The finding aid for the Elisha Oscar Crosby Papers C057890

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Note
B002182 / B-2-1B
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Title: Elisha Oscar Crosby Papers
creator: Crosby, Elisha Oscar, 1818-1895
Identifier/Call Number: C057890
Physical Description: 1 folder (2 handwritten memoirs, 1 typed transcript, and 3 handwritten letters)
Date (inclusive): 1886-1895
Abstract: This file contains various papers of Elisha O. Crosby, he was trained as a lawyer and came to California in search of gold in the year 1849. The file includes some letters of correspondence to the Society of California Pioneers, a handwritten autobiography and reminiscence requested by the Society, a handwritten account of the discovery of gold by James Marshall and a typed transcript of an original, in the Bancroft Library, account of the first California election.
Scope and Contents
Elisha Oscar Crosby, a New York lawyer, sailed for the West in December 1848 arriving in San Francisco aboard the Steamer "California" on February 28th, 1849, after a stop in Panama. In California he had a distinguished legal and political career that led to his appointment as U.S. Minister to Guatemala. Elisha Oscar Crosby was one of the delegates to the first Constitutional Convention at Monterey, acting as Chairman of the Finance Committee. He was also appointed Prefect of the Sacramento District, which constituted all land east of the Sacramento River and north of the Cosumnes River. Elisha Oscar Crosby held the position of Chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the State Senate, during the First and Second Sessions of the Legislature of California. He was involved in convincing the State Senate during its first session of Legislature to have California adopt a Common Law system rather than the Civil Law rule which was in place at the time. This reminiscence covers the period of Elisha Oscar Crosby's life from 1848 to 1850. The subject of the reminiscence is predominately the first Constitutional Convention which met September 1st, 1849 in Monterey. Crosby discusses the troubles the Finance Committee, of which he was Chairman, had in securing funds to pay the expense of the convention. He also describes his work as Prefect of the Sacramento District during the election of November 13th, 1849, which led to the approval of a State Constitution. Crosby was responsible for gathering votes from all men in his district, which inhabited half the population of California working in the mines at that time. Elisha Oscar Crosby has included in this reminiscence a table of votes cast in favor and against the Constitution in California’s ten voting districts. The district that Crosby presided over contained the largest number of voters. The papers also include a letter written to the Society noting that "Evil days came...", and he had to let his membership to The Society of California Pioneers lapse. Crosby's reminiscences are digitized, and available at the Online Archive of California.
Biographical / Historical
Mr. Crosby was born in Groton, Tompkins Co., New York on July 18, 1818. He studied law, and at age 23, in 1841, was licensed to practice law, and in 1844 went to practice in New York City at 27 Wall Street. He left for California on Christmas Day, 1848, arriving by the Steamer California on February 28, 1849. He was elected a delegate from the Sacramento district to the first Constituional Convention in Monterey. He was also in the first and second legislatures of the state as a Senator. In 1855 he was commissioned into the Committee of Vigilance in San Francisco. In 1861, he was appointed U.S. Minister to Guatemala by President Lincoln, and in 1867 was admitted and licensed to practice as an attorney and counselor to the Supreme Court of the United States. In 1874, he married Frances Alma Crandall in Lincoln, Nebraska, and settled afterwards in Alameda. They had one son, Edward Oscar Crosby. Elisha Crosby continued to be active in public service in Alameda but was not a wealthy man. He died at the age of 76 after falling down a flight of stairs, on June 20, 1892, and was cremated and interred at Cypress Lawn Cemetery. Crosby was the man "who single handedly collected all the returns for the first California Election" and he personally carried the votes on horseback form Sacramento to Monterey which would lead to California being admitted to the Union. During his time in California Crosby was also the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the State Senate during the first and second sessions of the California legislator. The original copy of Crosby's account of the early history of the California election is housed at the Bancroft Library in Berkley, CA. He became a member of the Society in 1853, and the Society has institutional records for him, from which some of the above information was taken.
Originals housed at the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA.
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Immediate Source of Acquisition
It appears that the handwritten documents were given to the Society in 1893, on the date of their writing, by Crosby himself.
Preferred Citation

**Related Materials**
The Society of California Pioneers holds the following institutional records on Crosby: Archive Record, vol. 1, p.252; Obituary Record, vol. 4, pg. 123; and Mortuary Record, 1892-1906, p. 54, from which much of the biographical information in this finding aid was gleaned.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Pioneers -- California
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Society of California Pioneers
Frontier and pioneer life – California
United States -- Politics and government
California - Politics and Government - 1846-1850
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