Guide to the Bennet Riley Papers, 1849

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Note
History --History, CaliforniaGeographical (By Place) --CaliforniaHistory --Military History
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**Scope and Content**

The papers in this collection come from various sources. Those in v.1 are originals, five of them purchased from Gelber-Lilienthal by subscription in June 1935. Though the source of the sixth document is unknown, it perhaps came from the Cowan Collection. Some items in v.2 were purchased from John Howell, December 12, 1947; some came from the T. W. Norris collection. Sources, when known, have been noted on the folders. Most of the papers are documents issued while Riley was governor of California. Some were signed for him or countersigned by Henry Wager Halleck, Secretary of State.

**Biography**

Bennet Riley, born in Virginia in 1787, early became a soldier, rising to the rank of Colonel by 1840 and General by 1849. He fought in Florida, distinguished himself in the Mexican war, particularly in the battle of Cerro Gordo. At the end of the war, in the spring of 1849, he was sent to command the Pacific department, with headquarters at Monterey. Appointed military governor of California, he proposed a convention for the purpose of forming a state constitution. He resigned when this was accomplished, staying on at Monterey until July 1850. He then resumed regular army life until his death in Buffalo, New York, in 1853.

### Volume Vol. 1

**Riley, Bennet**

- Appointment of Elisha Oscar Crosby, Prefect for Sacramento. Sept. 27, 1849
- Proclamation to the people of California, Oct. 12, 1849. Re submitting new constitution to vote (photocopy in v.2)
- Proclamation designating Thanksgiving day. Oct. 24, 1849
- Proclamation re ratification of constitution, Dec. 12, 1849 (duplicate copy in v. 2)
- Proclamation in which Riley tenders his resignation. Dec. 20, 1849

**Pico, Antonio María**

- Petition that absence on official business not jeopardize his title to rancho El Pescadero. With signed order by Riley. Dec. 4, 1849

### Volume Vol. 2

**Riley, Bennet**

- Proclamation, in Spanish, calling for election of delegates to constitutional convention (incomplete) June 3, 1849
- Proclamation to people of San Francisco re usurpation of civil powers. June 4, 1849 (photocopy only)
- Proclamation naming Hopeful Toler notary public and translator for San Francisco. Aug. 13, 1849
- Letter to Joseph Hooker, defending actions as Governor of California. Aug. 30, 1849
- Letter to Financial Committee of Constitutional Convention, Sept. 19, 1849
- Letter to Prefect of San Luis Obispo, announcing election of Pablo de la Guerra as representative to the Senate, Nov. 20, 1849 (copy, in Spanish)