Underhill (Henry Beers) Correspondence, 1849-1861

Collection number: Ms56

San Joaquin County Historical Society

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Underhill (Henry Beers) Correspondence
Date: 1849-1861
Collection Number: Ms56
Location: Erickson Vault
Extent: 1 volume
Contributing Institution: San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum
11793 North Micke Grove Road
Lodi, CA 95240
Language of Material: Records written in English

Abstract: The Henry Beers Underhill Correspondence is an eighty-page manuscript consisting of transcribed letters between Henry Beers Underhill (1821-1904), an early settler in Stockton, California; his first wife, Harriette Young Fish Underhill (1827-1854); Anna Fish Underhill Hart (1849-1943), the eldest of four children; and other family members. Also included as parts of several letters is an incomplete journal that Henry Beers Underhill kept in 1854 in transit to California from Missouri via the Isthmus of Panama. The correspondence affords insights into the westward migration shortly after California’s Gold Rush, social and business life in Stockton during the 1850s, and emotional strains within a family separated by the North American Continent.

Access Information

Collection is open for research by appointment.

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Preferred citation: [Item name], Henry Beers Underhill Correspondence, Ms56, San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum, Lodi, California.

Historical Sketch

An 1845 graduate of Amherst College, Henry Beers Underhill (1821-1904) was born in Troy, New York, to a Hudson River boat captain and his wife. Two years after graduation, he married Harriette Young Fish (1827-1854). Underhill spent the first eight years of his professional life teaching school, mostly in Mississippi. Becoming disillusioned with life as a teacher, he decided in 1854 to seek his fortune in California in partnership with his brother, James W. Underhill (1818-1876), who had already made his mark as a Stockton businessman. Underhill arrived in San Francisco in the spring of that year, having traveled through the Isthmus of Panama. He left behind his wife, who died of cholera shortly after his arrival in California, and two small children, Anna Fish Underhill (1849-1943) and Henry Beers Underhill, Jr. (b. 1851). Admitted to the California Bar in 1860, Underhill went on to hold posts as a San Joaquin County district attorney and judge, and later as an attorney for the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads. He retired in 1887 and died in Neshanic, New Jersey. Underhill married twice after the death of his first wife: the first time to Augusta Virginia Grove (d. 1861), then to Julia Card (d. 1903). He had two additional children, both by his second wife: William Albert Underhill (b. 1859) and George Lyons Underhill (b.
1861).

Scope and Content
The Henry Beers Underhill Correspondence is an eighty-page manuscript consisting of transcribed letters between Henry Beers Underhill (1821-1904), an early settler of Stockton, California; his first wife, Harriette Young Fish Underhill (1827-1854); and other family members.

Personal Names
Hart, Anna Fish Underhill, 1849-1943
Strong, Maria Ann Fish, b. 1828
Underhill, Harriette Young Fish, 1827-1854
Underhill, Henry Beers, 1821-1904
Underhill, Henry Beers, Jr., b. 1851
Underhill, James W., 1818-1876

Subjects
Gold Rushes--California--1850-1860
San Joaquin County (Calif.)--History
Westward movement--1850-1870
Westward movement--United States--1820-1880