Finding aid of the Alexander Parker Crittenden Papers C058820

Finding aid prepared by Alexandria Brown
Society of California Pioneers
300 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA, 94107-1272
(415) 959-1849
pkeats@californiapioneers.org
10/18/2011

http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1r29r9p9
No online items
**Title:** Crittenden, Alexander Parker Papers  
**Identifier/Call Number:** C058820  
**Contributing Institution:** Society of California Pioneers  
**Language of Material:** English  
**Physical Description:** 1.0 folder (5 letters, 1 item)  
**Date (inclusive):** 1847-1940 and undated  
**Abstract:** This folder contains 5 letters of correspondence regarding Crittenden and his murder, and a copy of his military history from West Point Military Academy.  
**creator:** Crittenden, Alexander Parker, 1816-1870  
**Conditions Governing Access note**  
Collection open for research.  
**Conditions Governing Use note**  
There are no restrictions on access.  
**Preferred Citation note**  
**Donor**  
Donated by Crittenden Van Wyck in August, 1934.  
**Biographical/Historical note**  
Crittenden was born in Lexington, KY and was assassinated on the ferry between Oakland and San Francisco in 1870. He was married with children. He was a military cadet at West Point Military Academy from 07/01/1832-07/01/1836. He joined the army as a lieutenant and resigned 09/30/1836. He worked as an assistant engineer for the railroads in Baltimore, MD, York, PA, Charleston, SC, and Augusta, SC. He was a lawyer in Texas from 1839-1849, and came to California during the Gold Rush. He was a member of the state assembly in Los Angeles before retiring to San Francisco. He was the grandson of John Crittenden, nephew of John Jordan Crittenden and Robert Crittenden, son of Thomas Turpin Crittenden (1788-1832), and brother of Union general Thomas Turpin Crittenden (1825-1905). Crittenden had been having an affair with the widow of a state senator, Laura D. Fair. Shortly after he broke it off, he picked his wife up in Oakland after her trip back East. As the ferry left the dock Fair approached him and shot him; he died two days later. She was tried twice and acquitted after claiming "emotional insanity".  
**Scope and Contents note**  
The letter dated 04/06/1933 is from Theresa Crittenden to John Winkler of the Society of California Pioneers regarding her donation of Crittenden's military history and the death of his son Churchill Crittenden. (Churchill was in the Confederate Army, Company C, 1st Maryland Cavalry and was captured by Union leader Colonel Powell on 10/04/1864. He and another solider named Hartigan were executed in a ravine outside Richmond, VA in retaliation for the Confederacy killing several Union soldiers earlier.) The letter dated 04/03/1856 is from Crittenden to his niece detailing his daily life and activities. The letter dated 04/05/1940 is from Elizabeth Whitney Putnam to Miss Van Sichlen and is a brief family history of her Crittenden grandparents. A letter dated January 23 from K. S. Baldwin to an illegible name regarding the death of the recipient’s mother. The letter dated 11/29/1847 from Alex Jones to his son Dr. Alexander Jones (care of Crittenden) regards Jarvis’ daily life and activities.  
**Existence and Location of Originals note**  
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107  
**Subjects and Indexing Terms**  
Crittenden, Churchill, 1840-1864  
Civil War, U. S., 1861-1865  
Correspondence.