Finding aid of the James S. Cowden Papers C057888

Finding aid prepared by Patricia Keats
Society of California Pioneers
300 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA, 94107-1272
(415) 959-1849
pkeats@californiapioneers.org
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Title: Cowden, James S., Papers
Identifier/Call Number: C057888
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 folder (1 typescript, 23 pages and 1 letter)
Date (inclusive): 1853-1854
Abstract: An overland diary, our copy is a transcript of the original, relating events which took place between April 7, 1853 to October 12, 1853 during a wagon train journey from Keosaqua, Iowa to Yreka, California - with additional observations and information added on January 1, 1854. There is also a handwritten letter by the donor giving additional information, dated January 3, 1983.
creator: Cowden, James S., fl.1830-1870
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.
Preferred Citation note
James S. Cowden Papers. The Society of California Pioneers.
Donor
Gift of Mary Case Haskins, 1983.
Biographical note
The only biographical information on James S. Cowden - since there was none in the diary - is from the letter written to the Society of California Pioneers by the donor, Mary Case Haskins, in 1983. She notes the following: "... that Mr. Cowden was a friend of the wagon master, Capt. Albert Annibal, who was her great-grandfather. Mr. Annibal had homesteads in the Iowa Territory earlier. His wife died in childbirth as they reached California, buried at the foot of Mt. Shasta. He sent her two children back to his sister, Mrs. George Cowden (Laura Annibal) in Gustavus Township in Trumbull Co., Ohio." The statement is unclear as to whose wife it was that died in childbirth - Cowden's or Captain Annibal's.
Scope and Contents note
A copy of a typewritten transcript of an overland diary kept by James S. Cowden, dated April 7, 1853 to October 12, 1853, starting in Keosaqua, Iowa and ending in Yreka, California. The diary relates to the daily life of the original group of 16-17 travelers and other parties that united with them along the way. Of particular interest are the daily detailed entries made during the entire trip noting the number of miles travelled each day, the scenery and the campsites. The last entry dated January 1, 1854 gives a number of the writer's personal thoughts and observations about the journey - from the Platte River across the country to Fort Laramie and on to Nevada and finally to California. Also included in this final entry is a list of prices paid in 1853 for groceries and provisions, which gives the reader a good sense of the cost of daily subsistence. Also include is a letter from the donor, Mary Case Haskins, dated January 3, 1983, noting her relationship to Cowden (see biographical note).
Existence and Location of Originals note
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 4th Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Overland journeys to the Pacific