Finding aid of the Jessie Benton Frémont Papers C058854

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Note
A typed transcription is currently in process (04/29/2014).
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Title: Fremont, Jessie Benton Papers
Identifier/Call Number: C058854
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Storage Unit: B001392
Storage Unit: C058854
Physical Description: 1.0 folder (13 letters, 2 newspaper clippings, 1 envelope)
Date: 1860-1861
Abstract: Contains 13 handwritten letters from Mrs. Jessie Benton Frémont to Mr. Thomas Starr King, all dating from around 1861.
creator: Frémont, Jessie Benton, 1824-1902
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.
Preferred Citation note
Donor
Donor and date of acquisition unknown.
Biographical/Historical note
Jessie Benton Frémont (May 31, 1824 – December 27, 1902) was an American writer and political activist. She was the daughter of Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton and in 1841 married Lieutenant John C. Frémont. In 1849 she moved to San Francisco, California where her husband was already living. They had a house in San Francisco's Black Point area (now known as Fort Mason), where they lived and raised their children, moving between San Francisco, St. Louis and Washington D.C. numerous times in the 1850s and 1860s. Jessie wrote popular accounts of her husbands explorations and political exploits, earning extra money for their family in this fashion. Jessie was fiercely anti-slavery and anti-Secession, and played a vital role in the Soldier's Relief Society in St. Louis and the Western Sanitary Commission. She lived for a time in Mariposa, prompting her to speak about the need to federally protect Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley (the Yosemite Grant Act was signed by Lincoln in 1864). She died in Los Angeles, California in 1902.
Thomas Starr King (December 17, 1824 – March 4, 1864) was an American Unitarian and Universalist minister, influential in California politics during the American Civil War. During the Civil War, Starr King spoke zealously in favor of the Union and was credited by Abraham Lincoln with preventing California from becoming a separate republic. In addition, he organized the Pacific Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, which cared for wounded soldiers and was the predecessor to the American Red Cross. A fiery orator, he raised more than $1.5 million for the Sanitary Commission headquarters in New York, one-fifth of the total contributions from all the states in the Union. The relentless lecture circuit exhausted him, and he died in San Francisco on March 4, 1864, of diphtheria.
Related Archival Materials note
John C. Frémont biographical file, containing newspaper clippings and typed biographies.
Scope and Contents note
Contains 13 handwritten letters from Mrs. Jessie Benton Frémont to Mr. Thomas Starr King, all dating from around 1861. The letters were written by Mrs. Frémont in New York and sent to Rev. King in San Francisco, and referred to their friendship while Jessie lived at the Frémont estate in San Francisco called “Black Point” (which is now known as Fort Mason.) There are no letters from King to Mrs. Frémont in the collection. Many of the letters are quite long – five to eight pages in length. Also included in an envelope addressed to Jessie's husband, General John C. Frémont, are two newspaper clippings regarding a speech given by Mary Lincoln.
Existence and Location of Originals note
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890
Harte, Bret, 1836-1902
King, Thomas Starr, 1824-1864
McClellan, George Brinton, 1826-1885
Civil War, U. S., 1861-1865
Patriotic poetry.
United States Sanitary Commission