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Guide to the Henry Eld Papers

WA MSS 161-162



by Beinecke staff

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS 161-162

CREATOR: Eld, Henry, 1814-1850

TITLE: Henry Eld papers

DATES: 1832–1858

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.63 linear feet (3 boxes + 1 Art)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Henry Eld Papers have been organized into three sections. The first section (WA MSS 161) consists of two journals kept by Henry Eld, Jr., U.S. Navy. The journals date from Eld's service in the Wilkes Expedition, 1838-42.

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

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.eld>.

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

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Henry Eld Papers Collection is 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

Henry Eld Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections [as they are acquired], and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This finding aid, created before the advent of computer-generated files, has been converted into a ASCII data file by means of scanning and Optical Character Recognition software. While attempts have been made to retain the complete information from the original document a number of format changes have been made to present the structure of this archive in accordance with current practice.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

For the purposes of creating a single finding aid for this collection, the original call numbers (WA MSS 161, WA MSS 162, and WA MSS 162a) have been consolidated to a range of those numbers, and the containers renumbered to a single sequence.

Henry Eld (1814-1850)

Henry Eld was born in New Haven, June 2, 1814, and died at sea on the U.S.S. Ohio, March 12, 1850. As Passed Midshipman he accompanied Lieutenant Charles Wilkes on the U.S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842, assigned first to the Peacock, and joined the Vincennes at Fiji. In 1841, Eld was ordered by Wilkes, commander of the expedition, to join the special overland expedition under Lieutenant George F. Emmons, from Vancouver, Wash., to San Francisco. As second in command, when the expedition separated at Sutter's, he led the overland party to San Francisco.

Scope and Contents

The Henry Eld Papers have been organized into three sections. The first section (WA MSS 161) consists of two journals kept by Henry Eld, Jr., U.S. Navy. The journals date from Eld's service in the Wilkes Expedition, 1838-42.

The first journal provides detailed information about an overland expedition from the Willamette Mission, south of Vancouver, to San Francisco, between September 6 and October 29, 1841. The journal is 126 pages long and is illustrated with forty-three manuscript maps (three of them double page, two of them folded). The two folded maps are entitled "Map of the Oregon Territory by U.S. Ex[ploring] Ex[pedition] and the Columbia River, reduced from a survey made by the U.S. Ex[ploring] Ex[pedition], 1841. J. H. Young & Sherman V. Smith, New York" and "Map of Upper California by U.S. Ex[ploring] Ex[pedition] and best authorities, 1841."

The second journal, which has been bound in the back of the journal of the Oregon and California overland expedition, is an incomplete thirty-page account of an expedition to survey Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay, August 11 to September 7, 1841. The manuscript of the Gray's Harbor expedition is preceded by an extract from the Appendix of Charles Wilkes' *Narrative*, Volume IV, pages 533-36, including a letter from Wilkes ordering Eld to undertake this survey, with George Colvocoresses as his second in command, after which he was to proceed to join the ships in Baker's Bay.

Also included in the papers is a carbon copy of a typewritten transcript of Eld's diary from September 7 to October 29, 1841. The transcript, which was made by Alfred N. Meiss, is of a manuscript journal now in the possession of the New Haven Colony Historical Society. The journal is apparently a copy of the one in the Coe collection. It has some variations and insertions but includes additions which are in the Coe manuscript and omits passages crossed out. The Historical Society also owns four other manuscript journals of Henry Eld, containing accounts of his experiences on the *John Adams* and the *Delaware*, on the Wilkes Expedition, and on the Antarctic cruise.

The journals are accompanied by three paper-covered sketchbooks containing forty-eight original drawings on forty-three loose leaves, each with guard sheet. The three sketchbooks are labeled "Henry Eld, Jr., U.S. Exploring Exped[ition] 1838-1842 No. 1 [No. 2 and No. 3]," and contain eleven sketches of scenes in Oregon and Washington, five of the Fiji Islands, three of other South Pacific Islands, one of California, and twenty-eight untitled. On the inside of the cover of Sketchbook No. 3 there is a pencil plan of San Francisco. The sketches are not reproduced in the Wilkes *Narrative* of the Expedition. A list of the sketches is appended below. In the list, the sketches are numbered consecutively by sketchbook. Some of the sketches were given titles by Eld. Those drawings which Eld failed to assign titles were given brief descriptive titles for purposes of the appended list.

