Guide to the Theressa Gay Papers, 1946-1960

Collection number: M0274

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Theressa Gay Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1946-1960
Collection number: Special Collections M0274
Creator: Gay, Theressa.
Extent: 10.5 linear ft.
Repository: Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.
Language: English.
Access Restrictions
None.
Publication Rights
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Provenance
Gift of Theressa Gay, ca. 1975.

Preferred Citation:

Biographical Note
Theressa Gay was born on February 3rd, 1894 in Illinois. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin. She moved to Wyoming shortly after graduation and lived in several western states including Montana and California. She did graduate work at the University of Montana on the history of the trans-Mississippi West. She received her M.A. from the University of California, studying under Dr. Herbert E. Bolton. She wrote her Master's thesis on the Establishment of Territorial Government in Montana. She also did post-graduate work at Stanford University under Dr. Edgar Robinson.

Her varied professional career has included teaching, doing library work, and, most notably, performing research for her own publications and on the behalf of other history scholars. She taught high school history in various towns in Montana and Washington; in California, at Berkeley High School and at Castilleja School in Palo Alto. She has also worked as a teaching assistant at the University of Montana and at Stanford University. She also taught English as a Second Language...
for the Palo Alto Adult Education Program. She also worked as a school librarian and held several library staff positions, including Stanford University, when she was not teaching or working on research projects.

Theressa Gay’s most significant professional accomplishments were her contributions to the field of historical scholarship, most significantly to that of the history of the California Gold Rush. Her book, James W. Marshall, the Discoverer of California Gold (Georgetown, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1967), represents the culmination of more than thirty years of research. Those familiar with the history of the California Gold Rush, are aware that James Marshall’s discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill resulted in one of the greatest gold rushes in modern history. This event which had enormous consequences for the economic and social history of the State of California, has had more written about it than any other single event in California history. However, until Theressa Gay’s biography was published in 1967, only one other biography had been written about James Marshall. The first book was an official biography which was written at Marshall’s request in order to pay the debts that he had incurred in his later years. According to reviews that were written after the publication of her biography in 1967, Ms. Gay’s biography is well-documented and does much to dispel the myths and half-truths that surrounded Marshall and his life. This work goes well beyond being a simple biography, and gives scholars a detailed insight into life during a significant period in California history.

In addition to the biography on Marshall, Ms. Gay also published a book entitled Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, First Wife of Reverend Jason Lee of the Oregon Mission (Portland, Or.: Metropolitan Press, 1936); and number of periodical articles, including, The California and Australia Gold Rushes, As Seen by Amos S. Pittman. She also collected songs from the Gold Rush which were written by gold miners, popular song writers of the day and by dance-hall entertainers, from 1848 to 1855. This was an independent project during which she collected about two hundred songs. These songs, as well as research and manuscript material used by Ms. Gay in preparing her publications, form the core of her personal papers collection.

Scope and Content

The bulk of this collection consists mainly of research notes, correspondence and manuscript material pertaining to Theressa Gay’s historical research on the California Gold Rush. This collection also includes materials relating to other areas of historical research as well (see contents listings for specific topics); some biographical material and teaching files. The focus of this collection are the original manuscript of Thressa Gay's biography of James W. Marshall, and a group of about two hundred Gold Rush Songs that she collected. The papers in this collection reflect her work over a period of approximately fifteen years, from about 1946 to 1960. It comprises about ten and a half linear feet of material.

SERIES I: PERSONAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Scope and Content Note

The first series contains biographical notes and partial listings of Ms. Gay’s professional experiences. Also included is a datebook/calendar from 1947.

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE, 1946 TO 1960

Scope and Content Note

The second series consists of Ms. Gay's correspondence; mostly incoming correspondence, but some copies of outgoing correspondence as well. Most of the letters pertain to inquiries regarding research on the California Gold Rush, but a small number deal with other topics as well. There is personal correspondence included here as well, but these letters often also pertain to Ms. Gay's research. Some of the individual correspondents include Warren T. Russell, a Gold Rush historian; and Hesley S. Davis and Mother Lee, descendants of several of Ms. Gay's research subjects.

