

Beale Family Papers from the Decatur House

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



**LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS**

**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2010**

Contact information:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Additional search options available at:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009320>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm78018127>

Prepared by Richard Bickel
Revised by Daniel Oleksiw and Kathleen O'Neill

Collection Summary

Title: Beale Family Papers from the Decatur House

Span Dates: 1794-1957

ID No.: MSS018127

Creator: Beale family

Extent: 4,000 items ; 16 containers plus 4 oversize ; 10 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Correspondence, journals, biographical material, speeches, articles, scrapbooks, printed material, and other papers pertaining to the role of Edward Fitzgerald Beale in opening the West; the diplomatic career of Truxtun Beale as United States minister to Greece, Persia, and Romania; the naval careers of Thomas Truxtun and Stephen Decatur; the Beale (Beal), Chase, Edwards, and Truxtun families; and the Decatur House.

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.

People

Beal family.

Beale, Edward Fitzgerald, 1822-1893. Edward Fitzgerald Beale papers.

Beale, Marie Oge, 1880-1956. Marie Oge Beale diaries.

Beale, Truxtun, 1856-1936. Truxtun Beale papers.

Benton, Thomas Hart, 1782-1858--Correspondence.

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868--Correspondence.

Cameron, Simon, 1799-1889--Correspondence.

Chase family.

Conkling, Roscoe, 1829-1888--Correspondence.

Decatur, Stephen, 1779-1820. Stephen Decatur papers.

Edwards family.

Frémont, Jessie Benton, 1824-1902--Correspondence.

Frémont, John Charles, 1813-1890--Correspondence.

Grant family--Correspondence.

Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885--Correspondence.

Logan, John Alexander, 1826-1886--Correspondence.

Sherman, John, 1823-1900--Correspondence.

Taylor, Bayard, 1825-1878--Correspondence.

Truxtun family.

Truxtun, Thomas, 1755-1822. Thomas Truxtun papers.

Organizations

Decatur House (Washington, D.C.)

United States. Navy--Officers.

Subjects

Diplomatic and consular service, American.

Indians of North America--California.

Indians of North America--Government relations.

Indians of North America--Nevada.

Roads--West (U.S.)

Places

Greece--Foreign relations--United States.

Iran--Foreign relations--United States.

Romania--Foreign relations--United States.
United States--Foreign relations--Greece.
United States--Foreign relations--Iran.
United States--Foreign relations--Romania.
West (U.S.)--Description and travel.
West (U.S.)--History.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of the Beale family, bequeathed to the National Trust for Historic Preservation together with the Decatur House, Washington, D.C., in 1956, were deeded to the Library of Congress in 1959. Additions were received in 1960 and 1974.

Processing History

The papers of the Beale Family were housed and listed circa 1975. The finding aid was revised in 2006 and 2010.

Transfers

Photographs, post cards, and blue prints have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as a part of these papers.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the [Thomas Truxtun Papers](#) in the Naval Historical Foundation Collection and the Evalyn Walsh McLean Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Beale Family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of the Beale Family are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Beale Family Papers from the Decatur House, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Thomas Truxtun (1755-1822)

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|---|
| 1755, Feb. 17 | Born, near Hempstead, Long Island, N.Y. |
| 1794 | Appointed captain, U.S. Navy |
| 1802 | Resigned from U.S. Navy |
| 1816-1819 | Sheriff, Philadelphia, Pa. |
| 1822, May 5 | Died, Philadelphia, Pa. |

Edward Fitzgerald Beale (1822-1893)

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|--|
| 1822, Feb. 22 | Born, Washington, D.C. |
| 1842-1851 | Naval officer, U.S. Navy |
| 1849 | Married Mary Edwards |
| 1851 | Resigned from U.S. Navy |
| 1853-1856 | Appointed superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada |
| 1861 | Appointed surveyor general of California and Nevada |
| 1872 | Purchased the Decatur House, Washington, D.C. |
| 1876 | Appointed minister to Austria-Hungary |
| 1893, Apr. 22 | Died, Washington, D.C. |

Truxtun Beale (1856-1936)

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|--------------|--|
| 1856, Mar. 6 | Born, San Francisco, Calif. |
| 1891 | Appointed ambassador to Persia |
| 1892 | Appointed ambassador to Greece, Romania, and Serbia. |
| 1894 | Married Harriet S. Blaine (divorced 1896) |
| 1903 | Married Marie Oge |
| 1936, June 2 | Died, Annapolis, Md. |

Marie Oge Beale (1880-1956)

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|--|
| 1880 | Born, California |
| 1903 | Married Truxtun Beale |
| 1956 | Bequeathed Decatur House to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C. |
| 1956, June 12 | Died, Zurich, Switzerland |

Scope and Content Note

The Beale Family Papers from the Decatur House span the years 1794-1957 and include journals, diaries, correspondence, speeches and writings, biographical material, miscellany, printed matter, and scrapbooks. The collection consists primarily of the papers of Edward Fitzgerald Beale; his son, Truxtun Beale; and their family.

