

**James William Denver Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2019**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79018309>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms009227>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2009  
Revised 2019 December

## Collection Summary

**Title:** James William Denver Papers

**Span Dates:** 1847-1884

**Creator:** Denver, James William, 1817-1892

**Extent:** 1,500 items

**Extent:** 5 volumes

**Extent:** 1 linear foot

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79018309>

**Summary:** Lawyer, army officer, United States representative from California, United States commissioner of Indian affairs, and governor of Kansas. Letterpress books containing correspondence relating to Denver's law practice in Washington, D.C., which was concerned with Choctaw Indian claims and land disputes in California and elsewhere in the West; his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, 1884; and correspondence describing Denver's experience during the Mexican War, 1847.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Denver, James William, 1817-1892.

Knut, Sargeant Prentiss, 1855-1939--Correspondence.

Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866.

### Organizations

Democratic Party (U.S.)

### Subjects

Choctaw Indians--Claims.

Choctaw Indians--Land tenure.

Churubusco, Battle of, Mexico City, Mexico, 1847.

Land tenure--California.

Land tenure--West (U.S.)

Mexican War, 1846-1848--Campaigns.

Mexico City, Battle of, Mexico City, Mexico, 1847.

Practice of law--Washington (D.C.)

Presidential candidates--United States.

Presidents--United States--Election--1884.

### Places

United States--Politics and government--1865-1900.

### Occupations

Army officers.

Governors--Kansas.

Lawyers.

Public officials.

Representatives, U.S. Congress--California.

## Provenance

The papers of James William Denver were acquired by the Library of Congress in 1954 via an exchange of items with Paul H. North, Jr., book dealer. Additional material was purchased by the Library in 2015.

## Processing History

The finding aid to the papers of James William Denver was prepared by Bradley Gernand and Patrick Kerwin in 2000. The addition was processed and the finding aid revised by Andrea J. Briggs in 2019.

## Transfers

A photostatic copy of a letter from James Buchanan to Denver, 27 March 1858, was once part of these papers but was later transferred to the Buchanan Papers.

## Related Material

Related collections of James William Denver papers may also be found in the California State Library, the Colorado Historical Society, and the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma Libraries.

## Copyright Status

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

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of James William Denver 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, James William Denver Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1817, Oct. 23	Born, Winchester, Va.
1830	Moved to Ohio
1841	Moved to Missouri in search of surveying work Taught school
1844	Graduated from Cincinnati Law School, Cincinnati, Ohio Practiced law, Xenia, Ohio Published <i>The Thomas Jefferson</i> , Xenia, Ohio
1845	Moved to Platte City, Mo., to practice law
1847	Captain, Twelfth Regiment, United States Infantry, during war with Mexico

1848	Resumed law practice in Platte City, Mo. Purchased and edited Platte Argus
1850	Moved to Sacramento, Calif.
1852	Appointed secretary of state for California Dued with and killed Edward Gilbert, editor, Daily Alta California
1852-1853	Served in California state senate
1855-1857	United States representative from California
1857	United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs Appointed secretary of the Territory of Kansas
1858	Appointed governor of the Territory of Kansas
1858	Reappointed United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs
1859	Returned to California Unsuccessful candidate for United States Senate
1861-1863	General, United States Army
1876	Delegate and presidential nominee, Democratic National Convention
1880	Delegate, Democratic National Convention
1884	Delegate and presidential nominee, Democratic National Convention
1892, Aug. 9	Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of James William Denver (1817-1892) span the years 1868-1884 and consist of letterpress books containing correspondence relating to Denver's law practice in Washington, D.C. Denver and his law firm were concerned with Choctaw Indian claims and land disputes in California and elsewhere in the West. His papers also document his unsuccessful campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1884. Four volumes contain Denver's correspondence; the fifth contains the correspondence of Sargeant Prentiss Nutt of Denver's law firm.

The Addition contains one letter written by Denver to an unnamed sister, dated Sept. 1, 1847, detailing several weeks during the Mexican War fighting in the army of General Winfield Scott on the march from Veracruz to Mexico City, with descriptions of the battles of Contreras and Churubusco.

## Arrangement of the Papers

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

## Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
BOX 1	Letterpress books
BOX 1	Denver, James William
BOX 1	1868, Mar. 2 - 1871, Mar. 8
BOX 2	1871, Mar. 12 - 1873, Dec. 4
BOX 3	1873, Feb. 25 - 1875, Feb. 14
BOX 4	1875, Jan. 14 - 1883, Apr. 22
BOX 5	Nutt, Sargeant Prentiss
BOX 5	1884, Mar. 24-June 28
BOX 5	Addition
BOX 5	Letter, James William Denver to his sister, 1847, Sept. 1