Edward Brinley, Jr. Papers

Finding aid prepared by Alex Young.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
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Descriptive Summary
Title: Edward Brinley, Jr. Papers
Dates: 1823-1925
Bulk dates: 1840-1856
Collection Call Number: mssHM 74000-74090
Creator: Brinley, Edward, Jr.
Extent: 2 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
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Abstract: The collection contains papers of New Jersey sailor Edward Brinley, Jr. (1824-1867), including family correspondence and a journal kept by Brinley on board the USS North Carolina in 1840.
Language of Material: The records are in English and Latin
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
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Preferred Citation
Provenance
Purchased from Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC on October 28, 2009.
Biographical Note
Edward Brinley, Jr. (1824-1867), was born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to Francis W. Brinley, a merchant who served as Surveyor General of New Jersey, as well as the Mayor of Perth Amboy in 1845 and 1847. He was preceded by two other Edward Brinleys: his grandfather and his paternal uncle. After a childhood in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and an education at the Rensselaer Institute in Troy, New York, where he earned a degree in civil engineering, Brinley was appointed a midshipman in the United States Navy in 1840.
Brinley served aboard a number of ships over his career, including the U.S.S. North Carolina, U.S.S. Delaware, U.S. Frigate Brandywine, U.S. Frigate Congress, U.S.S. Falmouth, U.S.S. Preble, and the U.S.S. Potomac. During his time in the Navy, Brinley served up and down the U.S. Atlantic coast, as well as in the Mediterranean from approx. 1841-1843, the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico from approx. 1844-1846, the Pacific (aboard the U.S.S. Preble) from 1847-1850, and finally the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean again 1855-1856. While aboard the Preble in the Pacific theatre, Brinley participated in the naval blockades of the U.S.-Mexican war, visited ports-of-call including Honolulu, Shanghai, and most notably, Nagasaki, during Captain James Glynn's famed negotiation for the release of the sailors of the shipwrecked U.S. Whaler Lagoda. Brinley's health began to suffer at the end of his Pacific cruise in 1850 (his letters indicate that nearly 50 of his shipmates aboard the Preble died of dysentery while en route to California from China), and forced him to quit the Navy following his cruise on the Potomac during 1856. He returned to Perth Amboy, where he served as Surveyor General of the East Jersey Proprietors and Commissioner of Pilotage for the State of New Jersey. He was granted a certificate of exemption from the draft during the American Civil War due to disability on account of a "permanent organic stricture of the urethra." He died of unknown causes on February 18, 1867, in Charleston, North Carolina.
Edward's brother Thomas Brinley (1829-1871) was a gold rush miner in the vicinity of Stockton, California.
Scope and Content
The collection contains 69 letters (primarily between members of the Brinley family and Edward Brinley, Jr.), 18 documents (largely relating the career of Edward Brinley, Jr.), a journal kept by Brinley on board the USS North Carolina, October 1840-May 1841, and the U.S.S. Delaware from December 1843-March 1844, and a portable wooden writing desk owned by
Correspondence is arranged alphabetically. The letters written by Edward Brinley, Jr. (HM 74003-74038) will prove the most interesting aspect of the collection to historians, thanks to the wide-ranging experiences, diverse insights, and colloquial epistolary tone of its author. Edward Brinley, Jr.'s letters of the 1830s (HM 74003-74008) provide a remarkable portrait of his education. HM 74003-74004 are written by Edward to his father and provide a fascinating glimpse of Brinley's childhood trips to visit relatives in Allegheny, New York, and Zelienople, Pennsylvania. HM 74005-74008 are written from Edward Jr. to his father while he was studying toward his engineering degree at Rensselaer School (later to become Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and provide a unique picture of the student life there in the second decade of that institution's existence.

The first letter from Edward after his appointment as a Navy Midshipman is HM 74009, when he was serving aboard the U.S.S. North Carolina in New York Harbor. The next series of letters (HM 74010-74016) were written during Brinley's cruise of the Western Mediterranean and include remarks about ports-of-call including Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Genoa, and Port Mahon. HM 74012 has a fascinating account of attending a bullfight in Cadiz. HM 74014 includes a discussion of the Caroline affair, which had heightened Naval tensions in the Mediterranean at the time, as well as mention of the sale of Raphael's "Mary with Infants Christ and John The Baptist."

Edward Jr.'s letters of the 1844-1845 period (HM 74017-74021) deal with his service on the U.S.S. Falmouth in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean during the prelude to the U.S.-Mexican War. Here Brinley comments extensively on the intrigues of Mexican politics, U.S. Naval movements in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean and on the election of James Polk over Henry Clay. HM 74021 also includes a remarkable tale of a quartermaster who committed suicide by jumping off the Falmouth whose head was found, 24 hours later, in the gullet of a large shark caught by sailors on the U.S.S. Saratoga.

