Finding Aid for the Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers, 1846-1855

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Finding Aid for the Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers, 1846-1855

Collection number: 103

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1846-1855
Collection number: 103
Creator: Lancey, Thomas Crosby, 1824-1885
Extent: 8 boxes (4 linear ft.)
Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.
Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: Thomas Crosby Lancey (1824-1885) joined the U.S. Navy (1846) serving as baggage master on the North Carolina before being transferred to the U.S. Sloop of War Dale as captain's coxswain. He kept a journal of daily occurrences which formed the basis of the three volume manuscript, The Cruise of the Dale, some of which Hubert Howe Bancroft used in preparing his History of California. After his discharge from the U.S. Navy (1849), Lancey kept a store for Hoyt and Smith near Sacramento and ran the first stage to the gold mines while continuing to collect clippings from newspapers and information from his fellow veterans. The collection consists of historical notes, loose papers, clippings and ephemera chiefly concerning the American conquest of California (1846-1849), with particular emphasis on naval operations.

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Language: English.

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Restrictions on Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Advance notice required for access.

Additional Physical Form Available
A copy of the original version of this online finding aid is available at the UCLA Department of Special Collections for in-house consultation and may be obtained for a fee. Please contact:
Public Services Division
UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
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Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575
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Email: spec-coll@library.ucla.edu

The collection was in the possession of the Martel family until purchased by Robert E. Cowan from Adele Martel in 1922. It came to UCLA Special Collections as part of the Robert E. Cowan Collection.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers (Collection 103). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 1973053

Biography
Lancey was born in 1824, and was a native of Dover, Maine; entered merchant service at an early age and served on voyages to Havana, the Netherlands, France and China; entered the U.S. Navy on April 26, 1846 as baggage master on the North Carolina, serving until July 3, when he was transferred to the U.S. Sloop of War Dale as captain's coxswain; the Dale sailed from the Brooklyn Navy Yard on June 6, 1846 to take re-enforcements to Commodore Sloat's Pacific squadron; Lancey served on board while taking in the action of Muleje, Lower California and the bombardment of Guaymas, Mexico; he kept a journal of daily occurrences which formed the basis of the three volume manuscript, The Cruise of the Dale, some of which Hubert Howe Bancroft used in preparing his history of California; after his discharge from the U.S. Navy on March 13, 1849, Lancey kept a store for Hoyt and Smith near Sacramento, and ran the first stage to the gold mines; in 1851 he settled in San Francisco, where he became a painter and mining agent; he continued to collect clippings from newspapers and information from his fellow veterans; he died in 1885.

Extended Biographical Narrative
The Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers contain bound volumes, loose papers, notes and clippings pertaining to the American conquest of California during the Mexican War with particular reference to the American naval operations. These papers are the rough notes and journals of Thomas C. Lancey, who served on the U.S. Sloop of War Dale from 1846 to 1849. Lancy, a native of Dover, Maine, was born in 1824. At an early age he entered the merchant service and shipped as an able seaman on voyages to Havana, the Netherlands, France and China. He entered the U.S. Navy April 26, 1846 as baggage master on the old North Carolina and served until June 3rd of that year, when he was transferred to the U.S. Sloop of War Dale as captain's coxswain.

The Dale sailed from Brooklyn Navy Yard on June 6, 1846 to take much needed re-enforcements to Commodore Sloat's Pacific Squadron and remained on the Pacific coast until March 14, 1849. During this time Lancy served on board taking part in the action of Muleje, Lower California and the bombardment of Guaymas, Mexico.

Lancy kept a journal of daily occurences which it is believed he later supplemented with additional recollections to form the three volume holograph manuscript known as The Cruise of the Dale. This manuscript is the gem of his papers. An earlier version appeared serially in the San Jose Pioneer and the installment were assembled by the historian Hubert Howe Bancroft in scrapbook form. Bancroft used Lancey's narrative as well as other materials from his collection in the preparation of the California History, and spoke of it as the most complete collection extant of data on the conquest of California. Lancy also received praise from Bancroft for his indefatigable zeal and marked ability in his researches. There is no question that Lancy possessed many of the instincts of a true historian. Certainly he did realize keenly his responsibility as a witness and participant in the Mexican War in the Pacific to gather and perserve material concerning it.

