

Bulk Dates: 1848 - 1851

Size: .25lf.

Biography/History:

Thomas W. Sweeny was born in County Cork, Ireland December 25, 1820. He arrived in the United States in 1832 and settled in New York. In 1846 during the outbreak of the Mexican War, Sweeny became 2nd lieutenant with the First New York Volunteers, with whom he participated and lost his right arm during the siege at Vera Cruz. In 1848 he became a lieutenant commander over the 2nd infantry, and was subsequently ordered to California to take possession of newly-acquired territory until fitted for civil government. His infantry arrived in San Diego harbor 1849 and once occupied Mission San Diego. He was known for his stoicism and for being a strict disciplinarian. While in command at Fort Yuma, he was involved in an incident regarding 2 deserters who were captured. His methods of punishment for the two men were in question by many in the United States Army, however, he was found innocent and no formal charges were ever brought against him. During the civil War he served under General Grant at the Battle of Wilson's Creek as well as under General Sherman, aiding at the capture of Fort Donelson. Sweeny went on to command several other posts, including fighting Native Americans in the Great Plains, until his retirement as a brigadier general in May 1870. He died on April 10, 1892.

Scope and Content:

The first volume is a typescript of a journal / biography of Thomas Sweeny.

The second volume contains a collection of transcribed letters, photos and newspaper articles, all referencing Thomas Sweeny. There is no information as to who created the volumes, although there is a possibility it was Sweeney's son.

Arrangement:

Two bound volumes, in chronological order

Subjects:

Mission San Diego

Fort Yuma

Camp Independence

Santa Isabel

2nd Infantry

Mexican War

First New York Volunteers

Yuma Indians

Battle of Wilson's Creek

Heintzelman, Major Samuel P.

Related Collections and Other Resources:

SER *The Journal of San Diego History*, Summer 1980. Volume 26, Number 3, "Fighting Tom Sweeny: The California Years", by James Edward Moriarty, IV.

SER *The Journal of San Diego History*, Summer 1975, Volume 21, Number 3, "Philip Crosthwaite San Diego Pioneer and Public Servant", by Pamela Tamplain.

Citation: Thomas William Sweeny Collection, MS 154, San Diego Historical Society Research Archives.

Restrictions: The San Diego Historical Society holds the copyright to the unpublished materials.

Condition and conservation:

Both volumes are in tact and spines are in good condition. Some pages in both volumes do have some print that has bled through the paper to the other side; however, they are still readable. In the volume entitled “Letters, etc. of General Thomas W. Sweeny”, some of the copies of news articles look faded, however, each article has a printed page of its content which is legible and in good condition. The last few pages of the volume “Thos. W. Sweeny” have been pulled loose.

Comments:

Sweeny Pass, County S-2 on the way to the Anza-Borrego Desert is named after him, although the spelling is slightly different. Volume 1 has a detailed description of landing in Rio de Janerio in the 1840s which gives an excellent first hand account of the sea port during that time.

Provenance: Frances Johnson Buckley, December 31, 1981

Accession: 811231 (SDH 81.86)

Processing: Heather Thomas

Date: September 3, 2008

Container List:

<u>Box</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Title/Subjects</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Thos. W. Sweeny, United States Army 1820-1860, Vol. I – biography, diary entries, letters	1771 - 1856
1	2	Letters Etc. of General Thomas W. Sweeny, United States Army – letters, correspondence, news articles, images	1846 -1851