Edward Jr.'s letters of the 1846-1850 period (HM 74022-74033, HM 74075) deal with his service aboard the U.S.S. Preble during its cruise of the Pacific. Brinley's comments on the economic, ecological, and political phenomenon of the Pacific throughout these letters. The California gold rush, U.S. economic colonialism in present-day Hawaii, U.S. whaling in the Pacific, and the Chinese Opium trade are among the issues extensively discussed. HM 74028-74030 contain commentary of Glynn's entry into Nagasaki, although the discussion is fairly sparse considering the historical significance of Glynn's entry.

Edward Jr.'s letters of 1856 (HM 74035-74037), during his service on the USS Potomac in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, include discussions of the "filibusterer" William Walker's short-lived takeover of Nicaragua (where Edward Jr. made a port-of-call at San Juan).

The letters of Francis W. Brinley (HM 74039-74055), Edward, Jr.'s most frequent correspondent, are dominated by family news and fatherly advice regarding the merits of hard work and respect for authority. Francis's letters do contain some interesting portraits of quotidian life as a businessman in Perth Amboy, NJ, however. HM 74049 contains a detailed description of Francis's Gaelic-speaking Irish household servants. The two letters of Thomas Brinley (HM 74059-74060) paint a dismal picture of his failed attempt at making a fortune in 1850s California. The remainder of the correspondence relates primarily to the everyday affairs of the Brinley family.

The manuscripts and documents section, each series arranged chronologically, contains primarily Federal and New Jersey government documents relating to the military and civil service of Edward Brinley, Jr., as well as various documents relating to Andrewutta Brinley's widow's pension.

The journal of Edward Brinley, Jr. (HM 74073) contains details of nautical weather, crew discipline, and ship maintenance aboard the U.S.S. North Carolina during its stay in New York Harbor. The journal of the U.S.S. Delaware contained therein details the same during that vessel's cruise of the Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic journey back to Norfolk, VA. The back of the folio has a chart relating to nautical navigation.

The final folder in the collection contains two documents included with the collection at the time of accession—one a family tree of the family of Francis W. Brinley (of unknown provenance) and an excerpt from the catalog of Michael Brown Rare Books that contains transcriptions of large sections of the letters of Edward Brinley, Jr.

The collection also includes the portable wooden writing desk of Edward Brinley, Jr., which contains writing and nautical instruments, as well as a newspaper clipping which details how to make a homemade barometer.

**Arrangement**

Arranged in 2 series:

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts, Documents and Ephemera

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

**Personal Names**

Edward Brinley, Jr. Papers
Brinley, Edward, Jr.

Corporate Names
United States--Navy--Officers--Correspondence.
Brandywine (Frigate)
Congress (Frigate: 1841-1862)
Delaware (Ship)
North Carolina (Ship of the line)
Potomac (Frigate)
Falmouth (Sloop of war)

Subjects
Walker, William, 1824-1860.
Bullfights--Spain.
Irish Americans--New Jersey--History--19th century--Sources.
Mexican War, 1846-1848.
Whaling--History--19th century--Sources.
California--Emigration and immigration.
California--Gold discoveries--Personal narratives.
China--Description and travel.
Cuba--Description and travel.
Gibraltar--Description and travel.
Hawaii--Description and travel.
Japan--History, Naval--19th century.
Nicaragua--History--Filibuster War, 1855-1860.
Portugal--Description and travel.
Spain--Description and travel.

Genre
Ephemera--United States--19th century.
Ephemera--United States--20th century.
Journals (accounts)--United States--19th century.
Letters (correspondence)--United States--19th century.

Box 1

Correspondence

Note
Edward Brinley Jr's paternal grandfather and uncle of the same name are identified as Edward I and Edward II, respectively, in this contents list.

