

Guide to the Albert Barnitz Papers

WA MSS S-1294



by Tina Evans

June 1986

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1294

CREATOR: Barnitz, Albert Trovillo Siders, 1835-1912

TITLE: Albert Barnitz papers

DATES: 1852-1978

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6.33 linear feet (15 boxes + 1 broadside folder)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain correspondence, diaries, military papers, and other material documenting the military career of Albert Barnitz and Barnitz family life. The papers concern such subjects as cavalry operations, military life, relations between parents and children, and child rearing practices.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.barnitz>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.barnitz>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The material was donated to The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library by Barnitz's granddaughter, The Marquesa de Zahara, between 1969 and 1988. The papers also include a typescript of *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, edited by Robert M. Utley, donated by the editor, and a copy of the book, published in 1978.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 13: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The Albert Barnitz Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Albert Barnitz Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

ALBERT TRORILLO SIDERS BARNITZ (1835-1912)

Albert Trorillo Siders Barnitz was born at Bloody Run, Pennsylvania, the son of Dr. Martin Eichelberger Barnitz and Martha McClintic Barnitz, on March 10, 1835. The family moved to Ohio shortly after his birth. Barnitz briefly attended Kenyon College in 1851 and the Cleveland Law College in 1858-59. During this time Barnitz published a book of poetry, *The Mystic Delvings* (1857). While at Cleveland Law College, Barnitz married Eva Prouty. She died in childbirth in 1860.

In 1861 Barnitz joined the 13th Ohio Infantry as a three month volunteer. In August 1861 he enlisted in Company G, 2d Ohio Cavalry and was mustered as a sergeant. The 2d Ohio Cavalry spent the next year in Missouri and in June 1862 Barnitz was promoted to second lieutenant. By February 1863 he had advanced to the rank of senior captain.

Barnitz spent 1863 in Tennessee, and during a raid he suffered severe injuries when his horse fell on him. Barnitz was wounded in June 1864 at Ashland Station, Virginia. In autumn he returned to his regiment fighting under the command of George Armstrong Custer in the Shenandoah Valley. By 1865 Barnitz was in command of the 2d Ohio Cavalry. He participated in several battles, culminating in the Battle of Appomattox. In September 1865 he returned to civilian life, but in November 1866 he was commissioned a captain in the U. S. Cavalry. The following year Barnitz married Jennie Platt.

For the next two years Barnitz was stationed at various posts, including Fort Leavenworth, Fort Harker, and Fort Riley, and was involved in Indian campaigns in Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and the Indian Territory. During the Battle of the Washita River Barnitz was wounded. The severity of the wound forced his retirement in November 1870. He was, however, awarded the rank of brevet colonel for "distinguished gallantry."

Barnitz returned to Cleveland with Jennie and daughter Bertha. The couple had two more daughters; Maidie, born on October 23, 1871, and Blanche, born on December 16, 1874. Barnitz continued his study of law, became involved in Republican politics, and was a frequent speaker at military reunions. By the late 1870's the family began to travel extensively, and Barnitz wrote travelogues for the *Cleveland Morning Herald* and the *Daily Leader*. Barnitz continued to travel until his death at Asbury Park, New Jersey on July 18, 1912.

For additional biographical information, see *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, (1978) by Robert M. Utley.

BARNITZ FAMILY

Albert T. S. Barnitz (1835-1912)-m.1 1857 Eva Prouty (-1860)

-----m.2 1867 Jennie Platt (1841?-1927)
-----Bertha Barnitz (1870-1960)-m. 1892 Bernard Abert Byrne
-----Maidie Barnitz (1871-1909?)
-----Blanche Barnitz (1874-)-m. 1896 Hobart Stocking

Scope and Contents

The Albert Barnitz Papers document the life and career of Albert Trorillo Siders Barnitz. The papers span the dates 1852-1978, but the bulk of the material covers the years 1860-1910.

The collection has three series. Series I, *Correspondence*, consists primarily of letters between Barnitz and his family and is found in Boxes 1-3 of the Barnitz Papers. Series II, *Diaries*, Boxes 4-8, is composed of the diaries of Alfred, Jennie, and Bertha Barnitz. Series III, *Family Papers*, is located in Boxes 9-11, and contains the personal papers of Albert Barnitz and other material relating to him.