SERIES III: SONGS OF THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH, 1845-1855

Scope and Content Note

The third series contains the songs collected by Ms. Gay, on the California Gold Rush. The songs are filed in alphabetical order by title. Also included is Ms. Gay’s Plan for Work, which outlines her collecting strategy. A complete alphabetical listing of the songs collected by Ms. Gay is included here, as well as research and bibliographic notes.
SERIES IV: BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES W. MARSHALL

Scope and Content Note
The fourth series contains the original, handwritten manuscript for Ms. Gay’s biography of James W. Marshall. Also included are a number of chapter revisions from the manuscript, and a periodical review of the biography from the California Historical Quarterly.

SERIES V: RESEARCH NOTES AND MATERIALS (BY SUBJECT)

Scope and Content Note
The fifth series contains the bulk of the collection. It is divided according to subject area, and then is subdivided by specific topic. The first section consist of research notes for the James Marshall biography: some of the folder headings in this section reflect chapter titles from the Marshall biography. The section which follows consists of Gold Rush material, some of which overlaps with material on James Marshall. Other sections in this series include: California--Other Topics; Miscellaneous Topics (which includes research notes on the history of the Pacific Northwest, on American Politics of the 20th Century, and other miscellaneous topics.)

SERIES VI: TEACHING FILES, 1947 TO 19--

Scope and Content Note
The sixth series consists primarily of course materials and notes from two history courses for which Theressa Gay was a teaching assistant at Stanford University’s History Department. These courses included History 132 (The Westward Movement) and History 169 (The History of California.) Also included is one item from the Adult Education course that she taught for the Palo Alto Unified School District.

SERIES VII: PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTED MATERIALS

Scope and Content Note
The seventh series contains pamphlets, fliers, tourist maps, newsclicks and other printed materials that Theressa Gay collected during the course of her research. Of particular interest are the various pamphlets and fliers relating to the California Gold Rush, and 20th century political campaign materials. This series also includes periodicals and newspaper articles pertaining to Theressa Gay’s historical research; and history book trade list publications that were used as sources for research materials.

SERIES VIII: PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

Scope and Content Note
The final series of this collection consists of a variety of photographic materials, including black and white photographs, negative photostats and microfilm. Most of these materials pertain to the James Marshall, or the California Gold Rush, but photographs having to do with other subject matter is also included.

SERIES I: BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

Box 1, Folder 1,2
Biographical and resume notes
Datebook/Calendar from 1947

SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE, 1946 to 1960.

Incoming (1946 to 1960):

Box 1, Folder 4
A
Box 1, Folder 5
B--F
Box 1, Folder 6
G--H
Box 1, Folder 7
I--L
Box 1, Folder 8
M--P
Box 1, Folder 9-10
R--Z
Box 1, Folder 11
Hensley S. Davis
Box 1, Folder 12
Mother Lee
SERIES II: CORRESPONDENCE, 1946 to 1960.

Guide to the Theressa Gay Papers, 1946-1960

Box 1, Folder 13 Evelyn Mick
Box 1, Folder 14 Gerald D. Nash
Box 1, Folder 15-16 Warren T. Russell
Box 2, Folder 1-3 Warren T. Russell
Outgoing (1947-1960):
Box 2, Folder 4-5 Copies of outgoing correspondence (by date)
Box 2, Folder 6 Invoices

SERIES III: SONGS OF THE CALIFORNIA GOLDRUSH, 1845-1855

Box 2, Folder 7-8 Plan for Work and List of Songs, A-Z
Box 2, Folder 9-10 Songs, A--C
Box 2, Folder 11-12 Songs, D-F
Box 2, Folder 13-14 Songs, G-I
Box 2, Folder 15 Songs, J-L
Box 2, Folder 16-17 Songs, M-O
Box 2, Folder 18-19 Songs, P-R
Box 2, Folder 20 Songs, S-U
Box 2, Folder 21 Songs, V-Z
Box 2, Folder 22 Untitled Songs
Box 2, Folder 23 Song Lists
Box 2, Folder 24-25 Research and Bibliographic Notes
Box 2, Folder 26-27 Research and Bibliographic Notes
Box 3, Folder 1 Research and Bibliographic Notes

SERIES IV: BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES W. MARSHALL

Biography of James Marshall--Manuscript

Note
(Note: Ms. Gay's original enumeration is shown here in brackets; numbering without brackets reflects the published version)

