Finding Aid to the Fremont Family Collection MS.217

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Finding Aid to the Fremont Family Collection MS.217

Title: Fremont Family Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS.217
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Autry Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 3.6 Linear feet (3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1836-1960
Language: English, French, German, Latin.
Abstract: John Charles Fremont (1813-1890) was an American military officer during the Civil War, explorer of the Western United States, United States presidential candidate and an opponent of slavery. Fremont’s wife, Jessie Benton Fremont (1824-1902) was an American writer and daughter of Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton. Their firstborn daughter Elizabeth (Lily) Benton Fremont (1842-1919) participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles in 1912. This collection of papers was compiled from donations from Elizabeth B. Fremont, as well as Southwest Museum curatorial and library staff, with documents spanning from 1836-1919. Materials include correspondence, etchings, certificates, manuscripts, maps, and newspaper clippings by and about members of the John C. Fremont family.
creator: Benton, Thomas Hart, 1782-1858
creator: Frémont Family
creator: Frémont, Jessie Benton, 1824-1902
creator: Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890
creator: Frémont, Lily, b. 1842
creator: Lummis, Charles Fletcher, 1859-1928.
Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application or contact library staff at rroom@theautry.org. An item-level inventory is available from library staff.
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Preferred citation
Fremont Family Collection, 1836-1960, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.217; [folder number] [folder title][date].
Processing history
Initial processing by Braun Library Staff. Finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Project Archivist, August 28, 2012, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).
Scope and contents
This collection of papers was compiled from donations from Elizabeth B. Fremont, as well as Southwest Museum curatorial and library staff.
The majority of the materials in Box 1 span from 1836-1919 and include correspondence, etchings, certificates, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, and other papers either generated by John C. Fremont, Jessie B. Fremont, or Elizabeth B. Fremont, or dealing directly with one of the members of the Fremont family. These materials include a political songbook from John C. Fremont’s campaign for presidency, and two federal reports made to the Secretary of the Interior by John C. Fremont as Governor of the Arizona territory in 1878 and 1879.
Materials in Box 1 date mostly from 1901 and 1957 and are mostly comprised of biographical articles and newspaper clippings written about the members of the Fremont family.
Box 3 contains oversized items, including maps that John C. Fremont drew from his expeditions in the Western United States, certificates for honorary memberships for John C. Fremont, and military commissions from the Presidents of the United States of America, documenting John C. Fremont’s military promotions between 1838 and 1890.
Box 1: Primary resource materials
Box 2: Biographical publications
Box 3: Oversize items
Acquisition
Donation by Elizabeth Benton Frémont and others, 1915-1960.

Biographical note
John Charles Frémont, born January 12, 1813 in Savannah, Georgia, was an American military officer, explorer, United States presidential candidate, and an opponent of slavery. In 1838, Frémont was appointed Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, and he led expeditions through the western part of the United States. From 1842 to 1846, Frémont led expeditions through the Oregon Trail and the Sierra Nevada mountain range, leading to the San Joaquin Valley. His journals of these expeditions, especially the second, were wildly popular. The accounts of the two expeditions were printed together for the Congress as *Report of the Exploring Expedition in the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the years 1843-1844*. Frémont was also involved in gold mining in California but this venture eventually foundered. Frémont’s most notable political accomplishments include serving as one of California’s first two U.S. senators from 1850-1851 and being governor of the Arizona Territory from 1878-1881. Frémont died July 13, 1890 at the age of 77. Frémont married United States senator Thomas Hart Benton’s daughter Jessie in 1841. Jessie B. Frémont, born May 31, 1824, was an American writer who supplemented the family income as a freelance writer. Some of Jessie’s most popular publications were memoirs of her time accompanying her husband on his expeditions in the American West. Jessie Benton Frémont died December 27, 1902. Their daughter Elizabeth (Lily) Benton Frémont was born November 15, 1842 and died May 28, 1919.