[Series I, Correspondence](#), houses chronologically arranged correspondence between Albert and Jennie Barnitz and other family members. The letters span the years 1859-1913, but the bulk of the letters are between 1866-69. The correspondence primarily documents Barnitz's military career. Later correspondence concerns finances and travels. Typescripts were produced for letters published in *Life in Custer's Cavalry* and can be found with the original letters.

The correspondence for 1859-60 (Box 1, folder 2) is concerned mainly with Barnitz and his first wife, Eva Prouty. Letters between 1861 and 1865 (Box 1, folders 3-5) document his Civil War career. These letters, written to family and friends, discuss such topics as the misappropriation of horses, the lawlessness of the troops, and escaped slaves.

Barnitz's correspondence with Jennie Platt began in 1866. The letters concern courtship, daily activities, and plans for the future (Box 1, folders 6-11). Early in 1867 Jennie married Albert who was almost immediately assigned to command Troop G of the 7th Cavalry. His letters to Jennie from the field offer a chronicle of the Indian Wars from 1867-68, details about military life, and Barnitz's opinions of his fellow officers.

During the spring of 1867 Barnitz was involved in the unsuccessful Hancock expedition against the Cheyenne Indians. In both Albert's and Jennie's letters can be found descriptions of life at Fort Riley, military routines, the Cheyenne Indian camp, and the officers stationed with Barnitz.

Barnitz sent Jennie an account of the first important battle between the Indians and the 7th cavalry at Fort Wallace, as well as a copy of the official report (Box 1, Folders 24-25). He also wrote in great detail concerning Indian fighting techniques, the cholera epidemic at Fort Harker, and George Armstrong Custer's unauthorized march to Fort Harker (Box 1, folders 24-28). Barnitz's increasing disenchantment with Custer and his behavior was a major topic of discussion in 1867 (Box 2, folders 29-36).

Barnitz continued to send detailed accounts of military maneuvers in 1868. He described Indian skirmishes, Camp Alfred Gibbs, his fellow officers, his growing dissatisfaction with the army, and his receipt of the brevet major and brevet lieutenant colonel ranks (Box 2, folders 44-54).

The correspondence from the later part of 1868 chronicles the Battle of the Washita River, his injuries, and includes letters from Lieutenant Edward S. Godfrey reporting on Barnitz's condition (Box 3, folders 61-63). The letters of 1869-70 concern his retirement from the army.

The correspondence spanning the years 1872-1913 is concerned mainly with Barnitz's financial affairs and travels (Box 3, folders 66-74). At the end of the *Correspondence* series are undated letters, most of which were written by his daughters.

[Series II, Diaries](#), can be found in Boxes 4-8 of the Barnitz Papers. The diaries span the years 1862-1910 and are arranged by author and date. The majority of the diaries were Albert's, but there are four diaries belonging to Jennie, and one diary kept by Bertha Barnitz Byrne.

The earliest diaries date from the Civil War. Albert Barnitz kept records of military maneuvers, his daily routines, his health, and the weather. Also included are his field notes for the campaign of 1864, lists of wounded, and an account of a shooting involving "Wild Bill" Hickock (Box 4, folders 75-82).

Barnitz was a careful observer of events around him. During the Indian Wars he listed the letters he sent and received, made notes on the Arapaho Indian language, and provided detailed descriptions of cavalry expeditions on the Plains. He also recorded his impressions of fellow officers, his disapproval of the rampant alcoholism in the cavalry, social life, and events in daily life (Boxes 4 and 5, folders 86-89).

Barnitz continued to keep a diary after his retirement. He chronicled the birth and development of his three daughters, including their physical growth and their ailments. He copied Bertha and Maidie's letters to Santa Claus, kept examples of their paper dolls, and noted their tantrums. He emphasized the fact that he and Jennie did not believe in spanking the children. Barnitz also discussed household maintenance, gardening, and problems with the servants, compiled genealogies of both the Barnitz and the Platt families, and kept records of household expenses.

The diaries from 1880 to the turn of the century were usually written in small pocket notebooks which Barnitz intended to copy into diary books. The diaries from this period detail his financial dealings, including those in real estate, and his involvement in lawsuits (Box 6, folders 97-102). He continued to discuss the activities of his daughters, including the marriage Bertha, his eldest daughter, the birth of her children, and the marriage and divorce of his youngest daughter, Blanche.

Barnitz noted "signs of depression" in his second daughter Maidie as early as 1895. Until her death sometime in 1909 Barnitz kept a detailed record of her deteriorating mental condition, her experience in the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, various treatments she underwent, and the opinions of the doctors who examined her.

