geary. September 14, 1847. 1 p.

Bibb, Titus P. Atticus. Certification that Geary served on the military commission. May 13, 1848. 1 p.

Black, Samuel. Letter to Geary. March 15, 1847. 3 pp.

---- Letter to Colonel Childs, Military Governor of Jalapa. May 25, 1847. 1 p.

Black, Samuel W. Copy of a letter to His Excellency James K. Polk. February 5, 1848. 1p.

Bowman, George W. Letter to Geary. January 13, 1848. 1 p.

---- Letter to Geary. February 14, 1848. 2 pp.

---- Letter to Geary. April 12, 1848. 1 p.

Brindle, William. Letter to Geary. November 14, 1848. 1 p.

Browattan, E. & Co. Letter to Geary. January 25, 1848. 1 p.

Caskey, Robert. Letter to Geary. November 24, 1848. 1 p.

Conrad, James M. Letter to Geary. November 29, 1848. 1 p.

Cresswell, John. Letter to Geary. December 29, 1846. 1 p.

Daniels, Joseph. Letter to Geary. October 28, 1847. 1 p.

Davis, George T. M. Letter to Colonel Roberts. May 13, 1847. 1 p.

Donough, Andrew. Letter to Geary. January 1, 1848. 1 p.

Dutton, Benjamin F. Letter to Geary. August 8, 1848. 1 p.

Everhart, E. V. Letter to Geary. March 1847. 4 pp.

Fairfield, John W. Contract drawn up for chartering the ship General Veazie. January 12, 1847. Signed by Thomas B. Eastland. 4 pp.

Forster, W. Letter to Geary. September 2, 1848. 1 p.

Frick, Clarence H. Letter to Geary. December 13, 1847. 1 p.

---- Letter to Colonel Roberts. April 8, 1847. 1 p.

Geary, Edward R. Sixteen letters to his brother, John W. Geary. December 28, 1846-November 16, 1848. 50 pp.

Geary, Margaret A. Six letters to her husband, John W. Geary. April 8, 1847- May 22, 1848 [n.d.] 16 pp.

Gibson, George. Letter to Geary. December 4, 1847. 1 p.

Graves, R. L. Letter to Assistant Joseph Daniels. October 28, 1847. Signature only. 1 p.

Guthrie, John B. Letter to Geary. June 16, 1848. 2 pp.

Hacker Brother and Company. Two letters to Geary. August 4, October 11, 1848. 2 pp.

Hagner, Peter. Letter to Geary. March 6, 1848. 1 p.

Hambright, Henry A. Letter to Geary concerning the battle of Chapultepec. September 14, 1847. 8 pp.

Hare, Nicholas. Letter to Geary. July 1, 1848. 1 p.

Heistand, I. D. Letter to Geary. January 11, 1847. 1p.

Henry, William. Letter to Geary. July 8, 1848. 2 pp.

Heyer, Charles H. Letter to Geary concerning the wounded at Chapultepec. September 15, 1847. 1 p.

Humphreys, John. Letter to Geary. October 2, 1848. 2 pp.

Irvine, Andrew. Letter to Geary. January 18, 1848. 2 pp.

Jackson, R. M. S. Letter to Geary. December 18, 1848. 1 p.

Jones, Roger Letter to Lieutenant John Keeffe. February 14, 1848. 2 pp.

Klotz, Robert. Letter to Geary. September 5, 1848. 1 p.

Litzinger, Charles. Letter to Geary. May 25, 1848. 2 pp.

Loeser, Thomas S. Form letter filled in to Geary. September 5, 1848. 1 p.

Logan, David. Letter to his brother-in law, J. W. Geary. March 20, 1848. 4 pp.

Logan, William W. Five letters to his brother-in-law, J. W. Geary. January 8- June 8 [n.d.] 14 pp.

McDermitt, James. Letter to Geary. May 20, 1848. 1p.

McFarland, George R. Letter to Geary. May 14, 1848. 3 pp.

McGowan, George. Letter to Geary. May 21, 1848. 1 p.

Mackall, William W. Letter written to Geary for General Worth. November 2, 1847. 1 p.

---- Letter to Geary. November 15, 1847. 1 p.

McKamey, Alexander. Letter to Geary. November 8, 1847. 1 p.

McNamara, Robert. Letter to Geary. June 5, 1848. 1 p.

McWilliams, Peter H. Two letters to Geary. March 15, April 4, 1848. 4 pp.

Madson, Joseph L. Three letters to Geary. October 5, November 8, November 22, 1848. 3 pp.

Miller, F. W. Letter to Colonel Roberts. May 22, 1847. 1 p.

Montgomery, Samuel H. Letter to Geary. December 30, 1846. 1 p.

Moorhead, J. K. Letter to Geary. December 12, 1848. 1 p.

O'Neill, J. C. Letter to Geary. December 14, 1848. 1 p.

Patterson, Robert. Letter to Geary. March 15, 1848. 1 p.

Pearce, John C. Letter to Geary. December 29, 1846. 1 p.

Pennsylvania Infantry. 2d Regiment, 1847-1848. Testimonial that Captain Montgomery's statement, which was printed in the paper about the Regiment, was false. December 9, 1847. Signed by the officers of the Regiment. 3 pp.

Porter, Robert. Letter to Geary. February 27, 1848. 1 p.

Potts, James. Letter to Geary. May 30, 1848. 2 pp.

Reed, Robert H. Letter to Geary. November 14, 1848. 1 p.

Stifley, John. Letter to Geary. October 1848. 1 p.

Thomas, Lorenzo. Copy of a letter to Major O. Cross. May 17, 1848. 1 p.

Todd, Andrew. Letter to Geary. September 5, 1848. 2 pp.

Williams, Edward C. Letter to Geary about the battle of Chapultepec. September 14, 1847. 1 p.

Wilson, S. S. Letter to Geary. May 5, 1847. 1 p.

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

Chapultepec, Battle of, Mexico City, Mexico,
1847
Mexican War, 1846-1848 -- Campaigns
Soldiers -- Pennsylvania

Geographic Names

United States -- Politics and government --
1815-1861

Names

Bowman, George W.
Geary, Edward R., 1811-1886
Geary, John White, 1819-1873
Geary, Margaret A., d. 1853
Logan, William W.
Madson, Joseph L.
Montgomery, Samuel H., d. 1864
Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866
Worth, William Jenkins, 1794-1849

Corporate Body

United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry, 2d