The second section of the collection (WA MSS 162) consists of 100 letters, orders, and other papers of Lieutenant Henry Eld, Jr., dating from Eld's service in the United States Navy, 1845-51, as well as eleven letters written by or to Edward Eld, Henry Eld's brother, while the former was in California or Nebraska Territory, 1845-58.

The papers in the second section fall into five groups. The first group consists of material concerning Henry Eld, Jr.'s early years in the Navy, 1832-37. The papers in the second section relate to the U.S. Exploring Expedition, Captain Wilkes commanding, 1838-42. The material in the third group touches on the mutiny on the *Somers*, 1842-43. The fourth group contains correspondence of Henry Eld, Sr., with his son Henry Eld, Jr., during the Mexican War, 1846-49. The fifth group consists of letters to Henry Eld, Sr., after the death of his son (1850-51), family records and genealogy, as well as correspondence of Edward Eld with his family while in California and the Middle West (1849-58).

Henry Eld, Jr., kept copies of all letters connected with his service in the Navy, and, with few exceptions, it is these copies that have been preserved by the family. Accompanying the manuscripts there is a handmade, red morocco portfolio, with Arabic decorations. It is possible that Eld got this portfolio in Morocco when he served in the Mediterranean.

The third section (WA MSS 162a) consists of Eld's burlwood and brass travel desk.

Collection Contents

WA MSS 161: Journals and Sketchbooks

Journal of Henry Eld, Jr., U.S. Navy. September 6 to October 29 [1841]. 126 pp., including 43 original maps. 2 folded maps, printed. 33 cm. Original binding. Journal of an expedition to survey Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay, August 11 to September 7, 1841. Incomplete. 30 pp. 31 ½ cm. Bound in the back of the journal of the Oregon and California overland expedition. Accompanied by 3 paper-covered sketchbooks containing 48 original drawings on 43 loose leaves, each with guard sheet. 29 x 22 ½ cm.

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| b. 1 | <p>Journals</p> <p>Two journals (bound in one volume) kept by Henry Eld, Jr., U.S.Navy. The journals date from Eld's service in the Wilkes Expedition, 1838-42. The first journal provides detailed information about an overland expedition from the Willamette Mission, south of Vancouver, to San Francisco, between September 6 and October 29, 1841. The journal is 126 pages long and is illustrated with forty-three manuscript maps (three of them double page, two of them folded). 126 pp., 33 cm. The second journal, which has been bound in the back of the journal of the Oregon and California overland expedition, is an incomplete thirty-page account of an expedition to survey Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay, August 11 to September 7, 1841. The manuscript of the Gray's Harbor expedition is preceded by an extract from the Appendix of Charles Wilkes' <i>Narrative</i>, Volume IV, pages 533-36, including a letter from Wilkes ordering Eld to undertake this survey, with George Colvocoresses as his second in command, after which he was to proceed to join the ships in Baker's Bay. 30 pp., 31 ½ cm. Also included in the papers is a carbon copy of a typewritten transcript of Eld's diary from September 7 to October 29, 1841. The transcript, which was made by Alfred N. Meiss, is of a manuscript journal now in the possession of the New Haven Colony Historical Society. The journal is apparently a copy of the one in the Coe collection. It has some variations and insertions but includes additions which are in the Coe manuscript and omits passages crossed out. The Historical Society also owns four other manuscript journals of Henry Eld, containing accounts of his experiences on the <i>John Adams</i> and the <i>Delaware</i>, on the Wilkes Expedition, and on the Antarctic cruise. 86 pp., 28 cm.</p> | August 1841-
October 1841 |
| b. 1, f. 1 | <p>Journal of the overland expedition from the Willamette Mission, south of Vancouver, to San Francisco. Illustrated with 43 manuscript maps. Journal of the expedition to survey Gray's Harbor and Shoalwater Bay.</p> <p>There are two folded maps in the journal: "Map of the Oregon Territory by U.S. Ex. Ex. and the Columbia River, reduced from a survey made by the U.S. Ex. Ex. 1841. J. H. Young & Sherman V. Smith, New York." 91 ½ x 63 cm. (See Wilkes' Atlas, Map [4].) "Map of Upper California by U.S. Ex. Ex. and best authorities, 1841." 31 x 27 cm. (See Wilkes, V, 151.)</p> | September 7,
1841-October
28, 1841 |

Sketchbooks (continued)

battlements, surrounding wall with arched doorway, etc. Perhaps this page really has two separate and unrelated scenes.

b. 2, f. 2

[Sketchbook 2](#)

1838-1842

Sketchbook 2

Untitled. Three sketches of parts of rowboats from different angles. Sacramento River and plains, California.

