

Edward Lee Plumb Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm82036418>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012063>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012

Collection Summary

Title: Edward Lee Plumb Papers

Span Dates: 1825-1903

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1857-1875)

ID No.: MSS36418

Creator: Plumb, Edward Lee

Extent: 3,600 items

Extent: 20 containers

Extent: 5.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and Spanish.

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm82036418>

Summary: Diplomat and secretary of the United States legation in Mexico. Correspondence, journals, clippings, and other papers relating primarily to Plumb's negotiations relating to the Mexican railway system.

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

Banks, Nathaniel Prentiss, 1816-1894--Correspondence.
Campbell, Lewis D. (Lewis Davis), 1811-1882--Correspondence.
Chew, Robert S., 1811-1873--Correspondence.
Chilton, R. S. (Robert S.)--Correspondence.
Clay, Henry, 1777-1852--Correspondence.
Conkling, Edgar, 1812-1881--Correspondence.
Cox, Thomas C., public official--Correspondence.
Cushing, Caleb, 1800-1879--Correspondence.
Dana, Charles A. (Charles Anderson), 1819-1897--Correspondence.
Díaz, Porfirio, 1830-1915.
Fessenden, William Pitt, 1806-1869--Correspondence.
Fish, Hamilton, 1808-1893--Correspondence.
Geralt, Baron von, -1879--Correspondence.
Grant, Robert, active 1860--Correspondence.
Hoadley, David, 1806-1873--Correspondence.
Hunter, William, 1774-1849--Correspondence.
Juárez, Benito, 1806-1872--Correspondence.
Lerdo de Tejada, Sebastián, 1823-1889--Correspondence.
Murillo Toro, Manuel, 1816-1880--Correspondence.
Plumb, Edward Lee, 1827-1912.
Romero, Matías, 1837-1898--Correspondence.
Seward, William H. (William Henry), 1801-1872.
Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874--Correspondence.
Thomson, J. Edgar (John Edgar), 1808-1874--Correspondence.
Wyke, C. Lennox, Sir--Correspondence.

Organizations

Mexican International Railroad.

Subjects

Canals--Mexico--Tehuantepec, Isthmus of
Communication and traffic--Mexico.
Communication and traffic--West (U.S.)

Cotton manufacture--Mexico.
Cotton manufacture--West (U.S.)
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Mexico.
Insurgency--Mexico.
Mexican War, 1846-1848.
Railroads--Mexico--Tehuantepec, Isthmus of
Railroads--Mexico.
Railroads--West (U.S.)
Voyages and travels.

Places

Horn, Cape (Chile)--Description and travel.
Mexico--Foreign relations--1861-1867.
Mexico--Foreign relations--1867-1910.
Mexico--Foreign relations--United States.
Mexico--Politics and government--1861-1867.
Mexico--Politics and government--1867-1910.
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)--Description and travel.
San Francisco (Calif.)--Description and travel.
South America--Description and travel.
Southern States--History--1865-1877.
United States--Foreign relations--Mexico.

Occupations

Diplomats.

Provenance

The papers of Edward Lee Plumb, diplomat and secretary of the United States legation in Mexico, were given to the Library of Congress by Ida Husted Harper, 1914-1926.

Processing History

The papers of Edward Lee Plumb were arranged and described in 1966 and 1975. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

The Plumb Papers are described in *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 330-332.

Transfers

Two maps of the Southern Pacific Railroad have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of the Edward Lee Plumb Papers.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Edward Lee Plumb 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, Edward Lee Plumb Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1827, July 17	Born, Gowanda, N. Y.
circa 1845-1850	Received a business education and was apprenticed to Hartford, Conn., mercantile house
1849	Went to California
1854	Explored Mexico, met General Juan Alvarez, and obtained prospecting concession
1855	Instrumental in helping found Mexican Pacific Coal and Iron Mining and Land Co.
1856-1857	On surveying expedition across Central Mexico and returned to New York
1861-1865	Translator and interpreter with American legation, Mexico City, Mexico; also held other positions in Mexico and Washington, D.C.
1866	Secretary of American legation to Mexico
1867-1868	Charge d'affaires, Mexico
1869	Consul general, Havana, Cuba.
1871-1881	Promoted railroads in Mexico and the U.S. for International and Great Northern Railroad
1881-1889	Vice president, Mexican International Railroad
1912, Apr. 16	Died