Box 3, Folder 2 Prologue, The Ringing of the Bells [I]
Box 3, Folder 3 Chapter I. [A Boy Grows Up] Boyhood Family Traditions [II]
Box 3, Folder 4 Chapter II. Adventuring Westward [III]
Box 3, Folder 5 Chapter III. California Bound [IX]
Box 3, Folder 6 Chapter IV. Lord of New Helvetia [V]
Box 3, Folder 7 Chapter V. Marshall at Sutter's Fort [VI]
Box 3, Folder 8 Chapter VI. Helping Manifest Destiny [A Son of N. J.] [VII]
Box 3, Folder 9 Chapter VII. Building a Sawmill [VIII]
Box 3, Folder 10 Chapter VIII. Gold! [IX]
Box 3, Folder 11 Chapter IX. The Secret is Out [X]
Box 3, Folder 12 Chapter X. The Rush is On! [XI]
Box 3, Folder 13 Chapter XI. Yellow Fever... [XII]
Box 3, Folder 14 Chapter XII. Culloma, 1848-1849 [XIII]
Box 3, Folder 15 Chapter XIII. Marshall and the Miners [XIV]
Box 3, Folder 16 Chapter XIV. A Famous Sawmill's Fate
Box 3, Folder 17 Chapter XV. Prospecting Around [XV]
Box 3, Folder 18 Chapter XVI. A Coloma Vinyardist [XVII]
Box 3, Folder 19 Chapter XVII. As Seen About Coloma [XVIII]
Box 3, Folder 20 Chapter XVIII. Mining Again [XIX]
Box 3, Folder 21 Chapter XIX. Lecture Tour [XX]
Box 3, Folder 22 Chapter XX. A State Pension [XXI]
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### SERIES V: RESEARCH NOTES AND MATERIALS (BY SUBJECT)

**James W. Marshall:**
- Box 4, Folder 7-8: Aid for Marshall
- Box 4, Folder 9-10: Death of Marshall
- Box 4, Folder 11-12: Early Years in Missouri
- Box 4, Folder 13-14: Early Years in New Jersey
- Box 4, Folder 15-16: Estate
- Box 4, Folder 17-18: Gold Discovery
- Box 4, Folder 19: James W. Marshall Museum--Catalogue
- Box 4, Folder 20: Lecture Tour
- Box 4, Folder 21-22: Marshall County Proposal
- Box 4, Folder 23: Marshall on Parade
- Box 4, Folder 24: Marshall's Monument
- Box 5, Folder 1: Marshall's Monument
- Box 5, Folder 2: Military Career
- Box 5, Folder 3-4: Property--Litigation
- Box 5, Folder 5: Property--Sale of the Mill
- Box 5, Folder 6: Property--Sale to Samuel J. Hensley
- Box 5, Folder 7: Prospecting Around
- Box 5, Folder 8-9: Reminiscences About Marshall
- Box 5, Folder 10-11: Tarson's Life of Marshall
- Box 5, Folder 12-13: Vineyard in Coloma
- Box 5, Folder 14: What Cheer House
- Box 5, Folder 15: Misc. Notes
- Box 5, Folder 16: Misc. Notes

**Physical Description:** (notecards)

**Gold Rush in California**
- Box 5, Folder 17-18: Amos Pittnam Letters
- Box 5, Folder 19-20: California Gold Rush Centennial
- Box 5, Folder 21-22: Coloma
- Box 5, Folder 23-24: Difficulties of Mining during the Gold Rush (includes correspondence with Gerald Nash)
- Box 5, Folder 25: Emigration
- Box 5, Folder 26-27: El Dorado County Archives
- Box 5, Folder 28: El Dorado County History--Misc.
- Box 6, Folder 1: George Johnson's Coloma Notebook (excerpts)
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| Box 8, Folder 10 | Teaching Assistant Files (Stanford University History Department): |
| Box 8, Folder 11 | Course notes and materials from History 132 and History 169 |
| Box 8, Folder 12 | Teaching Files (Palo Alto Adult Education Program): |
| Box 8, Folder 13 | Course material (item) |
| Box 9, Folder 1 | Miscellaneous |

**SERIES VII: PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTED MATERIALS**

| Box 8, Folder 13 | Pamphlets and Fliers: |
| Box 9, Folder 1 | Gold Rush |
| | American Politics--Campaigns, etc. |
SERIES VII: PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTED MATERIALS

Maps and Travel Guides:
- Gold Rush Country
- Misc.

Book Catalogs
- Misc. items and recipes
- Misc.

Newspapers
- Newscellings
- Newscellings
- Newscellings

SERIES VII: PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

Microfilm and negatives

Physical Description: (os)

Photographs and photostats
- Photostats

Microfilm