The diary of Bertha Barnitz Byrne spans the years 1889-97 (Box 7, folder 124). She discussed her marriage, her children, and the divorce of her sister.

The diaries of Jennie Barnitz are not as detailed as those of her husband. They cover the years 1862-68 and describe her day-to-day activities and their courtship. The diaries from the later period describe her life in Kansas with Barnitz and a trip she made to the East during one of his campaigns (Box 7, folder 119-23).

[Series III, Family Papers](#), is contained in Boxes 9-11 of the Barnitz Papers and is arranged alphabetically by subject and genre. Included in this series are financial papers, material relating to reunions of the Ohio Cavalry, and an autobiography of Bertha Barnitz Peele. A section of military papers contains Confederate Army financial records and Union Army prisoner interrogation reports, a Union Army inspection book, financial records, and papers relating to Barnitz's disability (Box 9, folders 134-40). The section of newspaper clippings consists of biographical information, clippings pertaining to the Civil War, and the Indian Wars, and Barnitz's campaign for sheriff of Cuyahoga County (Box 9, folders 141-45).

Also included is a section containing photographs. The photographs of the Barnitz family are reproductions of originals in the possession of the Marquesa de Zahara made for *Life in Custer's Cavalry*. They were annotated by Robert M. Utley. There are also original photographs of unidentified Indians, Fort Hays, Fort Dodge, Fort Harker, and Fort Wallace.

"Writings" houses material by Albert Barnitz, including a copy of *Mystic Delvings*, folders of holograph writings, and copies of his travelogues the *Cleveland Morning Herald*, and the *Daily Leader*. Also included are the typescripts and published version of *Life in Custer's Cavalry*. The book reproduces letters and diary entries for 1867-68, but it also includes additional biographical information and an appendix on the frontier forts.

An addition to the papers in November 1988 consists of material removed from a family scrapbook. The material includes a photograph of Eva Prouty, printed ephemera relating to Barnitz's life and career, and personal and military correspondence.

The [restricted fragile papers](#) in Box 13 consist of originals for which preservation photocopies have been made.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1857-1913

1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

Series I, *Correspondence* consists of chronologically arranged correspondence. Undated material, arranged alphabetically and letter fragments are placed at the end of the series.

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1857-58
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1859-60
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1861-62
b. 1, f. 4	Correspondence	1863
b. 1, f. 5	Correspondence	1864-65
b. 1, f. 6-11	Correspondence	1866
b. 1, f. 12-28	Correspondence	1867 Jan-Jul
b. 2, f. 29-42	Correspondence	1867 Aug-Dec
b. 2, f. 43-52	Correspondence	1868 Jan-Jul
b. 3, f. 53-63	Correspondence	1868 Aug-Dec
b. 3, f. 64	Correspondence	1869
b. 3, f. 65	Correspondence	1870
b. 3, f. 66	Correspondence	1872-73
b. 3, f. 67	Correspondence	1884-85
b. 3, f. 68	Correspondence	1890-91
b. 3, f. 69-70	Correspondence	1892
b. 3, f. 71-72	Correspondence	1893
b. 3, f. 73	Correspondence	1894-95
b. 3, f. 74	Correspondence	1908-13
b. 3, f. 75	Correspondence	n.d.
b. 3, f. 76	Letter fragments	n.d.

Series II: Diaries, 1860-1910*2.25 linear feet (5 boxes)*Series II, *Diaries*, is arranged alphabetically by author, and then chronologically.

Barnitz, Albert		
b. 4, f. 77-87	Diaries	1860-68 Apr
b. 5, f. 88-95	Diaries	1868 Apr-1878
b. 6, f. 96-106	Diaries	1879-96
b. 7, f. 107-117	Diaries	1897-1910
b. 7, f. 118	Diary fragment	n.d.
b. 8, f. 119-23	Barnitz, Jennie See: Oversize, Box 12, folder 177	1862-68
b. 8, f. 124	Byrne, Bertha Barnitz	1889-97

Series III: Family Papers, 1852-1978*1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)*Series III, *Family Papers*, are arranged alphabetically by subject or genre.

