
Finding aid of the Walter Murray Reminiscences C058565

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Title: Murray, Walter Reminiscences

Identifier/Call Number: C058565

Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers

Language of Material: English

Storage Unit: B001629

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Physical Description: 1.0 folder(1 bound volume - 158 pages)

Date (inclusive): 1846-1848

Abstract: "Narrative of a California Volunteer" is a memoir by Judge Walter Murray that details his experiences as a member of Colonel Stevenson's 1st Regiment of New York Volunteers. The Regiment was formed in New York in 1846 to serve in California during the Mexican American War. It was transported around Cape Horn in 5 Ships and the troops were garrisoned at Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego. Murray's company arrived in San Francisco in 1847 and served in Santa Barbara. They were sent on to Baja California where they fought in the Battle and Siege of La Paz.

creator: Murray, Walter, 1826-1875

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection open for research.

Conditions Governing Use note

There are no restrictions on access.

Preferred Citation note

Walter Murray Reminiscences. The Society of California Pioneers.

Donor

Gift of Fannie Murray and Anita Murray Unangst, 1941.

Biographical/Historical note

Walter Murray was born in Gloucestershire, England in 1826. Apprenticed to a lawyer, he was sent to America in 1842; by 1846 he was living in New York, where he learned of the California Volunteers, a regiment commanded by Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson of New York. The regiment was intended to serve in the Mexican War with the understanding that, following the American possession of California, the Volunteers would be discharged and provided with settlements in the newly obtained land. Murray's company was one of the few to see actual battle, as most of Stevenson's Regiment arrived in California too late to take part in military service. Following his duties with the Volunteers, Murray tried his hand at mining gold in Sonora and, finding it unsuitable, made his living providing miners with supplies from San Francisco. Murray also established and published the Sonora Herald. Having married, Murray moved to San Luis Obispo, where he studied law, served as a Justice of the Peace, and published the San Luis Obispo Tribune. At the time of his death in 1875, Murray was the District Judge of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

(Information on Stevenson's Regiment, or the California Volunteers, was obtained from James D. Hart's A Companion to California, University of California Press, 1987.)

Scope and Contents note

Walter Murray joined the Stevenson Regiment, known commonly as the California Volunteers or the 1st New York Infantry Regiment, in July of 1846. The company began its training on Governors Island in New York and two months later boards the Loo Choo for California. The company spent nearly seven months on the ship, sailing around Cape Horn and landing in Santa Barbara in early April of 1847. Murray discusses the training the company received, describes his duties, and provides very detailed descriptions of the native Californians and the lands surrounding Santa Barbara. Soon the regiment sailed to Lower California (now known as Baja California) on the Lexington in order to occupy La Paz. Murray carefully describes what it was like to wait for the Mexican army to arrive and then recounts at length the attack on his garrison and the battles that commenced.

The account is left unfinished, in mid-sentence. Pencil notes throughout appear to be an attempt at editing. As the original narrative is faded in places and difficult to read, researchers should consult the typed copies in the biography file.

Existence and Location of Originals note

The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth St, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Existence and Location of Copies note

A typed transcript of the original handwritten journal is kept in the Society's Biographical Files under "Murray, Walter, Judge"

Subjects and Indexing Terms

California Military History 19th Century

California--History--1846-1850

La Paz (Baja California Sur, Mexico)

Lexington (Sloop)

Loo Choo (Ship)

Mexican War, 1846-1848--California.

Mexican War, 1846-1848--Military Personnel--American

Santa Barbara (Calif.)

Voyages and travels -- 19th century

Voyages to the Pacific coast