The elder Beale was famous for his exploits in the West, especially for a daring adventure with Kit Carson after the battle of San Pasqual during the Mexican War, and was the first to bring news of California's gold strike to the East. A naval lieutenant, an army general, a diplomat, and surveyor general of California, he was an intimate of prominent figures in American public life, a connection reflected in these papers. He acquired large land holdings in the West and later, in 1871, purchased Decatur House (originally owned by Stephen Decatur and built by Benjamin Henry Latrobe) on Lafayette Square, which was, during the residence of his and his son's family, a center of Washington society. Truxtun Beale, named for his great-grandfather, Commodore Thomas Truxtun, became a diplomat serving as minister to Persia, Greece, and Romania. Marie Oge Beale, the wife of Truxtun Beale, was a Washington hostess, philanthropist, and advocate for historic preservation. She was the longest resident of the Decatur House and bequeathed the house to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1956.

The correspondence in the Beale Family Papers is almost equally divided between the careers of Edward Fitzgerald and Truxtun. Especially prominent are the letters written to Edward Fitzgerald Beale from Thomas Hart Benton and his daughter and son-in-law, Jessie Benton and John Charles Frémont, as well as those from James Buchanan, Simon Cameron, Roscoe Conkling, Ulysses S. Grant and his family, John Alexander Logan, John Sherman, and Bayard Taylor. Truxtun Beale's diplomatic correspondence, international in character, is included.

Bayard Taylor, a friend of Edward Fitzgerald Beale, called him "pioneer in the path of empire." Material pertinent to this attribution is represented in the collection by early California letters and by other sources on Beale's many Western expeditions. The latter include the journal covering a portion of his journey in 1853 to take up his post as superintendent of Indian affairs for California and Nevada and a more extensive journal covering his survey for a wagon road from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to the Colorado River from 1858 to 1859.

There are also original manuscripts and transcripts of manuscripts written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by Commodore Thomas Truxtun and by Stephen Decatur. In addition to Marie Oge Beale's diaries, speeches, and writings, there are social invitations and newspaper clippings.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1 | Journals |
| BOX 1 | Truxtun, Thomas, "Alamanack," 1801 |
| BOX 1 | Beale, Edward Fitzgerald |
| BOX 1 | On board the <i>Columbia</i> , [1842] |
| BOX 1 | Survey and map for a wagon train from Fort Smith, Ark., to the Colorado River, 1858-1859 |
| BOX 1 | Beale, Emily T., 1853 |
| BOX 1 | Chase, Alexander, on journey to California, 1861 |
| BOX 1 | Chase, Philander (1798-1824), during cruise on the <i>Guierrière</i> (frigate), 1818-1819 |
| BOX 2 | Diaries |
| BOX 2 | Beale, Marie Oge, 1907 |
| BOX 2 | Beale, Truxtun |
| BOX 2 | Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, 1921 (2 folders) |
| BOX 2 | Trip to the Middle East and China, 1934 |
| BOX 2 | Hyde de Neuville, Jean Guillaume, Baron, mémoires, 1913 |
| BOX 3 | Edward Fitzgerald Beale personal correspondence |
| BOX 3 | Family, 1847-1893 |
| BOX 3 | Grant, Ulysses S., 1872-1885, undated (69 folders) |
| BOX 4 | General correspondence |
| BOX 4 | 1794-1889 (13 folders) |
| BOX 5 | 1890-1938 (22 folders) |
| BOX 6 | 1939-1953 (9 folders) |
| BOX 7 | 1954-1956, undated (4 folders) |
| BOX 8 | Speeches and writings file |
| BOX 8 | Beale, Edward Fitzgerald, 1864-1882 |
| BOX 8 | Beale, Truxtun, 1900-1915 |
| BOX 8 | Beale, Marie Oge, 1928-1948 (3 folders) |
| BOX 9 | (2 folders) |
| BOX 9 | "Reconnaissance for a Wagon Road", 1858 |
| BOX 10 | Biographical file |
| BOX 10 | Material relating to the Truxtun, Beale, Chase, and Edwards families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries |
| BOX 10 | Beale Family (2 folders) |
| BOX 11 | Miscellany |
| BOX 11 | Certificates |

Container List

Container

Contents

| | |
|----------|---|
| BOX 11 | Guest and gift lists |
| BOX 11 | Pro San Marco restoration |
| BOX 11 | Correspondence |
| BOX 11 | Legal and financial |
| BOX 11 | Minutes and tax reports |
| BOX 12 | Fragments, undated (2 folders) |
| BOX 12 | Material relating to Decatur House, Washington, D.C. and its occupants (2 folders) |
| BOX 13 | Social invitations, Nineteenth and twentieth centuries (3 folders) |
| BOX 14 | Printed matter |
| BOX 14 | Newspaper clippings (2 folders) |
| BOX 15 | Miscellany |
| BOX 15 | 1820-1885 |
| BOX 15 | 1886-1900 |
| BOX 16 | 1901-1955 |
| BOX OV 1 | Scrapbooks |
| BOX OV 1 | 1802-1885 |
| BOX OV 2 | 1802-1941 |
| BOX OV 3 | 1848-1891 |
| BOX OV 4 | 1886-1902 |