John C. Frémont purchased land in the San Francisco Bay Area known as Black Point and built a house there for his family around 1860. When the Civil War started, the military claimed the land at Black Point, now Fort Mason, and the Frémonts were never reimbursed for their land. Future generations of the Frémont family, including grandson Benton Frémont, continued to fight for payment for the estate.

After John C. Frémont’s death, Jessie and Elizabeth Frémont settled in Los Angeles. They became friends with Charles F. Lummis, who also tried to fight on their behalf for the money owed them by the U.S. government. Because of her relationship with Lummis, Elizabeth Frémont had a great role in the ground-breaking ceremony at the Southwest Museum on November 16, 1912. Elizabeth had the flag her father had raised on the crest of the Rocky Mountains in 1842, and she donated it to the Southwest Society in 1905, as a gift for the forthcoming Southwest Museum. At the groundbreaking ceremony for the museum in 1912, Elizabeth Frémont raised this flag and then turned over the first shovel of earth for the actual breaking of ground for the Southwest Museum building.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Frémont Family
Frémont, Jessie Benton, 1824-1902
Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890
Southwest Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Arizona Territory
Certificates
Clippings
Correspondence
Etchings
Explorers -- West (U.S.)
Manuscripts
Maps
Presidential candidates
Presidents -- Elections
Songbooks
United States. Army -- History
West (U.S.) -- Discovery and exploration

Box 1, Folder 1
A bond between John C. Frémont and Charles Gould, 1857

Box 1, Folder 2
Manuscript regarding restoration of rank in the regular army, undated

Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence - Envelope to John C. Frémont from Benton Via Carson, 1847
Box 1, Folder 4  "Cashier d'Observations Astronomiques" 1838ff, 1838
   Language of Material: French
   Scope and contents
   Niccollet and Fremont's notebook of astronomical observations while on a survey of the upper Missouri expedition of 1838.

Box 1, Folder 5  Correspondence - from Benton regarding trial, 1842
Box 1, Folder 6  Correspondence - Thomas Hart Benton to John C. Fremont regarding the Fremont family, 1847
Box 1, Folder 7  Correspondence - Benton to Abert suggesting John C. Fremont go to South Pass, 1842
Box 1, Folder 8  Thanksgiving proclamation by John C. Fremont, as Governor of Arizona Territory, 1879
Box 1, Folder 9  Correspondence - Letters regarding the Lost Cannon, 1887, 1949
   Physical Description: 2.0 letters
   Separated materials
   Photo transferred to Photo Archives, 1986 September 23.
   Scope and contents
   Correspondence from P. B. Ellis to Captain A. W. Pray, 1887 April 26; Correspondence from Art Woodward to F. W. Hodge, 1949 March 25.

Box 1, Folder 10  Correspondence - Grand Army of the Republic memorial resolution, 1890
Box 1, Folder 11  Correspondence and decoration of Merit for Sciences to John C. Fremont from the Prince Regent of Prussia, 1860-1886
   Language: English, French, German.

Box 1, Folder 12  Correspondence - Envelope from Jessie Benton Fremont to "Governor Fremont," undated
Box 1, Folder 13  Commission to rank of Major General vide #49, 1890
   General Physical Description note: Photo copy

Box 1, Folder 14  Pencil sketch of John C. Fremont by Frank Carpenter, undated
   Acquisition
   Donation from Charles Elmer Bond, 1918 October 30.
   Scope and contents
   Accession card note: Original sketch of John Charles Fremont in War times in Washington, by Frank Carpenter (Painter of Lincoln's Emancipation picture, in Washington. The original of the Fremont picture is also in Washington). 2 1/2" x 3 1/2", face indistinct.

Box 1, Folder 15  Swatch of crocheted lace, undated
Box 1, Folder 16  Campaign ribbons, 1856, undated
   Scope and contents
   1856 ribbon for Fremont and Wm. Dayton; undated for Junior Fremont Club.

