Guide to the William Edward Colby Papers, 1892-1964

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The Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, 94720-6000
Phone: (510) 642-6481
Fax: (510) 642-7589
Email: bancoref@library.berkeley.edu
URL: http://bancroft.berkeley.edu
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Guide to the William Edward Colby Papers, 1892-1964

Collection number: BANC MSS C-B 980

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: William Edward Colby Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1892-1964
Collection Number: BANC MSS C-B 980
Creator: Colby, Wm. E. (William Edward), 1875-1964
Extent: Number of containers: 2 boxes, 3 cartons, and 1 oversize folder
Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Abstract: Letters; manuscripts of his writings; notes; reprints and copies of articles; diaries; newspaper clippings, and photographs, relating to the Sierra Club; John Muir; conservation (including material on the recession of Yosemite and the Hetch Hetchy controversy); mining law; his Chinese art collection; and genealogy. Included also: letters (typed transcripts) written by John Muir, mainly to his daughter Helen.
Languages Represented: English
Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], William Edward Colby Papers, BANC MSS C-B 980, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Acquisition Information
The collection of papers was given to the Bancroft Library by Mr. Colby in 1954 and 1959, with additions in 1965 from Mrs. Colby.

Biographical Sketch
William Edward Colby was born in Benicia, California, in 1875. His mother, Caroline Amelia (Smith) Colby, had been a teacher in the Young Ladies Seminary, and his father, Gilbert Winslow Colby, was a `49er, merchant, state assemblyman and state senator. After attending public schools in Benicia and Berkeley, Colby was graduated from the Hastings College of Law in 1898. He began his practice in San Francisco and soon specialized in mining law. From 1911 to 1937 he taught mining and water law at the University of California. He wrote numerous articles on the subject, compiling a valuable library as well.

Scope and Content
Colby's life-long connection with conservation resulted primarily from his first trip into the Sierra in 1894. In 1900 he was elected secretary of the Sierra Club. This brought him into close personal contact with John Muir, the club's founder and president. In 1901 they founded the annual high trip into the Sierra, which Colby led, after Muir's death in 1914. In his long association with the Club, which lasted until his death in 1964, Colby served as secretary, as president, and, from 1950, as honorary president.

His continued interest in conservation was evidenced by his membership on the State Park Commission, of which he was chairman from 1927 to 1936, the Save-the-Redwoods League, and the Yosemite Advisory Board.

Portraits have been removed and cataloged separately (Colby, 13671-13689; Muir, 13697-13733).

A key to arrangement follows.

Box 1
Scope and Content Note

Box 1-2
Letters written to Colby.
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization. Most letters concern the Sierra Club, John Muir, and conservation. At the end is a bound volume - Letters to Will Colby from the Sierra Club, 1955, on his 80th birthday. A partial list of correspondents follows the key to arrangement.

Carton 1
Diaries (1943-1947)
Scope and Content Note
Manuscripts of his writings, articles, notes, newspaper clippings; personalia; miscellany
John Muir material
Scope and Content Note
Typed transcript of letter to Charles Warren Stoddard, 187(?), and draft of letter to Secretary of the Interior, 1906(?), letters (typed copies) to his daughter Helen, 1903-1914 (bound volume); articles by Colby, and others; newspaper clippings; miscellany.
Processing/Project Information
Originals of transcripts of Muir letters to Helen Colby are in BANC MSS C-H 101.

Law
Scope and Content Note
Notes, articles, reprints, copies of court decisions, lecture notes, etc., on mining and water law.

Genealogy
Scope and Content Note
Biographical and genealogical data re the Colby and Smith families; Diaries and letters (copies) of Caroline Amelia (Smith) Colby.

Material relating to Colby's collection of Chinese art
Scope and Content Note
Invoices, receipts, articles, catalogs, photographs, etc.

Certificates of admission to practice as an attorney in various courts in Calif., Nev., and Utah, 1898-1929.
Scope and Content Note
6 items.

A Miscellany
Andrews, Ernest Clayton (1870-)
Letter, May 11, 1917.
Adams, Ansel Easton, 1902-
Albright, Horace Marden, 1890-
8 letters, 1949-1964.
Alvarez, Walter Clement, 1884-
2 letters, 1955.

B - Miscellany
Ballinger, Richard Achilles
Baruch, Bernard Mannes (1870-)
Letter, Dec. 8, 1933.
Bender, Albert Maurice (1866-1941)
Letter, n.d.
Blake, Anson Stiles (1870-1959)
Boone & Crockett Club
Letter, Mar. 7, 1919.
Bradley, Harold Cornelius (1878-)
Buwalda, John Peter (1886-1954)
Blackwater, Eliot, 1880-
Bracelin, Nina Floy
2 letters, 1955.
Brower, David Ross, 1912-

Additional Note
Letter dated 1964 written by his wife.

Buwalda, Imra (Wann), 1894- (Mrs. John Peter Buwalda)

C - Miscellany
California. University. Regents

Curtis, George Carroll
Letter, April 18, 1911.

Century Co.
8 letters, 1911-1912.

Additional Note
Concern John Muir's Book on Yosemite Valley.

Colby, Helen Leach (Flemming) (Mrs. W. E. Colby)
2 letters, 1965. Written to Bancroft Library.

Crocker, William Willard, 1893-
See San Francisco. Museum of Art

D - Miscellany
Douglas, William Orville (1898-)

De Lipkau, Jean (Hanna) (Granddaughter of John Muir)

Additional Note
Letter dated 1957 concerns dedication of John Muir Memorial Park in Wisconsin.

E - Miscellany
Engle, Clair (1911-1964)

Englebright, William F.

English, William Augustus (1907-)
Letter, Feb. 6, 1954.

F - Miscellany
Flint, Frank Putnam
Letter, Mar. 1, 1911.

