O. M. Poe Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2008
Revised 2010 April

Contact information:
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Additional search options available at:
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008037

LC Online Catalog record:
http://lccn.loc.gov/mm78036459

Prepared by David Larsen and Margit Kerwin
Revised by Joseph K. Brooks

Collection Summary

Title: O. M. Poe Papers
Span Dates: 1852-1922
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1863-1885)
ID No.: MSS36459
Creator: Poe, O. M. (Orlando Metcalfe), 1832-1895
Extent: 8,500 items ; 19 containers plus 4 oversize and 1 vault container ; 7.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: United States army officer and civil engineer. Diaries, correspondence, maps, blueprints, newspaper clippings, biographical material, subject files, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to his military service during the Civil War, his personal and professional relationship with General William T. Sherman, and his career as a civil engineer in the Great Lakes region.

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
Bache, Hartman, 1797-1872--Correspondence.
Chandler, Zachariah, 1813-1879--Correspondence.
Howard, Jacob Merritt, 1805-1871--Correspondence.
Poe, O. M. (Orlando Metcalfe), 1832-1895.
Raynolds, W. F. (William Franklin), 1820-1894--Correspondence.
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh), 1820-1891--Correspondence.
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh), 1820-1891.
Turnbull, Charles N., 1832-1874--Correspondence.
Williamson, R. S. (Robert Stockton), 1824-1882--Correspondence.

Organizations
United States. Army of the Ohio.
United States. Army--Officers.

Subjects
Canals--Great Lakes (North America)
Canals--Illinois.
Canals--Michigan.
Lighthouses--Great Lakes (North America)
Military engineering.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)

Places
Georgia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
Hennepin Canal (Ill.)
Huron, Lake (Mich. and Ont.)
Sault Sainte Marie Canal (Mich.)
South Carolina--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
Spectacle Reef (Mich.)
Tennessee--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Engineering and construction.

Occupations
Army officers.

Engineers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of O. M. Poe, United States army officer and civil engineer, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Eleanor Carroll Poe, between 1910 and 1915. Additional material was given to the Library by Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh between 1928 and 1982 and by Mary F. Bell between 1982 and 1995.

Processing History

The papers of O. M. Poe were arranged and described in 1984 and 1994. The finding aid was revised in 2008.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. Some photographs, drawings, and a steel engraving plate have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Some printed materials have been transferred to the Serial and Government Publications Division and to the general collections of the Library. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the O. M. Poe papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of O. M. Poe in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of O. M. Poe 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, O. M. Poe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	*Event*
1832, Mar. 7	Born, Navarre, Ohio
1856	Graduated, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1856-1861	Served as lieutenant of topographical engineers
1861	Married Eleanor Carroll Brent Appointed colonel of Second Regiment, Michigan Volunteer Infantry
1862	Commisioned brigadier-general of volunteers Commanded troops during the Peninsular campaign in Virginia, the second battle of Bull Run, Va., the Maryland campaign, and the battle of Fredericksburg, Va.

1863	Volunteer commission expired Promoted captain of engineers in regular army Appointed chief engineer of the Army of the Ohio Directed the defenses of Knoxville, Tenn.
1864	Appointed brevet major Brevetted lieutenant colonel for service during Atlanta, Ga. campaign Breveted colonel for service in Savannah, Ga. campaign
1864-1865	Chief engineer under General William T. Sherman
1865	Brevetted brigadier general for service in campaign resulting in the surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston
1865-1870	Secretary, United States Light-House Board
1870-1873	Engineer, Upper Lakes Light-House District
1873-1884	Commissioned colonel Aide-de-camp to William T. Sherman
1883-1895	Superintended iron and harbor works in Great Lakes region
1895	Died, Detroit, Mich.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Orlando Metcalfe Poe (1832-1895) span the years 1852-1922. The bulk of the collection relates to Poe's Civil War service, his friendship and service as aide-de-camp to General William T. Sherman, and his postwar military and engineering career during 1863-1885. The papers are arranged as Diaries and Notebooks, Family Correspondence, General Correspondence, Special Correspondence, Letterbooks, Miscellany, Addition, Oversize, and Artifacts.