Box 1, Folder 17  "Gen. Fremont, wife, and daughter at the Fremont Redwood" postcard, 1917
Box 1, Folder 18  Manuscript of declaration by Elizabeth Benton Fremont at donation of the flag to the Southwest Museum, 1912
Box 1, Folder 19  Special Order number 100, Headquarters of the Army, United States of America, to retire Major General John C. Fremont from active duty, 1890
Box 1, Folder 20  Note - John C. Fremont apology regarding charges, 1886
Box 1, Folder 21  John C. Fremont signature, 1844
   General note
   Clipped from an unidentified piece of correspondence.
Box 1, Folder 22  Reprint from Southern Californian No. 72: Supreme Court of the United States, 1854 December
   Scope and contents
   Regarding John C. Fremont versus the United States of America for a private land claim in California.

Box 1, Folder 23  Correspondence - John C. Fremont to Dr. Torrey, 1844
Box 1, Folder 24  John C. Fremont contract engaging Honore Ayot, 1842
   Acquisition
   Donation from Elizabeth Benton Fremont, 1905 October 31.

Box 1, Folder 25  Correspondence - Thomas Hart Benton to John C. Fremont, 1847 October 14
Box 1, Folder 26  Correspondence - Thomas Hart Benton to John C. Fremont, 1847 October 7
Box 1, Folder 27  Correspondence - Jessie Fremont to John C. Fremont and clipping regarding death of Godey, 1889 January
Box 1, Folder 28  Note for $182.31 to Dr. Marcus Whitman, 1843
Box 1, Folder 29  Envelope addressed to John C. Fremont with note on reverse, 1887
Box 1, Folder 30  Manuscript titled Captain de Arnaud, undated
Box 1, Folder 31  Photostat of a note from Jessie Fremont to Mr. Field, undated
   Acquisition
   Donation from Alice Eyre.

Box 1, Folder 32  Correspondence - Typed letter E.M. David to Jessie Fremont, 1886
Box 1, Folder 33  Correspondence - Letter of introduction, John C. Fremont from fur trader Pierre Chouteau, 1843
Box 1, Folder 34  John C. Fremont's commission as Major General USA vide #13, 1890
Box 1, Folder 35  Correspondence - John C. Fremont to John Torrey, 1845
Box 1, Folder 36  Correspondence - Thomas Hart Benton to John C. Fremont regarding the trial, 1847
Box 1, Folder 37  Typed version of John C. Fremont's farewell to his troops, 1861
Box 1, Folder 38  Verses written by John C. Fremont, 1875
   Scope and contents
   Verses are regarding crossing the Rockies, thirty-three years earlier than the writing.

Box 1, Folder 39  Proofs of the Senate Record regarding John C. Fremont's expedition to the Rockies, 1843
Box 1, Folder 40  Engraving of John C. Fremont profile, undated
   Physical Characteristics Note
   Matte and engraving both torn.

Box 1, Folder 41  Fremont campaign envelopes, undated
   Physical Description: 3.0 envelopes
Box 1, Folder 42  Correspondence regarding John C. Fremont's commissions, 1886
Box 1, Folder 43  Photostat of 1847 letter mentioning John C. Fremont and Abel Stearns, undated
   Acquisition
   Donation from H. R. Wagner, 1932.

Box 1, Folder 44  Engravings of John C. Fremont, 1862, undated
   Scope and contents
   Lithograph by Alonzo Chappel, published by Johnson, Fry & Co., 1862; Engraving by J. C. Buttre, created for Rebellion Record, G. P. Putnam, undated.
   Acquisition
   Chappel engraving, donated by F. W. Hodge, 1936 October; Buttre engraving, from Fenyes Collection.
Box 1, Folder 45  
**Correspondence** - unknown author on behalf of Jessie Benton Fremont and daughter, undated

Box 1, Folder 46  
**Newspaper clippings regarding the military reduction of son Francis**, 1907-1908

Box 1, Folder 47  
**Newspaper clippings regarding John C. Fremont’s idea to flood the California desert**, 1879

Box 1, Folder 48  
**Newspaper clipping mentioning John C. Fremont in the Mexican War**, undated