Untitled. Building -- perhaps a church -- amid greenery and low mountains. See George Emmons' Sketchbook No. 2 for a similar drawing of the same building.

Crossing the Umpqua Mountains. Oregon, 1841

South branch of the Umqua. Oregon Territory. September 21, 1841.

Encampment on the Banks of the Wilhamette with the Methodist Mission on the opposite side of the River. Oregon Territory.

[September 9, 1841].

Common lodge of the Klickitat Indians about Fort Vancouver.

Untitled. Scene with evergreen trees, stream, etc.

Untitled. Area enclosed by fence, surrounded by trees, a house, etc.

Encampment at Bakers Bay after the wreck of the Peacock. Mouth of Columbia River.

Fort Vancouver

Untitled. Sketches of two trees.

Untitled. Four blocks (apparently of stone) by a body of water with two small boats amid somewhat mountainous scenery. There is an illegible name on one of the blocks.

Old Mission House, Oregon.

A scene on the Columbia River.

Umqua Mountains, Oregon. Crossed 22nd Sept 1841.

Massacre Camp on Rogue's or Rascally River, morning of September 27th, 1841.

Columbia River. [in the foreground is a tipi with two Indians in front of it.]

Untitled. Projected street plan of a town.

b. 2, f. 3

[Sketchbook 3](#)

1838-1842

Sketchbook 3

Untitled. Sketch of a tower, a bridge over a river, another structure in the background.

Untitled. Scene with river and a small bridge over it, two buildings, plain, mountains, etc.

Untitled. Scene with trees, hills, water, buildings in the background, etc.

Untitled. Scene with small bridge, road, trees, mountains.

Untitled. House by a body of water and surrounded by trees, fence, etc.

Untitled. Two separate sketches -- one of the side of a building with part of a spoked wheel leaning against it; and, a house with a thatched roof.

Untitled. Bridge over a river in a somewhat mountainous area. See George Emmons Sketchbook No. 1 for a very similar drawing.

Untitled. Body of water upon which are two boats -- one a single-masted sailboat, the other apparently a steamboat, also a tower-like structure sticking up out of the water. 1841.

Untitled. Buildings, some perhaps houses, but one has a tower with battlements.

Untitled. Bridge over a river.

Two untitled drawings -- one of the remains of a fence, a few stone steps, grass, etc.; the other of four stone blocks plus a section of a column or part of the trunk of a tree.

Two untitled drawings -- one of some cows, trees, houses; the other of a fence with a gate, trees, a field, perhaps with crops growing.

Six untitled sketches of fences, walls, small buildings.

Untitled sketch of a complex of buildings with rectangular towers.

Three untitled sketches -- two of the tops of houses, the other a bridge over a river, top of house behind the bridge.

La Caldena, Island of Mindanao, Philipines.

Untitled. Single-masted boat heading toward land, where there are buildings, a fence, etc.

WA MSS 162: Papers, 1832-1858

One hundred letters, orders, and other papers of Lieutenant Henry Eld during his service in the United States Navy, 1832-1851; and eleven letters written by or to Edward Eld while he was in California or Nebraska Territory, 1845-1858. 188 pp., 25-33 cm.

The Eld papers fall into five groups: Henry Eld's early years in the Navy, 1832-1837; the U.S. Exploring Expedition, Captain Wilkes commanding, 1838- 1847; the mutiny on the Somers, 1842/43; correspondence of Henry Eld, Sr., with his son during the Mexican War, 1846-1849; letters to Henry Eld, Sr., after the death of his son, 1850-1851, family records and genealogy, and correspondence of Edward Eld with his family while in California and the Middle West, 1849-1858.