The papers include three diaries and a combination notebook-diary kept by Poe during the Civil War that document progressively more responsible chief engineer service with several commands beginning with the Army of Ohio and eventually encompassing the Western theater under Sherman during campaigns in Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The letterbooks provide Poe's daily record of the Civil War period, his postwar engineering career, and his service from 1873 to 1884 as aide-de-camp to Sherman.

The Family Correspondence includes correspondence of family members Henry Fitzhugh and Rebecca Wise and correspondence relating to the death of Winnifred Poe.

General Correspondence includes letters exchanged with Hartman Bache, Zachariah Chandler, Jacob M. Howard, William F. Raynolds, Charles N. Turnbull, and Robert S. Williamson.

The Special Correspondence consists of letters between Poe and his family and William T. Sherman and his family, including approximately one hundred postwar letters from Sherman to Poe. Included are photocopies of annotations made by Sherman on letters found in the General Correspondence.

The Miscellany includes maps, drawings, reports, and clippings relating to engineering projects Poe supervised after the Civil War, including the Spectacle Reef lighthouse on Lake Huron, the Illinois and Mississippi Canal in Illinois, and the Soo canals at Saulte Ste. Marie, Michigan. Biographical data on Poe can be found in the clippings as well as the biographical material file.

The Addition relates to the deaths of Poe and his son Charles in 1895.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- Diaries and Notebooks, circa 1859-1879
- Family Correspondence, 1852-1897
- General Correspondence, 1861-1896
- Special Correspondence, 1864-1891
- Letterbooks, 1863-1885
- Miscellany, 1852-1922
- Addition, 1895
- Oversize, 1875-1896
- Artifacts, undated

Description of Series

Container	*Series*
BOX 1	**Diaries and Notebooks, circa 1859-1879** Commonplace book, wartime diaries, and record notebooks. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1-4	**Family Correspondence, 1852-1897** Incoming and outgoing letters of Poe family members. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 4-11	**General Correspondence, 1861-1896** Incoming and outgoing letters. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 11	**Special Correspondence, 1864-1891** Primarily incoming letters of William T. Sherman and Sherman family members. Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 12-14	**Letterbooks, 1863-1885** Letterpress volumes containing copies of incoming and outgoing letters. Includes an index for 1865-1867. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 15-17	**Miscellany, 1852-1922** Speeches and essays, letters of recommendation, military reports and documents, maps and blueprints, scrapbooks, biographical material, newspaper clippings, checks and receipts, correspondence, and other papers. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 18-19	**Addition, 1895** Correspondence, clippings, calling cards, and miscellaneous material related to the deaths of Poe and his son. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 4	**Oversize, 1875-1891** Maps, plans, newspapers, and newspaper clippings. Organized and described according to the series from which they were removed.
BOX VA 1	**Artifacts, undated** Military insignia. Organized and arranged according to the series from which it was removed.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
BOX 1	**Diaries and Notebooks, circa 1859-1879**
	Commonplace book, wartime diaries, and record notebooks.
	Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	Diaries, 1863-1877
	(3 folders)
BOX 1	Notebooks, circa 1859-1879
	(4 folders)
BOX 1-4	**Family Correspondence, 1852-1897**
	Incoming and outgoing letters of Poe family members.
	Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 1	Poe, Betty, 1885-1895
BOX 1	Poe, Charles, 1876-1893
BOX 2	Poe, Eleanor, 1864-1897
BOX 2	Poe, Orlando M.,
BOX 2	1852, 1860-1865
	(6 folders)
BOX 3	1866-1895
	(6 folders)
BOX 3	Poe, Winnifred,
BOX 3	1874-1891
	(3 folders)
BOX 3	Undated
	(1 folder)
BOX 4	(1 folder)
BOX 4	Death of Winnifred Poe, 1891
	(2 folders)
BOX 4	Fitzhugh, Henry, 1890-1891
BOX 4	Wise, Rebecca P., 1881
BOX 4-11	**General Correspondence, 1861-1896**
	Incoming and outgoing letters.
	Arranged chronologically.
BOX 4	1861-1865
	(3 folders)
BOX 5	1866-1867
	(5 folders)
BOX 6	1868-1875
	(5 folders)
BOX 7	1876-1877

