

# Beale Family Papers from the Decatur House

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

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



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2010

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

Finding aid encoded by Library of  
Congress Manuscript Division, 2010

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

# 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

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

Abstract: 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)

*Date*                      *Event*

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)

*Date* *Event*

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)

*Date* *Event*

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)

*Date* *Event*

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

## Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 10	Beale Family (2 folders)
BOX 11	Miscellany
BOX 11	Certificates
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