William Sydney Thayer Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2009

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

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2011

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Collection Summary

Title: William Sydney Thayer Papers
Span Dates: 1835-1901
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1835-1895)
ID No.: MSS42689
Creator: Thayer, William Sydney, 1830-1864
Extent: 600 items; 3 containers; 1.2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: Newspaper correspondent, editor, and United States consul general in Egypt. Correspondence, dispatches, journals, essays, addresses, poems, clippings, printed matter, photographs, and memorabilia dealing primarily with Thayer's activities in Nicaragua and Egypt.

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
Banks, Nathaniel Prentiss, 1816-1894.
Bigelow, John, 1817-1911--Correspondence.
Dainese, Francis--Correspondence.
Hale, Charles, 1831-1882--Correspondence.
Kinney, Henry Lawrence, 1814-1961 or 5--Correspondence.
Thayer family--Correspondence.
Thayer family.
Thayer, Abijah Wyman, 1796-1864--Correspondence.
Thayer, James Bradley, 1831-1902--Correspondence.
Thayer, Sarah S.--Correspondence.
Thayer, William Sydney, 1830-1864.

Subjects
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Egypt.
Genealogy.

Places
Egypt--Foreign relations--United States.
Nicaragua--Foreign relations--United States.
Nicaragua--History--Filibuster War, 1855-1860.
United States--Foreign relations--Egypt.
United States--Foreign relations--Nicaragua.

Occupations
Diplomats.
Editors.
Journalists.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of William Sydney Thayer, newspaper correspondent, editor, and United States consul general in Egypt, were given to the Library of Congress by David Rankin Barbee in 1952.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1952. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Other Repositories

The main portion of the Thayer collection, dated 1835-1895, has been microfilmed by the University of Virginia Libraries, Charlottesville, Va.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Sydney Thayer is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Sydney Thayer 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, William Sydney Thayer Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

William Sydney Thayer, 1830-1864, was the son of Abijah Wyman Thayer and Susan Bradley Thayer of Haverhill, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard University in 1850, delivering the commencement poem on that occasion, and joined the staff of the *New York Evening Post* about 1852. In 1855, he accompanied Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney on his expedition to Nicaragua, and was one of the principal actors in that enterprise. He renewed his connection with the *Evening Post* upon his return from Nicaragua and served as associate editor of the paper until his resignation in April 1861. Appointed consul general of the United States at Egypt, he remained at his post until his death in Cairo in April 1864.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Sydney Thayer (1830-1864) span the years 1835-1901, with the bulk from 1835 to 1895. The collection consists of correspondence, dispatches, journals, essays, addresses, poems, clippings, printed matter, photographs, and memorabilia dealing primarily with Thayer's activities in Nicaragua and Egypt. Included is information on Henry Lawrence Kinney and his 1855 Nicaraguan expedition, in which Thayer participated; pamphlets relating to Nathaniel Prentiss Banks; Thayer family genealogy; and papers and correspondence of family members James Bradley Thayer, Abijah Wyman Thayer, and Sarah S. Thayer. Other correspondents include Francis Dainese, Charles Hale, John Bigelow, and Kinney. An incomplete set of dispatches treats Thayer’s service as consul general in Egypt, 1861-1863.

A supplement to the collection also contains letters from James Bradley Thayer, Abijah Wyman Thayer, Francis Dainese, Charles Hale, and others. With the exception of a few letters of political interest written prior to the Civil War, the correspondence deals principally with the activities of Thayer as consul in Egypt, the settlement of his estate, and Thayer family genealogy. Included in the supplement are poems by William Sydney Thayer and Sarah S. Thayer. Additional material consists of clippings of Thayer’s activities in Egypt, notes and clippings concerning the Thayer family, addresses of James Bradley Thayer, pamphlets relating to Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, photographs and views, and mementoes.

The main portion of the Thayer collection, dated 1835-1895, has been microfilmed by the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, and is organized in the order in which it was filmed.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material. The supplement is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
BOX 1	I. Obituary of Thayer; photographs of Thayer from William Hunt's replica, 1865; and photograph of Thayer, 1860.
BOX 1	II. Letters exchanged between members of the Thayer family, 1835-1857, undated; Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., program, July 1850; and a few clippings, including a poem of Thayer on "The Fountain of Youth," published in the *National Era*.
BOX 1	III. Themes written by Thayer while a student at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
BOX 1	IV. Pamphlets on "The Kinney Expedition" to Nicaragua; letters from Henry Lawrence Kinney and others; stocks of the Nicaragua Land Mining Co.; and clippings relating to the expedition, including a biographical sketch of Kinney.
BOX 1	V. Thayer's special and regular dispatches to the *New York Evening Post* as Washington, D.C., correspondent, 1860-1861; a few dispatches from Newport, R.I.; also dispatches to the *London Times*. Clippings mounted on loose sheets.
BOX 1	VI. Letters, 1861-1864, including some on John Bigelow's sale of his stock in the *New York Evening Post*, 1861; clippings on Thayer's appointment as consul general to Egypt; an incomplete diary for 1861; and clippings about Egypt.
BOX 1	VII. A-B. Typed copy of Thayer's journal, 1852-1864. It comprises few entries for 1852-1853, and includes copies of letters to members of his family for the years that he was in Egypt inserted to cover the period when no entries were made. It is chiefly a journal on his sojourn in Egypt.
	(1 folder)
BOX 2	(1 folder)
BOX 2	VIII. Handwritten copies of Thayer's journal for 1861 by his sister.
BOX 2	IX. Incomplete set of dispatches, 1861-1863, from Thayer as consul general in Egypt. At the end of this group is a copy of a dispatch from Francis Dainese reporting Thayer's death in Apr. 1864.
BOX 2	X. Letters concerning the death and grave of Thayer in Egypt and also the death of his father, 1864-1895
BOX 2	XI. Miscellaneous notes and clippings concerning Thayer and his family, undated
BOX 2	XII. Duplicates of material, principally typewritten carbon copies of Thayer's journal.
BOX 3	Supplement
BOX 3	Clippings relating to Thayer's activities as vice-consul in Egypt, 1861-1864
BOX 3	Correspondence, 1851-1901, undated
	(3 folders)
BOX 3	Manuscript and printed poems by Sarah S. Thayer and William Sidney Thayer
BOX 3	Miscellaneous pamphlets, clippings, and related matter regarding Nathaniel Prentiss Banks
BOX 3	Pamphlets and related matter; addresses of James Bradley Thayer

Container	*Contents*
BOX 3	Photographs, views, and mementoes
BOX 3	Thayer family and genealogical material, including manuscripts, pamphlets, and clippings