
Guide to the Thomas B. Eastland Papers, 1849

Collection number: MS 19 (Vault)

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library
San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Thomas B. Eastland Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1849

Collection number: MS 19 (Vault)

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Access

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Biography

The route followed by Eastland was through Texas and Mexico, but after 4 months enroute West Eastland wrote to his wife "...we are still 170 miles from El Paso...gross ignorance or willful design has governed those who induced the government to make a road this route...". On

Sept. 11, 1849 Eastland decided to strike out on his own--to continue to Chichuahua and there book passage to San Francisco. He arrived in San Francisco aboard the steamer Oregon on Dec. 1, 1848. By 1850 he and his son had formed Eastland and Son, a diversified business venture. Thomas Eastland returned to his family in Nashville in 1853. In addition to his business venture with his son he had purchased mining claims in Chinese Camp and Indian Gulch and lots for resale in the short-lived town of Ora in what was then Sutter Co., now Placer Co.

Scope and Content

The diary and 13 letters concern Eastland's overland trip from Nashville, Tenn. to Mazatlan where he boarded the steamer Oregon for the remainder of the trip to San Francisco.

Diary

Provides good descriptions of camping sites, availability of water, encounters with the Indians, and his eventual weariness at the slow pace of the expedition. 57 separate camps were made, from which Army scouts made forays into the countryside. After 97 days, still 170 miles from El Paso, Eastland decided to proceed independently with his son "Jo" and the slave Dow.

Date: Washington, DC Feb. 25, 1849

Title: To his son (probably Joseph): Concerns son's failure to make the Midshipman's list and his father's hope that the new Secretary of the Navy might offer a new chance; breaks news of his determination to go to the gold fields.

Date: April 20, 1849

Title: To his wife Josephine: suggests that her father should make a will giving her "in (her) own right, the negroes"; promises to send money as soon as possible.

Date: New Orleans, La. May 1, 1849

Title: To his wife Josephine: expects to reach San Antonio in time to meet "Jack" Hayes; son Jo is traveling with him.

Date: New Orleans, La. May 1, 1849

Title: To his wife: written same day as previous letter, requesting that mail be forwarded.

Date: New Orleans, La. May 9, 1849

Title: To his wife: Concerns financial arrangements; alluded to extravagant claims about gold mines.

Date: Lavacca Bay, Texas May 17, 1849

Title: To his wife: Aboard the steamer Fanny; describes cholera epidemic in San Antonio.

Date: San Pedro River, Texas June 3, 1849

Title: To his wife: describes the beginning of life in the woods; breaking mules etc.; engineers survey finds favorable conditions; some families traveling together; description of San Antonio; the slave Dow does cooking and chores; will be in San Francisco in Oct.; "...would be glorious to be first party in finding the precious stuff".

Date: Rio Leano, Texas June 12, 1849

Title: To his wife: At camp #1 for ten days thence to El Paso; is keeping a journal.

Date: "California Spgs," Texas July 9, 1849

Title: To his wife: intends to sell his wagon and use pack mules; Indians becoming bolder but no major trouble; describes prairie fire.

Date: El Paso Del Norte, Mexico Sept. 11, 1849

Title: To his wife: Irksome delays have tried his patience; camped at Coons Ranch; Apaches troublesome; Indian treaties discussed; Indian ambushes and hand-to-hand fights; El Paso and lives of the natives; tired of "experimental traveling."

Date: Chichuahua, Mexico Sept. 30, 1849

Title: To his wife: Enroute from Mazatlan via Durango; no gold on the Gila River route.

Date: Chichuahua, Mexico Oct. 5, 1849

Title: To his wife: Cholera epidemic; religious customs; march to "Sacramento" where Donophan defeated Chichuahuan; Governor Trias estate; mineral wealth; prepares to set out for Durango.

Date: San Francisco, Ca. Dec. 31. 1949

Title: To his wife: Describes arrival in San Francisco; purchases land on Feather River; reassures her that he will send money.

- "Battle of Sacramento" - Mexican War, 9/19, 9/22 diary entries
- Blacks in California - 1849 6/17 diary entry
- California - 1849

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- Chichuahua, Mexico - 1849
 - Chinese Camp, Tuolumne Co.
 - Coons' Ranch
 - Diaries
 - Doniphan, Cl. Alex W.
 - Feather River, Butte Co. -1849
 - El Pase Del Norte, Mexico - description -1849
 - Hayes, Col. "Jack"
 - Indians - Apaches 9/11 letter
 - Indians - treaties with U. S. Govt.
 - Indians of the West - methods of ambush warfare
 - Indian Gulch, Mariposa Co. -1849
 - Millerites - religious sect 7/28 diary entry
 - Mining Claims - 1849
 - Oregon - steamer
 - Oro, Ca. 1849
 - Overland Journeys -1849
 - San Francisco -description 1849
 - Texas Rangers
 - Trias, Angel -Governor of Mexico 1849
 - Van Horne, Brevet Major Jefferson
 - Yeatman, Capt. William