Finding Aid for the Thomas Crosby Lancey Papers, 1846-1855
After his discharge from the U.S. Navy at San Francisco on March 13, 1849, he kept a store near Sacramento for Messrs. Hoyt and Smith and ran the first stage to the gold mines. In 1851 he settled in San Francisco permanently taking up employment as a painter and mining agent.

Lancey did not long lay aside his research, but continued to collect data from newspapers and from fellow veterans who had settled in San Francisco. He was assisted in his work by a number of old shipmates from the Dale, particularly James Louis Martel, who had become a real estate broker in San Francisco. Even during the last years of his life when he was almost constantly bedridden he continued his work with the hope that these rough notes may in after years assist the true historian to give his people a true chronicle of the achievements of Fremont, Sloat, Stockton and their compatriots in arms.

Upon his death without direct heir, Lancey's notes and papers passed to his close friend and former shipmate in the Dale, James Louis Martel. They remained in the possession of the Martel family until 1922, when they were purchased from Adele Martel by the late Robert E. Cowan and now form a significant unit in the Robert Ernest Cowan Collection of Californiana in the Library of the University of California at Los Angeles.

Scope and Content
Collection consists of historical notes, loose papers, clippings and ephemera of seaman Thomas Lacey, chiefly concerning the American conquest of California, 1846-1849, with particular emphasis on naval operations. Includes his original holograph journal kept while stationed aboard the U.S. Sloop of War Dale, some of his correspondence, personal papers and biographical data. Contains common place books, lists of ship passengers to California, lists of military officers, and biographical information of California pioneers.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Lancey, Thomas Crosby, 1824-1885--Archives.
Mexican War, 1846-1848.
Diaries.
Apollo (Bark)Box 6,folder 3.
The Associated Pioneers of the Territorial Days of California, New YorkBox 6,folder 3
The Associated Veterans of the Mexican War, San FranciscoBox 1,folder 2;Box 6,folder 3
Bear Flag RevoltBox 6,folder 7
California Academy of Sciences, San FranciscoBox 6,folder 3
California--GovernorsBox 3,folder 2
California, LowerBox 8
California (Steamship)Box 2,folder 4
Clark, Francis D.Box 1,folder 1
Columbus (U.S. Ship)Box 8
Congress (U.S. Frigate)Box 8
Cortes, HernandoBox 8
Cyane (U.S. Ship)Box 8
Dale (U.S. Sloop of War)Box 7Box 5,folder 3;Box 5,folder 4.
Erie (U.S. Steamship)Box 8
Fremont's Battalion of Mounted Rifles (California Battalion)Box 6,folder 2
Guaymas, MexicoBox 1,folder 3.
Independence (U.S. Ship)Box 8
Jesuits In Lower CaliforniaBox 8
Lancey, Thomas Crosby (1824-1885)passim
LANCEY, THOMAS CROSBYBox 1
Levent (U.S. Sloop of War)Box 8
Lexington (U.S. Ship)Box 3,folder 1Box 8
Martel, James LouisBox 1,folder 1
Mechanics Institute, San FranciscoBox 6,folder 3.
Mexicans in CaliforniaBox 5,folder 1,2.
Missions--California, Lower Box 8
Montauk (Clipper Ship) Box 2, folder 1, 2.
Monterey, California Box 3, folder 1
New York Infantry, 1st Regiment (1846-1848) Box 5, folder 8, 9.
Oregon (Steamship) Box 2, folder 5, 6.
Pacific Mail Steamship Company Box 2, folder 4, 5, 6.
Panama (Steamship) Box 2, folder 6.
Pioneers--California, 1814-1849 Box 2, folder 4, 5; Box 6, folder 3.
Portola, Gaspar de Box 3, folder 2
Portsmouth (U.S. Sloop of War) Box 2, folder 3.
Powell, Lawrence Clark Box 1, folder 4
Preble (U.S. Sloop of War) Box 8
Riley, Bennett Box 3, folder 2
Rudd, John Box 1, folder 1
San Jose Pioneer Box 1, folder 2
Selfridge, Thomas Oliver Box 6, folder 3
Shark (U.S. Schooner) Box 1, folder 5
Ships--Pacific Coast Box 1, folder 5
Spaniards in California Box 5, folder 1, 2.
Stevenson, Jonathan Drake Box 5, folder 8, 9.
Stevenson's Regiment (New York Volunteers) see New York Infantry, 1st Regiment (1846-1848)
Territorial Pioneers of California Box 1, folder 2; Box 6, folder 3
U.S. Army, 3rd Artillery, Company F Box 3, folder 1
Warren (U.S. Ship) Box 8
Williams, George Box 1, folder 1

Box 1, Folder 1  Letters from various persons. ca. 1848-1852.

