Finding Aid of the Joseph B. Chiles Papers C057756

Finding aid prepared by Lacey Lieberthal
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May 30, 2012
Title: Chiles, Joseph B. Papers
Identifier/Call Number: C057756
Contribution Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 folder(1 map, 5 receipts, 1 license, 1 check, 2 notes, 2 documents, 1 strip of film negatives)
Date (inclusive): 1855-1885
Abstract: A group of documents belonging to and/or pertaining to Joseph B. Chiles, the earliest of which is a receipt of purchase from 1855, and the latest a note describing his death, life, and details of funerary plans from June 1885. Other documents include several receipts of purchase, tax receipts, a check, a map survey of part of his Cata coula (sic.) Rancho in Napa County, a United States Internal Revenue License, and a note describing the events surrounding his marriage to Miss Mollie Owens in April 1883.
creator: Chiles, Joseph B. (Joseph Ballinger), 1810-1885
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.
Preferred Citation note
Donor
Gift of Peggy Lee Chiles, January 26, 1949
Biographical/Historical note
Colonel Joseph B. Chiles was born in Clark County, Kentucky on July 16, 1810, and he died at his home near St. Helena, California in June 1885, a few weeks before his 75th birthday (age 74 at death). J.B. Chiles was one of the men who formed the vanguard of the Army that pioneered to California. His death marked the last of these early living American settlers in Napa County. Having been raised on a Kentucky farm, he settled in Missouri as a farmer and stock raiser at age 20. Seven years later, he enlisted in a Volunteer Infantry Regiment and fought in the Florida Indian Wars. In 1840, at age 30, upon his return to Missouri, he began to think about exploring out West in California. His first tour to California was with the Bartleson Party (33 pioneers), which arrived in 1841. At that time, he obtained a promise of a mill site from General Vallejo--this mill site became Chiles Mill in Chiles Valley, where J.B. Chiles would eventually settle. On this tour, he explored Central California with his friend, Chas Hopper, and then returned to Missouri. Shortly afterward, he organized a second pioneer party of about 60, named the Chiles Party, which arrived in California in 1843. On his third trip to California, in 1848, he brought his son (probably Kit) and three daughters (Fanny, Elizabeth, and Mary). He had married in Missouri, but his wife probably passed away. In 1853, he married again to M.G. Garnett during his last visit to Missouri, and they officially settled in Chiles Valley, Napa County. In 1844, he had been approved to receive a grant from the Mexican Government for a piece of land which would come to be known as Catacula Rancho. He paid $10 for the deed. J. B. Chiles was known as a generous, honest, and faithful man who had many friends. When he died, he was mourned by his third wife, Mollie Owens of Santa Barbara, whom he had married in 1883, and 10 children. His funeral took place on June 26, 1885 in St. Helena. (Most information taken from this group of papers and some information taken from Bancroft's History of California)
Scope and Contents note
The folder consists of four envelopes and one separate document.
The first envelope contains six items. First, National Poll Tax Receipt no. 22873, of Napa County, dated September 5, 1862. It states that J.B. Chiles paid his tax of $2.00 on April 12, 1862. The second item is a note signifying the receipt of $100 from William G. Chiles for taking a Jack Colt (laborer?) to California for J.B. Chiles. It is signed by H.C. Riggs of Jackson County, Missouri. The third receipt is for $5.00 of annual dues (receipt no. 117) from J.B. Chiles for the Rooms of California State Agricultural Society, and it is dated September 13, 1859. The fourth item is a check for $183.00 from J.B. Chiles of Napa County, paid to the order of Wells Fargo, and it is dated June 9, 1859. The fifth is a receipt of purchase by J.B. Chiles at Knight, Mitchell, and Childs, a company that sold Boots, Shoes, and Brogans. Dated October 18, 1855, Chiles purchases are listed with prices. The final item in the envelope is a receipt indicating that J.B. Chiles paid his state and county property taxes for the year of 1858. Dated October 18, 1858, the total amount came to $1259.08.
The second envelope in the folder contains a map of a land survey for "part of" Catacula (sic.) Rancho, which was surveyed in October of 1881 by J.A. Hopkins. The survey was filed December 3, 1881, at the request of J.B. Chiles, proprietor of the land.

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The document, in the folder is United States Internal Revenue License no. 1247 for J.B. Chiles of St. Helena. It indicates that J.B. Chiles had paid his tax of $24.00, and the license is valid from May 1, 1864-May 1, 1867. It is dated June 18, 1866.

The third envelope in the folder contains two pages of written notes and one page of short correspondence notes. The two written notes are on stationary from Casa Cristina. The first is headed: April 21, 1883, Napa, Cal. This note indicates that J.B. Chiles was married to Miss Mollie Owens of Santa Barbara "last Saturday." There is a small pencil notation above the name, Joseph B. Chiles, that appears to read: "Wanda's father." The note continues to explain that Chiles and his new bride left the evening of their wedding on a steamer to San Francisco, and on Wednesday, they went to Sacramento and then Davisville (Davis) to visit friends. The second note, which begins on the same page, is headed: Napa, June 26, 1885. This note indicates that Col. J.B. Chiles died at his home near St. Helena "last Thursday." It continues to explain that in the past few months, the last remaining members of the "old pioneer life" were passing at a quicker rate. Col. Chiles was one of the men who had formed the vanguard of the Army that pioneered to California, and his death marked the last of the "earliest living American settlers in Napa County if not in the state." On the second page of the note, on the front and back of the sheet, is written a brief description of J.B. Chiles' life (see biographical note). The page of short correspondences (two notes on one page) is labeled in the top right corner: San Fran June 17/59 (June 17, 1859). The first note is written to Mr. Dudley Esq., and it indicates that Dudley paid $175.00, and it is satisfactory to the settlement of J.B. Chiles and has been accepted. The signature is illegible, and it is unclear for what Dudley was paying. The second note appears to be written to Col. J.B. Chiles, but the note and the signature are both illegible.

The last envelope in the folder contains a strip of film negatives. The envelope is labeled "Chiles app. Grant to Catacula," and it is embossed in the upper left-hand corner by The Society of California Pioneers. Also, written in pen is a word, which appears as "Xerox," but it is difficult to read.

**Existence and Location of Originals note**

The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107.

**Related Archival Materials note**

The Society also owns 14 photographs, which illustrate the following: Chiles Adobe on Rancho Catacula, Chiles Valley, and Chiles Mill.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Vallejo, Mariano Guadalupe
Napa County (Calif.)
Rancho Catacula (Calif.)