The collection includes the following letters, orders, and other papers pertaining to Henry Eld:

ELD, HENRY. Letter to his brother, Edward, February 3, 1836. 3 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Three letters to his father. April 15, 1839 -February 21, 1850. 11 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Report to Captain Hudson on observations taken on the ice in Antarctica, January 23, 1840; expenditure of provisions, etc., June 15, 1842; provisions on board U.S.S. Vincennes, June 17, 1842; list of articles remaining on hand, June [21], 1842; list of chronometers delivered to the Navy Yard, June 21, 1842. 9 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Letter to Captain Wilkes. August 31, 1840, with Wilkes' answer of the same date. 2 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Draft of his report of the expedition from Nisqually to Gray's Harbor [after August 11, 1841]. 4pp.

ELD, HENRY. Request for supplies, September 1, 1841. Approved by Charles Wilkes, 1 p.

ELD, HENRY. Copy of the Resolution of the Senate and House, conferring medals on the members of the Exploring Expedition. 1 p.

ELD, HENRY. Letter to Captain Gregory. June 26, 1842. 2 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Report to John A. Davis on the bowsprit and jib boom of the U.S. Schooner Flirt, Porto Rico Harbor, May 8, 1843. Signed also by Chas. E. Fleming, acting lieutenant, H. F. Porter, acting master, Thomas King, carpenter. 1 p.

ELD, HENRY. Letter to the Gentlemen of the Court [of Enquiry] with regard to the log of the Somers, January 14, 1843, a preliminary draft, and the summons to the Naval Court of Enquiry, unsigned and undated, 3 pp.

ELD, HENRY. Draft or copy of an unsigned letter, Honolulu, November 10, 1840. 1 p.

ALMY, JOHN JAY. Two letters to Henry Eld, Sr. May 4, 29, 1850. 7 pp.

ALMY, JOHN JAY. Letter to Miss Eld. May 28, 1850. 3 pp.

BANCROFT, GEORGE. Two letters to Henry Eld, Jr. August 21, 1845 [printed form, signed], May 12, 1846. 2 pp.

CLARK, PETER G. Letter to Henry Eld, Sr. May 4, 1850. 2 pp.

CRANE, WILLIAM MONTGOMERY. List of nautical instruments allowed to ships of each class. Printed circular, signed by W. M. Crane to Captain F. H. Gregory, with added note by M. C. Perry. 2 pp.

DAYTON, A. O. Two letters to Henry Eld. March 22, 30, 1843. 2 pp.

DICKERSON, MAHLON. Seven orders, etc., to Henry Eld. March 7, 1836-June 28, 1838. 7 pp.

Eld, Ann Mansfield (Mrs. Henry, SR.). Letter to her son Edward. February 17, 1850. 3 pp.

ELD, EDWARD. Letter to his mother. September 20, 1845. 2 pp.

ELD, EDWARD. Letter to his brother, Henry Eld. July 12, 1850. 2 pp.

ELD, EDWARD. Six letters to his father, Henry Eld, Sr. October 30, 1854-June 20, 1858. 10 pp.

ELD, HENRY, SR. Unsigned draft of a letter to John Boyle, Acting Secretary of the Navy, with a copy of a certificate from Dr. J. Knight. May 8, 1833. 2 pp.

ELD, HENRY, SR. Seven letters to his son, Henry Eld. November 4, 1846-November 20, 1849. 18 pp.

ELD, HENRY, SR. Two letters to his son, Edward Eld. June 23, 1849, February 15, 1855. 6 pp.

ELD, HENRY, SR. Three drafts of an epitaph for his son Henry, and family records. 8 pp.

ELLIOT, JESSE DUNCAN. Orders to Henry Eld, Jr. May 20, 1836, 1 p.

EMMONS, GEORGE FOSTER. Instructions to Henry Eld. October 26 [1841]. 1 p.

EMMONS, GEORGE FOSTER. Summons to appear at Naval Court of Enquiry. February 21, 1842. 1 p.

FORBES, ROBERT BENNET. Letter to Henry Eld, Sr. January 13, 1851. 1 p.