Foster, Kenneth E.
3 letters, 1947-1948.

Funk, Helen (Muir), 1886- (Daughter of John Muir)

G - Miscellany
Garfield, James Rudolph
Letter, Feb. 9, 1909.

Goethe, Charles Matthias (1875-)

Greenleaf, Charles Ravenscroft (1838-1911)
Letter, Apr. 23, 1906.

Additional Note
Requesting army to allow Colby to enter his office after the earthquake.

Gutenberg, Beno (1889-)

H - Miscellany
Hartzog, George B.  

Hatch, Philander Ellsworth (1861- )  

Hanna, Richard Rea, 1912- (Grandson of John Muir)  

Hanna, Wanda (Muir), 1881-1942 (Daughter of John Muir)  
3 letters, 1911-1915.

Hoover, Herbert Clark, 1874-1964  
3 letters, 1928-1935.

Hoover, Lou (Henry) D., 1944  
3 letters, 1920-1935 & n.d.

Hubbard, Douglass H.  
See Yosemite Natural History Association

Huber, Walter Leroy, 1883-  

Johnson, Robert Underwood, 1853-1937  
2 letters, 1915.

K - Miscellany

Kasch, Charles  

Knowland, Joseph Russell (1873-1966)  
Letter, Dec. 11, 1936.

Kittredge, Frank Alvah  
2 letters, 1953.

La Follette, Robert Marion  
2 letters, 1913.

Lee, Shao Chang, 1891-  
3 letters, 1940-1955.

Leonard, Richard Manning, 1908-  

Lindley, Curtis Holbrook, 1850-1920  
2 letters, 1917-1918.

M - Miscellany

McAdoo, William Gibbs (1863-1941)  
Letter, Nov. 27, 1936.

McKay, Douglas (1893-1959)  
Telegram, May 6, 1955.

Matthers, Francois Emile  
Letter, Mar. 28, 1911.

Merriam, Frank Finley (1865-1955)  
Letter, Nov. 20, 1936.

Miller, Henry (1891-)  

Morley, Grace Louise (McCann) (1900-)  
Letter, Feb. 8, 1936.

Additional Note  
Written as curator, San Francisco Museum of Art

McFarland, John Horace, 1859-1948  
4 letters, 1912-1929.

McLaughlin, Emma (Moffat), 1880-1968 (Mrs. Alfred McLaughlin)  

Marshall, Robert Bradford, 1867-1949  
6 letters, 1910-1916.

Mather, Stephen Tung  
4 letters, 1909-1913.
Mauk, Charlotte E.
2 letters, 1949-1964.
Additional Note
Letter dated 1949 written to Mrs. Vernon Kellogg & includes typed copies of letters written to her by John Muir, 1907-1914.

Mills, Enos Abijah, 1870-1922
3 letters, 1912-1915.

Mills College, Oakland
2 letters, 1937. Written by Aurelia (Henry) Reinhardt.

Muir, John, 1838-1914
93 letters, 1892-1914 & n.d.
Additional Note
Typed transcripts. Letters (2) dated 1892 written to Prof. J. H. Senger.
See also Mauk, Charlotte E.
See also volume of typed transcripts of letters to his daughter, Helen, in carton 1.

Newhall, Nancy (Wynne)
Additional Note
Letter dated 1964 written to Mrs. Colby.

P - Miscellany
Patrons of Husbandry
Letter, Aug. 19, 1958. Written by George Sehlmeyer, Master

Pinchot, Gifford

Plimpton, Russell Arthur (1891-)
Letter, Sept. 1, 1942.

Palmer, Paul, 1900-
Additional Note
Concern Muir article for Reader's Digest.

Preston, John C.

R - Miscellany
Rockefeller, John Davison (1874-1960)
Letter, Aug. 29, 1931.

Reinhardt, Aurelia (Henry), 1877-1948
See Mills College, Oakland

S - Miscellany
San Francisco. Museum of Art
Letter, Dec. 11, 1936.
Additional Note
Typed transcript, written by W. W. Crocker, Pres. Board of Trustees.

Sargent, Shirley
Letter, Feb. 6, 1963

Searls, Fred (1887-1968)
Letter, July 13, 1918.

Searls, Robert McMurray (1886-)
Letter, Apr. 11, 1950.

Seth, Julien Orem (1883-)
Partial List of Correspondents

Sharp, Robert Phillip (1911-)
Smith, Sylvester Clark
  Letter, Feb. 9, 1911.
Sproul, Robert Gordon (1891-)
Sutherland, George (1862-1942)
Sutro, Oscar (1874-1935)
  Letter, June 16, 193[4].
Sierra Club, San Francisco
  Additional Note
    Letter dated Apr. 30 includes first day cover of the John Muir 5 c stamp.
Taylor, Frank J., 1894-1961
  Additional Note
    Concern Muir article for Reader's Digest.
Thompson, Wandalee
Udall, Stewart Lee, 1920-
Underhill, Robert M.
See California University. Regents
W - Miscellany
  Warren, Earl (1891-)
    Letter, Nov. 20, 1964. Written to Mrs. Colby
  White, John Roberts (1879-)
    Letter, Aug. 16, 1937.
    Additional Note
      Written as Supt. Sequoia National Park.
Westley, Volney J.
  2 letters, 1952.
  Additional Note
    Concern Tioga Road Controversy.
Wilson, George Warren
Winkley, John W.
  4 letters, 1964.
  Additional Note
Wirth, Conrad Louis, 1899-
Wolfe, Linnie (Marsh), 1881-1945
  4 letters, 1938-1945.
X-Y-Z - Miscellany & unidentified
  Young, Clement Calhoun (1869-1947)
    Letter, Nov. 17, 1928.
Yosemite Natural History Association