Physical Description: 11 letters.

Scope and Content Note

Includes 5 to Lancey from James Louis Martel, 1848-1882; 2, March 1, 1882 & June 7, 1883 from Francis D. Clark; March 15, 1880 from George Williams.

Letter to Sarah Ann Lambert, Lancey's sister from John Rudd offering Lancey a place on the frigate Constitution. The letters relate to Lancey's research on the history of the Conquest.

Box 1, Folder 2  Personal papers. ca. 1849-1885.

Physical Description: 20 pieces.

Scope and Content Note

Includes:

Notarized copy of Lancey's discharge from the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Ship Dale.

Notes for correction of his Cruise of the Dale which appeared in the San Jose Pioneer.

Receipts for membership dues paid to the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War and the Territorial Pioneers of California.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 3</th>
<th><strong>Commonplace book. ca. 1846-1885.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 54pp. 38cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contains poems and stories by Lancey and copies of a letter, December 25, 1847 to his brother and January 29, 1848 to his mother, written on board the <em>Dale</em> at Guaymas, Mexico. The front cover of the book is decorated with an oil painting probably by Lancey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 4</th>
<th><strong>Biographical materials concerning Thomas C. Lancey.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 11 items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biographical sketches of Lancey; copy of his obituary from the <em>San Francisco Call</em>, October 15, 1885; manuscript concerning the origin of Lancey’s <em>Cruise of the Dale</em>, and notes on his life and character as reflected in his papers by Lawrence Clark Powell.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 5</th>
<th><strong>Notes and clippings concerning the history of ships.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 200 pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many notes refer to early ships on the Pacific coast. There is a manuscript history of the U.S. Schooner <em>Shark</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 6</th>
<th><strong>Miscellaneous notes concerning the conquest of California. 1846-1849. ca.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 187 pieces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 1</th>
<th><strong>Journal of voyages. ca. 1825-1846.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 247pp. holograph manuscript. 37cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounts of voyages on the Atlantic coast, including descriptions of Maine and New York and records of Lancey’s voyages to Havana, the Netherlands, France and to Canton, China aboard the clipper ship <em>Montauk</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box 2, Folder 2 | **Clippings, notes, etc. that have been removed from the journal and placed in an envelope with notation of their former location in the volume.** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 3</th>
<th><strong>History of the U.S.S. Portsmouth. 1843-1879.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 44 leaves. holograph manuscript. 32cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A history of the U.S. Portsmouth from its construction in 1843 to its arrival in Hampton Roads, Virginia, January 11, 1879 with particular attention to the part played by that vessel in the conquest of California. Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed and placed in an envelope with notation of their former location in the volume.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 4</th>
<th><strong>List crew and passengers who arrived in the Pacific Coast Mail Steamship California. February 28, 1849 with biographical matter [about] them.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: 25 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 37cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On pp.1 and 2 of the above manuscript is a list of the passengers and crew of the Pacific Coast Mailship <em>California</em>. The remaining 23 pages are devoted to biographical information concerning these individuals arranged alphabetically by individual. Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed and placed in an envelope with notation of their former location in the manuscript.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 2, Folder 5  List of the passengers who came in the Pacific Mail Steamship Oregon. April 1, 1849 and biographical notices.

  Physical Description: 25 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 38cm.
  Scope and Content Note
  On page 1 of the manuscript is data concerning the Pacific Coast Mail Steamship Oregon and a list of her officers. The remaining 24pp. are devoted to biographical information concerning the individuals who came on the Oregon. This information is arranged alphabetically by name of individual.
  Notes, clippings, etc. including some concerning the history of the Oregon have been removed and placed in an envelope with notation of their place in the original manuscript.

Box 2, Folder 6  List of the passengers who arrived in San Francisco. June 4, 1849 in the Pacific Mail Steamer Panama and biographical notices.

