Finding aid for the Robert R. Givens Papers C057980

Finding aid prepared by Nick Scales
Society of California Pioneers
300 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA, 94107-1272
(415) 959-1849
pkeats@californiapioneers.org
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Title: Givens, Robert R., Papers
Identifier/Call Number: C057980
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.0 folder1 typescript transcription (61 pages) 1 set of copies (27 pages)
Date (inclusive): 1849-1859
Abstract: 27 typewritten pages of transcriptions of letters from Robert R. Givens and Eleazar T. Givens and 9 copies of some of the original letters to family at home in Caseyville, KY. Covers the period from 4.20.1849 to 8.29.1859. Describes the overland journey from St Charles, MO to California; gold mining in Mariposa County; and life on the Texas Ranch which was located on the road from Stockton to the Mariposa mines.
creator: Givens, Robert R., b.1832
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for Research
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restriction on access
Preferred Citation note
Immediate Source of Acquisition note
Donor and date of acquisition unknown
Biography
Robert R. Givens was a member of the Society of California Pioneers - our membership records note his arrival in California on October 26, 1849, and his joining the Society on January 6, 1873. He was born in Caseyville, Kentucky, and from an entry on his brother, Eleazar T. Givens, page 831-32 of a book (the copies only have the title listed as Historical and Biographical Record), it appears he started out for California from Caseyville, with his brother Eleazar on April 5, 1849. Robert and Eleazar remained in Salt Lake City for some six weeks, then joined another party under the leadership of James Waters, of San Bernardino. They took the southern route and in October arrived at the Rubidoux ranch, along the Santa Ana river, and spent the winter working on the ranch. Robert Givens married Maratha Melvina Parker (b.1837-?), and had four children: Mary A.(1856-1871), James Benjamin (b.1859-?), Rosannah Virginia (b.1857-?) and Thomas Dudley (b.1861-?). (Source: Ancestry.com). Eleazar T. Givens has a page of biographical information in he above mentioned book, Historical and Biographical Record, pg. 831-32. The full title of the book cannot be found - there is a book on Southern California with the title Historical and biographical record of southern California (Guinn, James Miller, 1902), but Givens appeared to have settled not in southern California, but in northern. E.T. Givens, also born in Union County, Kentucky, on October 17, 1828, the son of Thomas and Catherine (Richards) Givens, and grew up on their farm. He left Caseyville, Ky. with his brother Robert, as noted above, and arrived in Rubidoux Ranch near the Santa Ana River. He mined in Coarse Gold Gulch (Fresno Co.), then went to Mariposa Co., and mined the Whitlock and Agua Frio mines. He was mauled by a bear, and returned to Kentucky. His parents came to California in 1852, via the Isthmus of Panama, and Eleazar married Martha Pratt in 1853 in Morganfield, Ky. They journeyed to California together, and in 1854 spent the winter on a ranch in Mariposa Co. They lived there until 1904, and had seven children - four dying in early childhood. His wife died in 1876 in Oakland, and in 1870, Eleazar married Adelaide M. Brooks - and they had 5 sons and 2 daughters. Eleazar retired and lived in Oakland at the end of his life. (Source: Guinn, James Miller. Historical and Biographical Record:...?, Chicago: Chapman, 1902).
Scope and Contents note
27 pages of typewritten transcriptions of letters from Robert R. Givens and Eleazar T. Givens and 9 copies of some of the original letters to the family at home in Caseyville, KY. Covers the period from 4.20.1849 to 8.29.1859. Describes the overland journey from St Charles, MO to California; gold mining in Mariposa County; and life on the Texas Ranch which was located on the road from Stockton to the Mariposa mines. A brief summary of the letters: 4/20/1848 - St. Charles, Mo. - putting together company and equipment 5/18/1848 - Camp near St. Joseph, Mo - travelled 560 miles in 19 days; waiting for grass on prairie; description of St. Joseph; cholera 5/6/1849 - Ft. Childs / Ft. Kearney – 3 weeks from St. Joseph, 300 miles; cholera and diarrhea; 300 soldiers at fort. 5/11/1849 – 75 miles up Platte River from Ft. Kearney – Guard duty; travel conditions; Indians; Caseyville, Ky hometown. 6/17/1849 – 40 miles above fork of the Platte River; Buffalo chase; Sioux Indians; Chief Grey Eagle 6/24/1849 – Scott’s Bluff, 40 miles from Ft. Laramie 6/29/1849 – Ft. Laramie – Condition of wagon teams; Rocky Mountains and Laramie Peak 6/16.1850 – Agua Frio (Mariposa County) – Arrived in California at Pueblo de Los Angeles; laid over for winter; employment; mining 2 months making $5 to $20 per day; Mines depleted, on Merced River
100 miles east of Stockton. 7/14/1850 – Agua Frio – Climate and fertility of Country; Mining prospects; Northern Mines very crowded. 8/11/1850 – Agua Frio – Made $1000 last month; near Great Mariposa Quartz Vein; using rocker, tin pan and wooden bowl; winter will deal in provisions. 10/10/50 – Agua Frio – Bear Attack and medical treatment. 10/10/1850 – Agua Frio – advises no one to come for gold, but great place to live. 12/8/1850 – Agua Frio – Living in a tent, cooking, and washing clothes. 1/19/1851 – Agua Frio – Mining yield down to $5 per day; other occupations are “overdone”; Indian troubles. 2/1/1851 – Agua Frio – from Eleazar Givens. 10/20/1851 – Agua Frio – recommends moving to California. 11.20.1851 – Agua Frio – Discovery of Gold in Bear Valley (Mariposa) 12/24/1851 – Agua Frio – Mining good 4/5/52 – Agua Frio – Family to emigrate to California – Purchase half interest in Texas Ranch on road to Stockton; Mining still doing well; visits Mokelumne and Calaveras Rivers; American cattle at premium. 5/21/52 – Texas Ranch – Beauty and opportunity in California. 8/25/1852 – Texas Ranch – Bring girl for him to marry – Prices higher; ranch doing well – National Politics and Presidency – Endear to the country. 9/10/1852 – Texas Ranch – Prices still high – Bringing Negroes to California is prohibited; potential division of state with south slavery. 10/10/1858 – Family has moved to Santa Clara. 10/24/1858 – Quartzburg. 8/29/1859 – Texas Ranch – Camp Meeting and Religion.

**Existence and Location of Copies note**

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Givens, Eleazar T., b. 1828
Gold mines and mining - California - History - 19th century
Overland journeys to the Pacific
Pioneers--California--History--19th century