Finding aid of the Henry Lewis Ford Papers C058851

Finding aid prepared by Michael Lange
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01/22/2014
Title: Ford, Henry Lewis Papers
Identifier/Call Number: C058851
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Storage Unit: B001392
Storage Unit: C058851
Physical Description: 1.0 folder (2 letters, 2 typed transcripts, 1 newspaper clipping, 1 published genealogy)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1854
Date (inclusive): 1854-1956
Abstract: Contains two letters, one newspaper clipping and a genealogy of the descendants of William Ford. The first letter is addressed to Sam Brannan and is a recounting of his memories of the Bear Flag Revolt. The second is an undated, unaddressed letter recounting his memories of the Battle of Natividad. The newspaper clipping is dated 6/05/1950 and is about Henry L. Ford's new grave marker. The genealogy does not appear to deal with this Henry Lewis Ford, but another by the same name.
creator: Ford, Henry L. (Henry Lewis), 1822-1860

Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.

Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.

Preferred Citation note

Related Archival Materials note
The Society of California Pioneers (SCP) owned the original Bear Flag, until it burned in the Earthquake and Fire of 1906. SCP still owns photographs of the original flag, both color (hand-tinted) and black & white (C001790), as well as a flag replica (C001791).
SCP also owns a composite painting of Ford in front of the original flag, made from a daguerreotype of Ford (print in SCP collection) and photo of original Bear Flag; painted for Col. Fred B. Rogers (C001023), and a painting of the men of the Revolt raising the flag (C014928).
Other manuscripts and documents related to the Bear Flag and the Bear Flag Revolt owned by SCP are: 1. Bear Flag Revolt document; description of materials used in making the flag, signed William L. Todd & A. H. Gillespie (C004067). 2. "The Bear Flags / An Account of Their Making by the Historian of the Pioneer Society" by John S. Hittell (C047731).

Donor
The genealogy was a gift of Colonel F.B. Rogers. The other material is donor and date of acquisition unknown.

Biographical/Historical note
Henry Lewis Ford was born in North Conway, New Hampshire on 08/24/1822, and arrived in California in 1842, and took part in the Bear Flag Revolt in 1846, and is generally credited as the "designer" of the flag. He joined the Society of California Pioneers in 1850 as a resident of Sacramento. He died by an accidental discharge of his own pistol on 07/02/1860 in Round Valley, California.
The Bear Flag Revolt - Thirty-three settlers in Sonoma, assisted by volunteers from among the American settlers and Vacqueros from the many haciendas in the Sacramento River valley, captured the Mexican garrison of Sonoma and raised a homemade flag with a bear and star (the "Bear Flag") to symbolize their taking control. The words "California Republic" appeared on the flag but were never officially adopted by the insurgents. Their actions were later called the "Bear Flag Revolt." As part of the Sonoma garrison, the rebels captured the Commandant of Northern California, General Vallejo, who openly endorsed the inevitability of the annexation of California by the United States. Vallejo was sent to Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento River valley, where he was kept a prisoner until 08/01/1846. The Republic's first and only president was William B. Ide, whose administration lasted twenty-five days. On 06/23/1846, Frémont arrived with sixty soldiers and took command in the name of the United States. The Bear Flag was replaced by the Stars and Stripes. The "republic" disbanded and Ide enlisted in the U.S. forces as a private. The Mexican governor sent 55 men to attempt to crush the rebellion, but General José Castro's forces were defeated at the Battle of Olompali. Unknown to Frémont and the Bear Flag supporters, war had already been formally declared on 05/13/1846, but the news did not reach California until early July, when the frigate USS Savannah and the two sloops, USS Cyane and USS Levant, of the United States Navy captured Monterey,

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Scope and Contents note
The first letter is handwritten by Henry Ford, dated 2/08/1854, and is addressed to Sam Brannan. In the letter Ford discusses his role in the Bear Flag revolt, recounting why he joined up with the men to capture General Vallejo at Sonoma, the subsequent retaliation of the Mexican forces, and his heroic ride of over 100 miles in a single day to release two of his kidnapped men culminating in the Battle of Olompali. Also included is a typed transcription of this letter. The second letter is handwritten by Henry Ford, undated, and unaddressed. The letter is titled "The Battle of Salinas" and recounts both his role and the history of what is now known as the Battle of Natividad. It appears that the letter is incomplete, as it is not signed and after the narrative on the fourth page is unfinished. Also included is a typed transcription of this letter. Also included is a newspaper clipping from the Redwood-Journal-Press-Dispatch (Ukiah, California) dated 06/05/1950. The article discusses the laying of a new bronze plaque on Henry Ford's grave, to commemorate all he did for the state of California. Some biographical information about Ford is included in the article. An unbound, published manuscript titled "Ford History and Genealogy Including Allied Families - One Line of Descendants of William Ford Who Landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, November 20, 1621" compiled by Frederick William Ford and published in 1956. It appears that this Ford family genealogy is not of the same Ford family as Henry Lewis Ford. The genealogy was a gift of Colonel F.B. Rogers.

Existence and Location of Originals note
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Brannan, Sam, 1819-1889
Castro, José Antonio, 1808-1860
Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890
Ide, William Brown, 1796-1852
Merritt, Ezekiel, fl. 1846
Micheltorena, Manuel, 1802-1853
Stockton, Robert Field, 1795-1866
Vallejo, Mariano Guadalupe, 1808-1890
Bear Flag Revolt, 1846
California--History--1846-1850
California. Governor (1842-1845 : Micheltorena)