Container	*Contents*
BOX 7	1878
	(4 folders)
BOX 8	(2 folders)
	1879-1880
	(2 folders)
BOX 8	1881
	(1 folder)
BOX 9	(1 folder)
BOX 9	1882
	(3 folders)
BOX 10	1883-1896
	(4 folders)
BOX 11	Undated
BOX 11	**Special Correspondence, 1864-1891**
	Primarily incoming letters of William T. Sherman and Sherman family members.
	Arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 11	Sherman, Ellen Ewing, 1874-1887
BOX 11	Sherman, Ellie, Lizzie, Rachel, and Thomas, 1877-1891
BOX 11	Sherman, William T., 1864-1890
	(4 folders)
BOX 12-14	**Letterbooks, 1863-1885**
	Letterpress volumes containing copies of incoming and outgoing letters. Includes an index for 1865-1867.
	Arranged chronologically.
BOX 12	Index, 1865-1867
BOX 12	1863, Nov.-1864, Aug.
BOX 12	1863, Dec.-1864, July
BOX 12	1864, Aug.-Nov.
BOX 12	1864, Dec.-1865, Oct.
BOX 12	1865, Oct.-1866, Feb.
BOX 13	1866, Feb.-1868, Mar.
BOX 13	1868, May-1871, Aug.
BOX 13	1871, Aug-1874, Apr.
BOX 14	1874, July-1881, Aug.
BOX 14	1881, July-1885, Apr.
BOX 15-17	**Miscellany, 1852-1922**
	Speeches and essays, letters of recommendation, military reports and documents, maps and blueprints, scrapbooks, biographical material, newspaper clippings, checks and receipts, correspondence, and other papers.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 15	Biographical material, 1874-1896
BOX 15	Checks and receipts, 1879-1883

Container	*Contents*
BOX 15	Clippings and newspapers, 1885-1900 *See also Oversize*
	(2 folders)
BOX 15	General, 1861-1894
BOX 15	Letters of recommendation and personnel records,
BOX 15	General, 1873-1881 *See also Oversize*
BOX 15	Hall, Wilburn B., 1874
BOX 16	Maps, plans, and engineering reports
BOX 16	General, 1883-1881
BOX 16	Illinois and Mississippi Canal (Ill.), 1891 *See also Oversize*
BOX 16	Spectacle Reef lighthouse, Lake Huron, Mich., 1875-1877 *See also Oversize*
BOX 16	Memorabilia
BOX 16	General, 1854-1898
BOX 16	Poe, Charles C., commonplace book, undated
BOX 16	Shoulder-rank insignia, colonel undated *See Artifacts*
BOX 16	Scrapbooks
BOX 16	1858-1865
	(2 folders)
BOX 17	1880-1885
BOX 17	Military reports and documents, 1858-1884
BOX 17	Speeches and essays, 1883-1888
	(3 folders)
BOX 17	Twentieth-century descendants, 1918-1922
BOX 18-19	**Addition, 1895**
	Correspondence, clippings, calling cards, and miscellaneous material related to the deaths of Poe and his son.
	Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 18	Calling cards and photographs, 1895
BOX 18	Miscellany, circa 1895
BOX 18	Poe, Charles C., death of
BOX 18	Clippings, 1895
BOX 18	Correspondence, 1895
	(5 folders)
BOX 19	Telegrams, 1895
BOX 19	Poe, Orlando M., death of
BOX 19	Clippings, 1895
BOX 19	Correspondence, 1895
	(5 folders)
BOX 19	Telegrams, 1895
BOX OV 1-OV 4	**Oversize, 1875-1891**
	Maps, plans, newspapers, and newspaper clippings.
	Organized and described according to the series from which they were removed.
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
	Clippings and newspapers, 1890-1896 (Container 15)
BOX OV 2	Letters of recommendation and personnel records

Container	*Contents*
BOX OV 2	General
BOX OV 2	Map of route, Khartoum to Obeiyad, Sudan, 1875 (Container 15)
BOX OV 3	Maps and engineering reports
BOX OV 3	Illinois and Mississippi Canal (Ill.), map, 1891 (Container 16)
BOX OV 4	Spectacle Reef lighthouse, plans, Lake Huron, Mich. 1875-1877 (Container 16)
BOX VA 1	**Artifacts, undated**
	Military insignia.
	Organized and arranged according to the series from which it was removed.
BOX VA 1	Shoulder-rank insignia, colonel, undated (Container 16)