Box 1, Folder 49  
**Newspaper clipping regarding John C. Fremont in California before Castro**, undated

Box 1, Folder 50  
**Newspaper clipping of article by Putnam regarding John C. Fremont’s promotion to Lt. Col.**, undated

Box 1, Folder 51  
The Fremont Songster political song book, New York: P. J. Cozans, 1856

Box 1, Folder 52  
**Correspondence** - Elizabeth B. Fremont to Charles F. Lummis, 1916

Box 1, Folder 53  
**Correspondence** - Charles F. Lummis to Elizabeth B. Fremont, 1917

Box 1, Folder 54  
**Correspondence** - Elizabeth B. Fremont to Charles F. Lummis, 1907

Box 1, Folder 55  
**Correspondence** - Elizabeth B. Fremont to Charles F. Lummis, undated

Box 1, Folder 56  
**Correspondence** - Elizabeth B. Fremont and Charles F. Lummis, 1916

Box 1, Folder 57  
**Photo postcard** - Elizabeth B. Fremont to Charles F. Lummis, 1910

Box 1, Folder 58  
**Copy of Senate document introduced regarding title to land**, 1901 December 12

Box 1, Folder 59  
**Correspondence** - Elizabeth B. Fremont to Charles F. Lummis, undated

Box 1, Folder 60  
**Correspondence** - Copy of letter from Charles F. Lummis to President Theodore Roosevelt, 1903

Arrangement note
Previously housed with items in Box 2, Folder 1.

Box 1, Folder 61  
**Copies of Resolution by California Federation of Women’s Clubs to settle the Fremont claim**, undated

Box 1, Folder 62  
**John C. Fremont’s message to the 10th legislative assembly**, 1879

Acquisition
From the Munk Library of Arizoniana.

Box 1, Folder 63  
**John C. Fremont’s diploma of graduation from Charleston College**, 1836

Language of Material: Latin

Physical Description: 2.0 copies

Box 1, Folder 64  
**Col. Fremont Not a Roman Catholic** pamphlet, undated

Box 1, Folder 65  
**“JCF” verse manuscript**, 1890

Box 1, Folder 66  
**Fremont Glee Club: newspaper clipping, photostats, and correspondence**, 1901-1902

Box 1, Folder 67  
**“California and Fremont” by Jessie B. Fremont, 1895 December**

Scope and contents
Clipping from The Land of Sunshine Vol. IV, no. 1, December 1895.

Acquisition
From the Munk Library of Arizoniana.

Box 1, Folder 68  
**“Souvenirs of My Time” by Jessie B. Fremont, 1884 October**

Scope and contents
Clipping from Chautauqua Young Folks' Journal Vol. 1, Number 1, October 1884.

Box 1, Folder 69  
**Printed pamphlet regarding Fremont land in San Francisco**, undated

Box 1, Folder 70  
**Elizabeth B. Fremont’s calling card**, undated

Box 1, Folder 71  
**Postal sleeve bearing Elizabeth Benton Fremont and John Charles Fremont, Jr.’s names and address**, undated

Box 1, Folder 72  
**Small envelope bearing the words “Fremont’s promotion,”** undated
Box 1, Folder 73  "My Arizona Class" by Jessie B. Fremont, 1883 November
Scope and contents
Manuscript clipping from Wide Awake Vol. 17, Number 6, November 1883.
Acquisition
From Munk Library of Arizoniana.

Box 1, Folder 74  Correspondence and photographs of Jessie B. Fremont to Mr. Wm H. Whiton, 1895
Box 1, Folder 75  Correspondence - Charles Fletcher Lummis with Fremont family members, 1899-1917
Box 1, Folder 76  Fremont Miscellany, 1940, undated
Scope and contents
Includes correspondence from Mrs. Lee A. Phillips to Mrs. Britton regarding Charles Fletcher Lummis and Jessie Benton Fremont, undated; newspaper clipping, 1940; Lummis notes on poem to Elizabeth Benton Fremont, undated.

