Descriptive Summary
Title: John M. Schermerhorn journal
Dates: 1855-1857
Collection Number: SFH 263
Creator/Collector: Schermerhorn, John Marcellus, d. 1917
Extent: 1 volume (15 leaves)
Repository: San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center
San Francisco, California 94102
Abstract: Account of a voyage from San Francisco to New York City via Panama, with later entries from Lena, Illinois
Language of Material: English
Access
The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Collections that are stored offsite should be requested 48 hours in advance.
Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.
Preferred Citation
John M. Schermerhorn journal. San Francisco Public Library. San Francisco History Center
Acquisition Information
Purchase.
Biography/Administrative History
John Marcellus Schermerhorn was born about 1830 in Fultonville, New York state. His family moved to Lena, Stephenson County, IL. With the gold rush, he and his father came to California, where they mined, and John spent two years in a law office. He may be the John Schermerhorn of Harney's Exchange, Brenham Place, who is listed in the 1854 LeCount & Strong San Francisco directory. Unsuccessful in mining, the two returned to their Illinois farm. John married Rachel J. Dodd, and served in the Union army in the Civil War. He worked almost forty years as Lena's village clerk, was postmaster there for several years, and died there in 1917.
Scope and Content of Collection
Schermerhorn's journal entries (written in ink) begin San Francisco August 1, 1855 on the steamship Golden Age, which anchored at Panama August 13. He describes sights in Panama City, and after riding the new railroad train to Aspinwall, the steamship George Law then took Schermerhorn on to New York, where he landed August 25. Schermerhorn's account ends with descriptions of New York City landmarks. The thin book also includes small sketches of construction project details, a penciled list of building materials for a building for Samuel F. Dodd in Lena, Illinois, and a reference to a J. P. Schermerhorn of Chatfield, Fillmore County, Minnesota. The author belonged to the Lena Lodge No. 194, IOOF, and a draft resolution in pencil memorializing James Allen, passed by that organization in April 1857, is included in the volume.
Indexing Terms
Steamboats – California – San Francisco.
Steamboats – History – 19th century.
Dodd, Samuel F., d. 1862
Schermerhorn family
Dodd family
Pacific Mail Steamship Company – History
George Law (Steamer)
Golden Age (Steamer)
Panama Railroad Co.
Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Lena Lodge No. 194 (Lena, Ill.)
Panama—Description and travel
New York (N.Y.)—Description and travel
Lena (Ill.)—History—19th century