  Physical Description: 56 leaves (some blank). Holograph manuscript. 38 cm.
  Scope and Content Note
  Biographical information concerning the passengers who arrived on the Panama arranged alphabetically by passenger.
  Note, clippings, etc., including some concerning the history of the Panama have been removed and placed in an envelope with n notation of their location in the original manuscript.

Box 3, Folder 1  List of the officers of Company F, 3rd U.S. Artillery and non-commissioned officers and privates. January 1847.

  Physical Description: 53 leaves (some blank). Holograph manuscript. 38cm.
  Scope and Content Note
  Biographical data concerning members of Company F, 3rd U.S. Artillery, who embarked from New York City on the U.S.S. Lexington for California, July 14, 1846 and landed at Monterey, California, January 28, 1847 to participate in the American conquest of California. A short history of the company is included on pp.1-2 of the manuscript.
  Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed and placed in an envelope with notation as to their original place in the manuscript.

Box 3, Folder 2  Governors of California. 1767-1850.

  Physical Description: 43 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 37 cm.
  Scope and Content Note
  Notes on the Spanish, Mexican and American Military Governors of California commencing with Gasper de Portolá and concluding with Bennett Riley.
  There are notes, clippings, etc. (16 pieces) removed from the manuscript with notation as to their original place. These are in a folder with the manuscript.

Box 3, Folder 3  Notes on ship arrivals in San Francisco. 1849 with sailing records and ships and captains.

  Physical Description: 26 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 38cm.
  Scope and Content Note
  The information is arrange alphabetically by ship.
  Notes, clippings, etc. (ca. 200 pieces) have been removed and placed in a pocket at the end of the volume with notation as to their original position in the manuscript.
Pioneers. ca. 1814-1849.

Physical Description: 2 vol. of 8 vol. set of holograph manuscript 33 cm.

Scope and Content Note
A useful compendium of biographical notes concerning California pioneers who arrived in California between 1814 and 1849. Includes 2 volumes with biographical notes on Spanish and Mexican settlers in California.

Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed from each volume and placed in envelopes contained in a folder at the end of the series of volumes with a notation as to which volume and page from which they were removed.

Box 3, Folder 4
vol.1: A-C.

Box 3, Folder 5
vol.2: C-G.

Pioneers. ca. 1814-1849

Scope and Content Note
vol.3-6 of 8 vol. set of holograph manuscript 33cm. (continued)

Box 4, Folder 1
vol.3: H-L.

Box 4, Folder 2
vol.4: M-O.

Box 4, Folder 3
vol.5: P-S.

Box 4, Folder 4
vol.6: T-Z.

Box 5, Folders 1-2
2 volumes of Spanish and Mexican settlers of California, vol. 7 and 8 of the Pioneers series of holograph manuscript.

Box 5, Folder 3
List of the commissioned and warrant officers attached to the U.S. Ship Dale from June 2, 1846 to August 23, 1849 and who served in California during the Mexican War.

Physical Description: 29 leaves (some blank). Holograph manuscript. 33cm.

Scope and Content Note
Includes biographical information.

Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed and placed in a pocket at the end of the volume with notation as to their original place in the manuscript [6 pieces].

Box 5, Folder 4
Names of petty officers and seamen and marines 1st class, boys and landsmen who served in the U.S. Ship Dale from July 2, 1846 to August 2, 1849 during the Mexican War in California.

Physical Description: 28 leaves. (some blank) holograph manuscript 33cm.

Scope and Content Note
Includes biographical information concerning many of the individuals listed.

Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed from the manuscript and placed in an envelope with original location in the volume noted [32 pieces].

Box 5, Folder 5
Commissioned and warrent officers of the United States Navy who served in California during the Mexican War. 1846-1949.

Physical Description: 28 leaves (some blank). Holograph manuscript. 37cm.

Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically and containing biographical data for some entries.

Box 5, Folders 6-7
Notes, clippings, etc. removed from the manuscript and placed in envelopes with original location in the volume noted.

Physical Description: ca. 468 pieces.
Box 5, Folder 8

List of Field Officers, Staff Officers, Line Officers, Captains, Lieutenants and non-commissioned staff of the New York Volunteers, known as Stevenson's Regiment who served in California from September 16, 1846-October 26, 1848 during the Mexican War.

Physical Description: 28 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 38 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Includes some biographical information.

Box 5, Folder 9

Notes, clippings, etc. removed from the manuscript have been placed in an envelope with notation of their original place in the volume.