Box 1, Folder 77  Elizabeth Benton Fremont obituaries, 1919
Box 1, Folder 78  Correspondence - Kansas State Historical Society to John C. Fremont, 1887 January 22
Arrangement note
The certificate accompanying this letter is in Box 3, Folder 1.

Box 1, Folder 79  Report of the Governor of Arizona by John C. Fremont, 1878, 1879
Physical Description: 2.0 reports

Box 2, Folder 1  Newspaper clippings regarding Fremont claim to Fort Mason land, undated
Arrangement note
Previously housed with items in Box 1, Folder 60.

Box 2, Folder 2  Newspaper clippings regarding the Fremont property at Fort Mason and the death of John C. Fremont's grandson Benton Fremont, 1960
Box 2, Folder 3  Newspaper clipping on Santa Barbara Headquarters building, undated
Box 2, Folder 4  "A Man Unafraid" book review, 1927
Box 2, Folder 5  Newspaper clipping regarding dedication of John C. Fremont bust in Oakland, 1911
Box 2, Folder 6  Newspaper clippings on Fremont relics to Southwest Museum by Charles F. Lummis, 1905, undated
Physical Description: 2.0 sets

Box 2, Folder 7  Newspaper clippings regarding plaque for Fremont headquarters in Santa Barbara, 1929-1931
Box 2, Folder 8  Newspaper clipping regarding "Fremont Experience" Agua Mansa, 1933
Box 2, Folder 9  Biographical newspaper clipping on John C. Fremont from The Daily Telegraph, 1890 July 16
Box 2, Folder 10  Newspaper clipping regarding the Gun Carriage, 1948
Box 2, Folder 11  Newspaper clipping of John C. Fremont's grandson John Charles Fremont's obituary, 1957
Box 2, Folder 12  Newspaper clipping regarding Fremont Flag, 1946
Box 2, Folder 13  Review clipping on Jessie B. Fremont's forthcoming biography of her husband, 1901
Box 2, Folder 14  Newspaper memorials of Jessie Benton Fremont's death, 1952-1953
Box 2, Folder 15  Newspaper clipping "Stories of Gen. Fremont," 1905
Box 2, Folder 16  Newspaper clipping "Gleanings from History," 1940
Box 2, Folder 17  Articles regarding the "Lost Painting" of John C. Fremont as Senator, 1953
Physical Description: 2.0 articles

Box 2, Folder 18  Newspaper clipping on the Fremonts' 1849 journey to California, 1949
Box 2, Folder 19  **Article on "The Pathfinder" by Rockwell Hunt, 1939**
Acquisition
Donation from F. W. Hodge.

Box 2, Folder 20  **"John Charles Fremont - The Pathfinder" by Lewis Liston, 1924**
Acquisition
Donation from F. W. Hodge, 1938 July.

Box 2, Folder 21  **"In the Lion's Den" Charles F. Lummis article on Jessie B. Fremont, 1903**
Scope and contents
From *Out West* v. XVIII, no. 1.

Box 2, Folder 22  **"Fremont and the Bear Flag" by William Simpson, 1910**

Box 2, Folder 23  **"Fremont in Southern California" by S. B. Parish, 1908**
Acquisition
Donation from George L. Moxley.

Box 2, Folder 24  **"Life of Col. Fremont" pamphlet, 1856**

Box 2, Folder 25  **"Our Fremont Flag" *Masterkey* article by M. R. Harrington, 1952**

Box 2, Folder 26  **"Fremont for President" *Masterkey* article by Allen W. Welts, 1956**
Physical Description: 2.0 copies

Box 2, Folder 27  **"Pioneers of the Western Frontier: John C. Fremont" *Touring Topic* article, 1931**

Box 2, Folder 28  **"A Woman Who Has Lived History" by Margaret Coy Kendall, 1901**
Scope and contents
Biography of Jessie Benton Fremont.

Box 2, Folder 29  **"The Exploration of an Embryo Empire" by John T. Burns, 1903**
Scope and contents
One installation of the series from *The Frontier Monthly* vol. II, no. 3.