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edward Lee Plumb (1827-1912) span the years 1825-1903, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1857-1875. The collection consists of correspondence, dispatches, journals, reports, board minutes and financial records, printed matter, and other papers and documents in English and Spanish. The collection is organized by type of material, with the bound correspondence that comprises the largest part of the papers arranged chronologically.

The papers reflect mainly on Plumb's official negotiations with the Mexican government on behalf of the United States and American investors in the Mexican railway system. Included are copies of official reports and dispatches to William Henry Seward, secretary of state, on diplomatic and political affairs in Mexico, and letters to William Hunter, Charles Dana, R. S. Chilton, Robert S. Chew, Thomas C. Cox, and Edgar Conkling. Other material consists of an official publication by the Mexican government on forced loans in Mexico, 1838-1839; letters from Havana to Hamilton Fish on Cuban affairs; an account of a voyage from New York to Rio de Janeiro and then San Francisco by way of Cape Horn, in 1849; and miscellaneous printed matter relating to steam communications, railroads, and cotton manufacturing in the American West and Mexico. Papers from the Mexican War period include copies of letters of Henry Clay.

Letters of Robert Grant and Sir C. Lennox Wyke in 1861 concern the rupture of relations between England, France, and Mexico, while later correspondence, 1876-1877, to Hamilton Fish, reflects on conditions and events in Mexico and the policy to be adopted by the United States toward Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915) and other insurrectionists in Mexico. Other topics after 1860 include the affairs of the Mexican International Railroad and a proposed Tehuantepec canal and railway. A series of letters by Plumb to Charles Sumner from New Orleans in 1867 describes his impressions of attitudes in the South during the period.

Other correspondents in the collection include Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, Lewis, D. Campbell, Caleb Cushing, William Pitt Fessenden, Baron von Geralt, David Hoadley, Benito Juárez, Matías Romero, J. Edgar Thomson, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, and Manuel Murillo Toro. Among the printed items are copies of *Diario Oficial*, 1868, and *El Sinapismo*, 1877.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material, with the bound correspondence that comprises the largest part of the papers arranged chronologically.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Bound correspondence
BOX 1	1825, Mar.25-1855, Nov. 1
BOX 2	1855, Nov. 2-1856, Nov. 4
BOX 3	1856, Nov. 5-1857, June 4
BOX 4	1857, June 5-1858, Jul 15
BOX 5	1858, Jul 17-1862, Mar. 19
BOX 6	1862, Mar. 31-1865, Oct. 28
BOX 7	1865, Nov. 1-1871, Aug. 14
BOX 8	1871, Aug. 17-1872, Feb. 27
BOX 9	1872, Feb.-Aug. 30
BOX 10	1872, Aug.-Dec. 14
BOX 11	1872, Dec. 16-1873, Apr. 26
BOX 12	1873, Apr. 30-1876, Nov. 11
BOX 13	1876, Nov. 13-1884, Dec. 1
BOX 14	1884, Dec. 6-1890, Nov. 20
BOX 15	Proceedings, 1858-1865
BOX 15	Notes, 1856, Dec.-1857, July
BOX 15	Letterpress copybook, 1868
BOX 16	Dispatches
BOX 16	1866, Nov. 10-Sept. 18
BOX 16	1867, Aug.-1868, Dec.
BOX 16	1869, May-July
BOX 16	Journals, 1849, Feb.-1851, Aug. 22
BOX 16	Scrapbook, undated
BOX 17	General correspondence, 1847-1887, undated
BOX 18	Maps and newspaper clippings, undated
BOX 19	Printed matter
BOX 20	Printed matter