	Announcement See: Oversize, Box 12, folder 173	
b. 9, f. 125	Cards	1870-93
	Financial papers	
b. 9, f. 126	Account books	1866, 1892-93
b. 9, f. 127-29	Receipts	1875-93, n.d.
	Military papers	
b. 9, f. 130-36	Miscellaneous	1912, 1963, n.d.
b. 9, f. 137	Second Ohio Cavalry reunions See also: Oversize, Box 12, folders 174-175	1874-1904
b. 9, f. 138-40	Miscellaneous papers	n.d.
	Newspaper clippings	
b. 9, f. 141	Biographical	1863-1912, n.d.
b. 9, f. 142	Civil War	n.d.
b. 9, f. 143	Indian Wars	1867-94, n.d.
b. 9, f. 144	Miscellaneous	1862-1904, n.d.
b. 9, f. 145	Speaking engagements	1878-1917, n.d.
b. 9, f. 146	Notebook	n.d.
	Photographs	
b. 9, f. 147	Barnitz family	1870
b. 9, f. 148	Barnitz, Albert See also: Oversize, Box 13, folder 177	1856-75
b. 9, f. 149	Barnitz, Jennie	1867
b. 9, f. 150	Custer, George A., and Elizabeth	1867-74
b. 9, f. 151-52	Indians	
b. 10, f. 153	Military photographs See also: Oversize, Box 12, folder 176	1867-91, n.d.
b. 10, f. 154	Photograph album	n.d.
b. 10, f. 155	Unidentified family	n.d.

b. 10, f. 156-57	Scrapbooks See also: November 1988 Addition, Material removed from family scrapbook	1862-80
Writings		
b. 10, f. 158	Abert, J. J., <i>Report in Reference to the Canal to Connect the Chesapeake and 1874 Ohio Canal with the City of Baltimore</i>	1874
Barnitz, Alfred		
b. 10, f. 159-61	Holographs	1886-1909, n.d.
b. 10, f. 162	<i>Life in Custer's Cavalry. The Letters and Diaries of Albert and Jennie Barnitz</i> , edited by Robert M. Utley, typescript	1975
b. 11, f. 163	<i>Life in Custer's Cavalry. The Letters and Diaries of Albert and Jennie Barnitz</i> , edited by Robert M. Utley	1978
b. 11, f. 164	<i>The Mystic Delvings</i>	1857
b. 11, f. 165-70	Newspaper clippings	1862-96, n.d.
b. 11, f. 171	Meacham, Henry H., <i>The Empty Sleeve: or the Life and Hardships of Henry Meacham</i>	n.d.
b. 11, f. 172	Peele, Bertha B., "Autobiography"	ca. 1960

Oversize

BARNITZ, ALBERT		
b. 12, f. 173	Announcement	1858
Military papers		
b. 12, f. 174	Certificate	1864
b. 12, f. 175	Maps	1864
b. 12, f. 176	Photographs	1867, n.d.
b. 16 (Broadside)	Photograph	undated
BARNITZ, JENNIE		
b. 15, f. 177	Diary	1862

Restricted Fragile Papers*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Box 13, *Restricted Fragile Papers*, contains fragile originals. The material is arranged in folder order.

Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

b. 13, f. 178	Box 5, folder 92
b. 13, f. 179-80	Box 6, folders 99, 106
b. 13, f. 181-85	Box 9, folders 141-45
b. 13, f. 186-91	Box 11, folders 165-170

November 1988 Addition

0.08 linear feet (1 box)

The November 1988 addition consists of material removed from a family scrapbook. The material includes a photograph of Eva Prouty, printed ephemera relating to Barnitz's life and career, and personal and military correspondence.

b. 14, f. 192-97 Material removed from family scrapbook

1846-1878

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Child care
Courtship
Divorce
Families
Father and child
Home economics
Indians of North America -- Kansas
Marriage
Mental illness
San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, Calif., 1906
Soldiers -- United States
Washita Campaign, 1868-1869

Geographic Names

Kansas -- History
United States -- Description and travel
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Campaigns
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Cavalry operations
West (U.S.)

Genres / Formats

Diaries -- United States

Names

Barnitz, Albert Trovillo Siders, 1835-1912
Barnitz, Blanche, 1874-
Barnitz, Jennie
Barnitz, Maidi, 1871-1909
Barnitz family
Byrne, Bertha Barnitz, 1870-1961
Custer, George A. (George Armstrong),
1839-1876

Corporate Bodies

United States. Army. Cavalry, 7th
United States. Army. Ohio Cavalry, 2nd
United States. Army (Military life)