Box 2, Folder 30  **"Fremont and Carson in Nevada" by George Wharton James, 1914**

Box 2, Folder 31  **"Fremont Crosses the Sierras" by H. E. Bolton, 1931**
Acquisition
Gift to the Fenyes collection from F. W. Hodge, 1936 October.

Box 2, Folder 32  **"Documentary: The Fremont Episode" in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 1927**
Bigelow's Memoir of Fremont excerpt, undated

Box 2, Folder 33  **"Fremont's California" by Lewis R. Works, 1930**
Acquisition
Gift to the Fenyes Collection from F. W. Hodge, 1936 November.

Box 2, Folder 34  **"The Fremont Myth" by A.T. Richardson, undated**

Box 2, Folder 35  **"Fremont on Rocky Mountains" by Phillip Rochlin, 1952**
Acquisition
Donation by the author, 1952 August.

Box 2, Folder 36  **"Fremont's Expedition to the Far West, 1842" by J. Gregg Layne, 1951**

Box 2, Folder 37  **"Fremont in California" by George Wharton James, 1903**
Physical Description: 2.0 copies
Scope and contents
This publication is a complimentary pamphlet from the Fremont Hotel on the corner of 4th and Olive Streets in Los Angeles, California.
Box 2, Folder 39  
Reviews of Catherine Coffin Phillips's book on Jessie Benton Fremont, 1936

Box 2, Folder 40  
"The Last Survivor of Fremont's Army" by Byron E. Cooney, 1913

Box 2, Folder 41  
"General J. C. Fremont" by George B. Wallis, 1890

Custodial history
Received in the Munk Library of Arizoniana, before 1931.

Box 2, Folder 42  
"Last of the Voyageurs" by Thomas R. Henry, 1926

Box 2, Folder 43  
Five articles on John C. Fremont and California history from The Century Magazine vol. XLI, no. 5, 1891 March

Box 2, Folder 44  
Newspaper clipping "The Pathfinder: Century Agone, His Natal Day," 1913

Box 3, tube 1  
Metal mailing tube, circa 1863

Arrangement note
This metal tube housed the Royal Geographic Society diploma now in Box 3, Folder 9.

Box 3, Folder 1  
Kansas State Historical Society honorary membership for John C. Fremont certificate, 1887

Arrangement note
Correspondence accompanying this certificate is in Box 1, Folder 78.

Box 3, Folder 2  
Copy of Presidential commission of Second Lieutenant, Topographical Engineer to John C. Fremont, 1838

Box 3, Folder 3  
Copy of Presidential commission of Captain to John C. Fremont, 1845

Box 3, Folder 4  
Copy of Presidential commission of Lieutenant to John C. Fremont, 1846

Box 3, Folder 5  
Copy of Presidential commission of Major General to John C. Fremont, 1861

Box 3, Folder 6  
President's restoration of rank Major General to John C. Fremont, signed by President Benjamin Harrison, 1890

Box 3, Folder 7  
Copy of 1842 map of the Rockies, Oregon and Northern California by J. C. Fremont, undated

Box 3, Folder 8  
Jessie Benton Fremont portrait lithograph, 1856

Box 3, Folder 9  
Royal Geographical Society honorary membership certificate, 1863

Arrangement note
This certificate was in the metal mailing tube found in Box 3.

Box 3, Folder 10  
Daughters of the American Revolution memorial resolution for Jessie B. Fremont, Eschscholtzia Chapter 1903

Box 3, Folder 11  
Scott County Fremont Club memorial certificate for Jessie Benton Fremont, 1903

Box 3, Folder 12  
Picture map of San Francisco formerly Yerba Buena, by Captain W. Swasey, circa 1847

Box 3, Folder 13  
New England Associated California Pioneers diploma for John C. Fremont, 1890

Box 3, Folder 14  
Native Sons of the Golden West Brooklyn Parlor No. 151 memorial for John C. Fremont, 1890