HENSHAW, DAVID. Orders to Henry Eld, Jr. July 27, August 1, 1843. 2 pp.
 HOFFMAN, O., Judge Advocate. Document certifying that Henry Eld performed the duties of provost marshal to the Court of Enquiry, U.S.S. North Carolina, January 20, 1843. 1 p.
 HUNT, TIMOTHY A. Letter to Henry Eld, Sr. May 27, 1850. 3 pp.
 INGERSOLL, RALPH ISAACS. Two letters to Henry Eld, Sr. January 8, 1832, enclosing appointment of Henry Eld, Jr., as acting midshipman, January 7, 1832 [printed form signed by Levi Woodbury]; and January 20, 1832, enclosing a letter to him from Levi Woodbury, January 19, 1832. 5 pp.
 MANSFIELD, LOUISA. Letter to Henry Eld, Jr. July 24, 1833. 2 pp.
 MASON, JOHN YOUNG. Orders to Henry Eld, Jr. November 13, 1846. 1 p.
 NELSON, SAMUEL. Habeas Corpus ordering Captain Gregory, Captain Moorehead or the officer commanding the North Carolina to produce the body of Alexander Fullerton at the office of Frederick A. Talmadge, recorder of the City of New York on the 24th day of August. July 1, 1842. 2 pp.
 PATTERSON, DANIEL TODD. Orders to Henry Eld, Jr. October 23, 1835. 1 p.
 PAULDING, JAMES KIRKE. Letter to Henry Eld, Jr. July 6, 1838 [printed form]; orders, July 12, 1838. 2 pp.
 REYNOLDS, WILLIAM. Letter to Henry Eld, Jr. January 22, 1843. 4 pp.
 RIDGELY, CHARLES GOODWIN. Four orders to Henry Eld, Jr. July 1, 1837-June 5, 1839. 4 pp.
 STRIBLING, CORNELIUS K. Letter to Henry Eld, Sr. March 28, 1850. 2 pp.
 UPSHUR, ABEL PARKER. Seven orders to Henry Eld, Jr. June 17, 1842-April 10, 1843. 7 pp.
 WARRINGTON, LEWIS. Letter to Henry Eld, Jr. February 23, 1847. 1 p.
 WILKES, CHARLES. Seven orders to Henry Eld, Jr. June 18, 1838-May 23, 1842. 10 pp.
 WILKES, CHARLES. Lists of equipment and provisions for the Grays Harbor expedition. Approved by Wilkes, July 18, 1841. 3 pp.
 WILKES, CHARLES. Two letters to Henry Eld, Jr. August 15, 1841, June 11, 1846. 5 pp.
 WINDER, CHARLES H., Judge Advocate. Summons to Henry Eld to testify at the General Court Martial of Charles Wilkes, U.S. Ship North Carolina, July 30, 1842. Printed form. 1 p.
 WOODBURY, LEVI. Letter to the Hon. R. I. Ingersoll. October 16, 1832. 1 p.
 WOODBURY, LEVI. Letter to Henry Eld, Jr. April 2, 1833. 1 p.
 WYMAN, THOMAS W. Certificate of Eld's correct deportment, October 31, 1835. 1 p.

b. 3, f. 1	Letters and Documents, 1832-1837
b. 3, f. 2	Letters and Documents, US Exploration Expedition, 1838-1841
b. 3, f. 3	Letters and Documents, 1842-1847
b. 3, f. 4	Letters and Documents concerning Somers Mutiny, 1842-1843
b. 3, f. 5	Correspondence of Eld and his father, 1846-1849
b. 3, f. 6	Letters and Newspaper announcement concerning Eld's death, Epitaph, and Genealogical record, 1850.
b. 3, f. 7	Correspondence of Edward Eld, mostly with his father, 1845-1858.
b. 3	Red Morocco portfolio, handmade, with Arabic decorations. It is possible that Eld got this portfolio in Morocco when he served in the Mediterranean. 23 ½ x 36 cm.

Series WA MSS 162a: Desk

b. Box 4 Eld's burlled wood and brass travel desk
1 item
18.5 x 49 x 26 cm.

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

Mexican War, 1846-1848

Geographic Names

Antarctica -- Description and travel
California -- Description and travel
California -- Maps
Grays Harbor (Wash.) -- Description and travel
Grays Harbor (Wash.) -- Surveys
Oceania -- Pictorial works
Oregon -- Maps
Oregon -- Pictorial works
Washington (State) -- Pictorial works

Genres / Formats

Diaries -- United States -- 19th century
Drawings (visual works) -- United States -- 19th century
Portable desks -- United States -- 19th century

Occupations

Seamen -- United States -- 19th century

Names

Eld, Edward
Eld, Henry, 1783-
Wilkes, Charles, 1798-1877

Corporate Bodies

Peacock (Sloop of war : 1828-1841)
United States. Navy -- History -- 19th century
United States Exploring Expedition (1838-1842)
Vincennes (Sloop of war)