HM 74000 Brinley, Edward I. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1823, Mar. 23
HM 74001 Brinley, Edward II. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1842, Nov. 30
HM 74002 Brinley, Edward II. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1857, Nov. 3
HM 74003 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1831, July 29
HM 74004 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1836, Jan. 25
HM 74005 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1839, May 16
HM 74006 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1839, July 20
HM 74007 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1839, Nov. 21
HM 74008 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1839, Dec. 19
HM 74009 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, Feb. 13
HM 74010 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, July 13
HM 74011 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, July 30
HM 74012 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, Aug. 2
HM 74013 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, Aug. 8
HM 74014 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, Sep. 28
HM 74015 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1841, Dec. 22
HM 74016 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1843, Mar. 31
HM 74017 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1844, July 14
HM 74018 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1844, Nov. 16
HM 74019 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1845, Apr. 30
HM 74020 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1845 May 10-May 12
HM 74021 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1845, July 21
HM 74022 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1846, Oct. 28
HM 74023 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1847, Jan. 25
HM 74024 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Aliph Brinley. 1847, Sep. 25-Nov. 27
HM 74025 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1848, Sep. 1-Sep. 17
HM 74026 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1848, Oct. 8
HM 74027 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1849, May 7
HM 74028 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1849, May 21
HM 74029 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1849, June 25-Aug 9
HM 74030 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1849, Nov. 4
HM 74031 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. [1849, Nov.]
HM 74032 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1850, Jan. 12
HM 74033 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1852, Nov. 6
HM 74034 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1856, Jan. 4
HM 74035 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Andrewetta Brinley. 1856, Jan. 5
HM 74036 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to Andrewetta Brinley. 1856, Mar. 26-Apr. 8
HM 74037 Brinley, Edward, Jr. 1 letter to C----- Parker. 1866, June 7
HM 74038 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1841, Apr 22
HM 74039 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1841, May 14
HM 74040 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, July 10
HM 74041 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, Feb. 6
HM 74042 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, Mar. 2
HM 74043 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, June 10
HM 74044 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, July 18
HM 74045 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, Sep. 10
HM 74046 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, Oct. 28
HM 74047 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1842, Dec. 5-Dec. 15
HM 74048 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, Jan. 14
HM 74049 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, Jan. 19
HM 74050 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, Mar. 17
HM 74051 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, Apr. 24
HM 74052 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, June 19
HM 74053 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, July 2
HM 74054 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1843, July 29
HM 74055 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. [18417]
HM 74056 Brinley, Francis W. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1827, Dec. 26
HM 74057 Brinley, G.A. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1918, Mar. 1
HM 74058 Brinley, John. 1 letter to Andrewetta Brinley. 1857, June 30
HM 74059 Brinley, Thomas. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1859, June 17
HM 74060 Brinley, Thomas. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1859, June 13
HM 74061 Fogg, Francis Brinley. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1826, July 3
HM 74062 Forman, John S. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1834, Nov. 29
HM 74063 Gilpin, Edwin. 1 letter to Francis W. Brinley. 1834, Nov. 29
HM 74064 Greenleaf, A. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1853, Aug. 26
HM 74065 Halsey, E.P. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1855, Oct. 27
HM 74066 Mackay, Eliza. 1 letter to Edward Brinley I. 1821, July 1
HM 74067 Morris, ----- 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1855, Oct. 27
HM 74068 -----, J.D. 1 letter to Garret D. Wall. 1841, June 10
HM 74069 -----, N.M. 1 letter to Andrewetta Brinley. 1857, July 21
Box 2

Manuscripts, Documents and Ephemera

HM 74071 -----, Will A. 1 letter to Edward Brinley, Jr. 1852, Mar. 8


HM 74074 Rodal, Father Joseph Maria. Visa for Travel in Palestine. 1843, Aug. 20

HM 74075 Brinley, Edward, Jr. Application for Medical Survey. 1850, Jan. 21

Physical Description: 4 items

HM 74076 Parker, Joel, 1816-1888. Appointment of Edward Brinley, Jr. to Commissioner of Pilotage. 1863, Mar. 19

HM 74077 Sherman, W.M. Certificate of Exemption for a Drafted Person on Account of Disability. 1864, July 27

HM 74078 [Brinley, Andrewetta?] Statement of Account. 1868, Jan. 22

HM 74079 Brinley, Andrewetta. Bank Check. 1874, Apr. 22

HM 74080 Conger, John. Notarized Title for Mining Properties. 1882, Jan. 6

HM 74081 Armistead, John G. Copy of Marriage Certificate of Edward Brinley, Jr. and Andrewetta Rowlett. 1885, July 11

Physical Description: 3 items

HM 74082 Hitchcock, Ethan Allen, 1798-1870. Widow's Pension Certificate. 1899, July 27

Physical Description: 5 items

HM 74083 Newspaper Clipping (Death notice of Willie Alise Collier) 1925, Sep. 25

Physical Description: 2 items

HM 74084 Brinley, Edward, Jr. Catalog of Personal Book Collection. [1841-1844?]

HM 74085 [Brinley, Edward, Jr.]. Hawaiian-English translation notes. [1849?]

HM 74086 Brinley, Edward, Jr. Catalog of items sent to Perth Amboy. [1850?]

HM 74087 Calling Cards of Edward Brinley, Jr., Mrs John Rowlett, and Miss Andrewetta Rowlett. [Before 1856]

Physical Description: 5 items

HM 74088 Brinley, Edward, Jr. Draft of Resolutions to be Submitted. [After 1863?]

HM 74089 Brinley, Edward, Jr. Draft letter to John Rowlett. [1861-1865]

HM 74090 Empty Envelopes. [1863-1918?]

Physical Description: 6 items