Physical Description: ca. 105 pieces.

Box 6, Folder 1

List of seamen and ships serving on the Pacific coast in the War with Mexico.

Physical Description: 134 leaves. (many blank) holograph manuscript 37 cm.

Box 6, Folder 2

Naval officers who have died, with date of birth and death when known and with time [of] original entry into the naval service etc.

Physical Description: 28 leaves. (some blank) holograph manuscript 37 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically and containing biographical data for some entries.
Notes, clippings, etc. have been removed from the manuscript and placed in a pocket at the back of the volume with notation of their original position in the manuscript [ca. 65 pieces].

Box 6, Folder 3


Physical Description: 1 vol. (many pages blank) 36 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Letters from the Mechanics' Institute, San Francisco, Territorial Pioneers of California, the Associated Pioneers of the Territorial Days of California, the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War and the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, and including tickets, brochures and invitations from these organizations pasted on the first 26 leaves of the book. There are also several letters from the U.S. Customs House at Newburyport, Massachusetts concerning the barque Apollo, a note from Thomas O. Selfridge and a few personal items concerning extra pay due Lancey for his term of service in the U.S. Navy.

Box 6, Folder 4

Army officers who served in California during the Mexican War. 1846-1848 and 1849.

Physical Description: 28 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 37 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically and including biographical data.

Box 6, Folders 5-6

Notes, clippings, etc. that have been removed from the manuscript and placed in an envelope with notation of their original place in the volume.

Physical Description: ca. 203 pieces.

Box 6, Folder 7

Men who served in California during the Mexican War. 1846-1848 under the Bear Flag and in Fremont's Battalion of Mounted Rifles, and all others not attached to the regular Army or Navy of the United States.

Physical Description: 28 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 38 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically and including biographical data.

Box 6, Folders 8-9

Notes, clippings, etc. removed from the manuscript have been placed in these folders with notation of their original place in the volume.

Physical Description: ca. 276 pieces.
Box 8  Portfolio. [First New York Volunteers. 1846-1848] List of officers by rank and men by company.

Physical Description: 154 leaves (many blank) holograph manuscript 38 cm.
Scope and Content Note
Does not include biographical information.
Clippings, notes, etc. have been removed from the manuscript and placed in a pocket at the front of the volume (17 pieces).


Physical Description: 3 vol. Holograph manuscript. 39 cm.
Scope and Content Note
The original holograph journal kept by Lancey while serving as captain's coxswain aboard the U.S. Sloop Dale. The journal covers the period from the Dale's departure for California from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, June 6, 1846 to March 13, 1849, when Lancey's tour of duty with the U.S. Navy terminated. The Dale sailed for New York on the following day with a cargo of gold dust and arrived there August 23, 1849.

Box 8  History of the U.S. Frigate Congress, etc. ca. 1870.

Physical Description: 53 leaves. Holograph manuscript. 39 cm. Oversize material.
Scope and Content Note
A history of the U.S. Frigate Congress, August 16, 1841-January 14, 1847 with special attention to the part played by that vessel in the conquest of California. Also included in this volume are: notes on the office of Secretary of Navy and a brief history of the U.S.S. Columbus, May 1816-February 29, 1847 with a particular reference to the part played by that vessel in the conquest of California.
Clippings, notes, etc. have been removed from the volume and placed in an envelope with notation of their former location in the volume. Included in the notes are histories of the U.S.S. Warren, U.S. Sloop Preble, U.S. Steamship Erie, U.S.S. Lexington, U.S. Sloop Levent, U.S.S. Independence, and the U.S.S. Cyane.

Box 8  History of California, 1522-1735.

Physical Description: 63 numbered pages. Holograph manuscript. 43 cm.
Scope and Content Note
This incomplete manuscript history of California was probably written by Lancey during the last decade of his life when owing to failing health he was unable to pursue his regular work and spent considerable time on his historical research.
The chapters or sections completed are: First discovery of Baja California and Voyages Thither in the Times of Hernan Cortes; Reduction of Baja California by the Jesuits and Their Transactions to 1758; Progress of the Baja California Missions till the End of the Year 1703, and 1717, Part 2, which continues the the history of the Baja California Missions to 1735. Notes, and clippings have been removed and placed in a pocket at the end of the manuscript with a notation as to their original place in the volume (7 pieces).