

Edward Shaw Papers

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Collection Summary

Title: Edward Shaw Papers

Span Dates: 1847-1867

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1850-1859)

ID No.: MSS85789

Creator: Shaw, Edward, 1824-1914

Extent: 980 items ; 9 containers ; 3.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: United States Patent Office clerk. Chiefly letters from Shaw's family, friends, and acquaintances documenting daily life of women in antebellum New England, Shaw's financial investments, and letters relating to Shaw's work as a patent clerk.

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

Barney, Anna Shaw, 1829-1855--Correspondence.

Brainard family--Correspondence.

Gardner, Henry J. (Henry Joseph), 1819-1892.

Greeley, Horace, 1811-1872.

Shaw family--Correspondence.

Shaw family.

Shaw, Edward, 1824-1914.

Shaw, Salona Wilmarth, approximately 1801-1884--Correspondence.

Vassall, Bernard B. (Bernard Barton), 1835-1894--Correspondence.

Organizations

Associated Press.

United States. Fugitive slave law (1850)

United States. Patent Office.

Subjects

Education--Massachusetts.

Presidents--United States--Election--1856.

Slavery--Kansas.

Women--New England--History--19th century.

Places

Attleboro (Mass.)--Social life and customs.

Connecticut--Social life and customs.

Haddam (Conn.)--Social life and customs.

Hertford County (N.C.)--Social life and customs.

Kansas--History--1854-1861.

Massachusetts--Social life and customs.

New England--History--1775-1865.

New England--Social life and customs.

United States--Politics and government--19th century.

Washington (D.C.)--History.

Occupations

Clerks, U.S. Patent Office.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Edward Shaw, United States Patent Office clerk, were transferred to the Library of Congress by the General Services Administration in 2013.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Edward Shaw is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions. In addition, 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, Edward Shaw Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1824, Oct. 8	Born, Attleboro, Mass.
1847	Graduated Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
1847- circa 1852	Teacher, Attleboro, Mass., and New Haven, Conn.
1853	Telegraphic correspondent, Associated Press, Washington, D.C.
1853-1861	Assistant examiner, United States Patent Office, Washington, D.C.
1867-1870	Hospital steward, United States War Department, Washington, D.C.
1870-1908	Librarian, Office of the Surgeon General, United States Army, Washington, D.C.
1914, Sept. 26	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edward Shaw (1824-1914) span the years 1847-1867, with the bulk of the material dating from 1850 to 1859. The papers are in English, consisting chiefly of correspondence but include financial papers, notes, printed matter, and envelopes.

Shaw worked with Clara Barton in the United States Patent Office in the 1850s and lived in the same building at 437 7th Street, NW (then 488 1/2 7th Street), Washington, D.C., where Barton operated her bureau for missing soldiers at the end of the Civil War. Shaw lived at this residence for approximately fifty years. This collection of papers and other material relating to Clara Barton were discovered in the attic of the building in 1996.

The majority of the Shaw papers consists of correspondence from Shaw's mother, Salona Wilmarth Shaw, and his sister, Anna Shaw Barney, who lived in Attleboro, Massachusetts, and the Brainard family of Haddam, Connecticut, with whom

Shaw boarded while teaching school from about 1849 to 1852. The letters document daily life of women in antebellum New England, the importance of letter-writing to convey family and local news, and the significance of visiting during that era. Shaw's sister was a school teacher; her letters contain comments about her students and her efforts to educate them. In a letter of 18 January 1855, Anna Shaw writes about traveling to Boston where she saw Henry J. Gardner, governor of Massachusetts, take the oath of office and give his inaugural address. Also in that letter she mentions that while on that trip she sat near Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. She provides a detailed description of Greeley's physical appearance and characterized him as an "eccentric genius." Letters from Shaw's mother include admonishments to him about maintaining a good appearance in his clothing, the importance of staying out of debt, and comments about moral conduct and religion.

Shaw also received letters from Edward Hodges relating to military pension land warrants and letters from Samuel R. Brainard concerning Shaw's investment in the *Almon Bacon* (schooner). Also reflected in the papers is Shaw's stint in 1853 as a telegraphic correspondent for the Associated Press in Washington, D.C., and letters from various friends and acquaintances requesting advice or assistance in obtaining patents while Shaw worked in the Patent Office. Shaw also corresponded with Clara Barton's nephew Bernard B. Vassall, from Bartonsville, North Carolina. Vassall's letters describe the people and daily life in Bartonsville, his comments about political affairs, and his desire to obtain a patronage job in Washington, D.C.

The collection also includes references to national political matters such as the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 (letter of 14 October 1850), the presidential campaign of 1856 (letters of 30 January 1854 and 16 September 1856), and the bloodshed in Kansas over slavery (letters of 28 May 1856 and 16 September 1856). Also included is a form letter from the office of Senator Charles Sumner, 7 March 1859, mentioning the lingering physical and political effects of Sumner's caning by Representative Preston Brooks in 1856.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged chronologically by date, with fragments, loose envelopes and wrappers, miscellaneous photocopies, and restricted items filed at the end of the dated material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	circa 1847-1851 <i>See also Restricted</i> (20 folders)
BOX 1	1852
BOX 1	Jan.-Aug. <i>See also Restricted</i> (8 folders)
BOX 2	Sept.-Dec. <i>See also Restricted</i> (7 folders)
BOX 2	1853
BOX 2	Jan.-Aug. <i>See also Restricted</i> (13 folders)
BOX 3	Sept.-Dec. <i>See also Restricted</i> (10 folders)
BOX 3	1854
BOX 3	Jan.-Sept. <i>See also Restricted</i> (14 folders)
BOX 4	Oct.-Dec. <i>See also Restricted</i> (8 folders)
BOX 4	1855
BOX 4	Jan.-July (15 folders)
BOX 5	Aug.-Dec. <i>See also Restricted</i> (13 folders)
BOX 5	1856
BOX 5	Jan.-May <i>See also Restricted</i> (8 folders)
BOX 5	June
BOX 5	2-14 (2 folders)
BOX 6	16-28 (2 folders)
BOX 6	July-Dec. (13 folders)
BOX 6	1857
BOX 6	Jan.-June (8 folders)
BOX 7	July-Dec. (10 folders)
BOX 7	1858 <i>See also Restricted</i> (15 folders)
BOX 7	1859
BOX 7	Jan.-May (7 folders)

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 8	June-Dec. <i>See also Restricted</i> (15 folders)
BOX 8	1850s (3 folders)
BOX 8	Undated <i>See also Restricted</i> (10 folders)
BOX 8	Fragments, 1858, undated <i>See also Restricted</i> (2 folders)
BOX 8	Loose envelopes and wrappers, 1859, undated
BOX 8	Miscellaneous photocopies, 1866-1867
BOX R 9	Restricted
BOX R 9	circa 1847-1850 (Container 1) (2 folders)
BOX R 9	1852
BOX R 9	Jan.-Aug. (Container 1) (2 folders)
BOX R 9	Sept.- Dec. (Container 2) (2 folders)
BOX R 9	1853
BOX R 9	Jan. (Container 2)
BOX R 9	Sept. (Container 3)
BOX R 9	1854
BOX R 9	Jan.-Sept. (Container 3)
BOX R 9	Nov.-Dec. (Container 4)
BOX R 9	1855, Oct. (Container 5)
BOX R 9	1856, Jan. (Container 5)
BOX R 9	1858, Feb. (Container 7)
BOX R 9	1859, July (Container 8)
BOX R 9	Undated (folder 2 of 10) (Container 8)
BOX R 9	Fragments, undated (Container 8)