Joseph Lane papers, 1848-1887

Overview of the Collection

**Creator**  Lane, Joseph, 1801-1881

**Title**  Joseph Lane papers

**Dates**  1848-1887 (inclusive)

**Quantity**  2 linear feet, (5 containers)

**Collection Number**  Ax 183

**Summary**  Joseph Lane (1801-1881) was an active Oregonian politician serving as Governor and Oregon's first Senator. The Joseph Lane papers include diaries, correspondence, legal documents, newspaper clippings, a draft of Nina Lane Faubion's biography of Lane, and photographs.

**Repository**  University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.

**Access Restrictions**  Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time.

**Additional Reference Guides**  See the Current Collection Guide for detailed description and requesting options.

**Languages**  English

**Sponsor**  Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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**Historical Note**

Joseph Lane was born in North Carolina on December 14, 1801, and he and his family moved to Kentucky when he was three years old. Lane moved away from his family to Indiana at age fourteen to work as a clerk in a store. After acquiring a farm and his own business at the age of twenty-one, Lane married Mary Hart Polly. The couple had eight children.

In his early twenties, Lane served on the Indiana state legislature from 1822 to 1846. After serving in the war against Mexico, where he became a major-general in 1847, he accepted the position as governor of Oregon. He moved with his oldest son, leaving the rest of his family behind. Lane was sworn in as governor on March 3, 1849. Purchasing land along the Willamette River, near Oregon City,
Lane built a home. In the 1850s, Lane operated an unsuccessful lumber mill and worked in the mines in Northern California.

Lane became a delegate to Congress in 1851 as a Democrat, after beating opponent William H. Wilson. He became Oregon's first Senator, serving from 1859 to 1861. There were two initial pieces of legislation that Lane proposed while he was in Congress. He wanted to move Oregon's capital from Oregon City to Salem, which failed. Lane also proposed roads leading from Walla Walla, Washington to the Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon. The proposal was passed and the roads were built over a series of years.

While Lane served in Congress, a majority of his efforts were spent on the issue of slavery. Lane believed that the states, not federal government legislation, should dictate slavery decisions in each state. The slave debate grew in Oregon during the 1850s as it grew as a national issue. Although Lane did not fight as a soldier in the Civil War, he used his efforts to support slave states by proposing a variety of legislation in Congress.

Lane was reelected to Congress in 1857 and continued to focus on state's rights. Lane also focused on the Native American issues that Oregon faced. In 1857, Lane and other leaders in Oregon pushed Native America tribes in the Umpqua Valley back onto reservations. Lane unsuccessfully tried to enact Congressional legislation that would use federal funds to enforce containing Native Americans to reservations. While this piece of legislation did not pass, Lane continued to push for measures that would benefit the people represented by Oregon's pioneer government.

Lane's role in Congress ended in March, 1861, as his pro-slavery beliefs did not resonate with the public. While he did not contribute to Oregon politics after 1861, he did run for and lose his bid for a state senate seat in 1880, at the age of 79. In 1870, Lane's wife died and Lane continued to live with much of his extended family just outside of Roseburg, Oregon. He died on April 19, 1881. Lane County, Oregon is named for Joseph Lane.

Joseph Lane had one son, Lafayette Lane, who served in Congress from 1875 to 1877 and a grandson, Dr. Harry Lane, that served in Congress from 1913 to 1917.


Content Description

The Joseph Lane papers include diaries, correspondence, legal documents, newspaper clippings, and a draft of Nina Lane Faubion's biography of Lane.

The diaries are from 1872 to 1881. The correspondence includes material from 1852 to 1887. Work by Nina Lane Faubion includes the draft and notes of the Lane biography, as well as the manuscript, Señorita Gringa.

The photographs series includes two daguerreotypes, two cabinet photographs, an ambrotype, a tintype and two silver gelatin copy prints. Highlights are portraits of Lane and family members, some unidentified, and one military scene of the anti-slavery conflict in Kansas in 1856.
Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Description

Guide to the Joseph Lane papers

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
- African Americans
- Governors--Oregon
- Indians of North America--Relocation--Oregon
- Slavery--Justification

Personal Names:
- Faubion, Nina Lane, 1884-1945

Corporate Names:
- United States. Congress. Senate

Geographical Names:
- Oregon Territory--Politics and government--To 1859
- United States--Politics and government--19th century

Form or Genre Terms:
- Correspondence
- Photographs

Finding aid prepared by Vida Germano
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