

# EPHRAIM GEORGE SQUIER PAPERS, 1838 - 1905

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Collection #  
M 0262  
OM 0056  
F 0353

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April 1989  
May 1994

Updated 2 January 2002

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 manuscript boxes, 3 oversize folders, photographs and 1 roll microfilm.
COLLECTION DATES:	1838-1905
PROVENANCE:	Gift of Eli Lilly, Indianapolis, 1958; microfilm made in July 1971
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.
RESTRICTIONS:	None

ALTERNATE FORMATS: Portion of collection microfilmed

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1958.0002, 1971.0705

NOTES:

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ephraim George Squier (he usually signed his name "E. George") (1821-1888) was born in Bethlehem, N.Y., the son of Joel and Catherine (Kilmer) Squier. Though he had little formal schooling, he did enough studying by himself to become a distinguished scholar. His early experience included farm work, teaching, and civil engineering. He became the editor of several small newspapers, some of which were quite short-lived. Moving to Chillicothe, Ohio, in the mid-1840s, he edited the *Scioto Gazette*, and served as Clerk of the Ohio House of Representatives (1847-1848). He then studied the Mound Builders of the Mississippi Valley, and produced a work about them, which became the first publication of the newly founded Smithsonian Institution. This was followed by an equally authoritative work on Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New York (1851). These works gained Squier the acquaintance of several prominent writers, such as O. W. Holmes, Francis Parkman, and William H. Prescott.

In 1849, through the influence of Prescott, Squier was appointed charge d'affaires to Central America. During the next four years he negotiated a treaty (never ratified) with Nicaragua for an American-built canal, and studied the route for a transcontinental railroad across Honduras.

About 1860 Squier became chief editor for Frank Leslie's publishing house, and was responsible for beginning the publication of a pictorial history of the Civil War. His work for Leslie's continued for another decade, but was interrupted from 1863 to 1865 by his appointment as U. S. commissioner to Peru to settle financial claims between the two countries.

In 1858 Squier became the second husband of Miriam Florence Follin, an able lady who also worked for Leslie. In 1873 she divorced Squier and married Leslie, who also obtained a divorce after a "particularly unhappy" marriage. She referred to this third marriage as "her one happy matrimonial experience," and ran the publishing house for twenty years after Leslie's death in 1880. She was married a fourth time, to Oscar Wilde's brother.

Squier wrote numerous articles and books about travel, archaeology, and general conditions in the nations of Central and South America. In 1874 he lost his physical and mental health. He died in 1888 after many years of illness.

Sources: Materials in collection

Article in *Dictionary of American Biography*

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection, filling three manuscript boxes, consists of letters, printed articles, transcripts, and clippings. The main body of correspondence is arranged chronologically, the rest by type of material.

The collection was given to Indiana Historical Society by Eli Lilly, along with a large collection of books owned by Squier. Mr. Lilly's interest in Squier presumably came from the fact that Squier had written the first major

book about the Mound Builders of the Mississippi Valley. However, material in this manuscript collection comes almost entirely from other facets and periods of Squier's varied career, particularly his diplomatic and other activities in Central America and his work at the Leslie publishing house.

Perhaps because of the breadth of Squier's interests and the variety of his activities, his papers are located in a number of different libraries, including the following:

Library of Congress  
Henry E. Huntington Library  
William L. Clements Library (University of Michigan)  
New-York Historical Society  
Western Reserve Historical Society  
John Carter Brown Library (Brown University)  
Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia  
Ridgway Library, Philadelphia

In this collection, Box 1 (Folders 1-20) contains Squier's correspondence, spanning the period 1842-1874, almost entirely letters written to Squier. Some of the letters are in Spanish, and are accompanied by translations made by Eleanor Dunn Moore in 1960. There is one folder (Folder 21) of letters written after Squier's breakdown, mainly to and from his nephew Frank Squier who administered his literary estate.

Folders 23-25 contain typed transcripts of letters to Squier by Francis Parkman, David Dixon Porter, and other notables. The location of the originals of these letters is not indicated. Folders 26-28 contain printed correspondence of Squier: an 1850 letter to Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian, forwarding various antiquities from Nicaragua to the museum; and correspondence in Spanish concerning his missions to Central America in 1849-1853. Folder 29 contains two short pieces, apparently in Squier's handwriting, on the Seneca and Algonquin Indians. Folders 30-32 contain printed articles by Squier, notably his contributions to the Encyclopaedia Britannica on parts of Central and South America. Folder 33 contains material about the Honduras Inter-Oceanic railway in which Squier had an interest, Folder 39 an 1860 flyer advertising the SS Osceola of which he was co-owner. Folders 38-40 contain clippings and notes found between the pages of books in the Squier collection.

In Box 2 are several scrapbooks and notebooks kept by Squier, along with items laid in these notebooks. These include a scrapbook and diary for 1839 (Folder 1); scrapbook of poems by Squier and of reviews of his work (Folder 3); and two notebooks with writings on archaeology (Folders 4 and 6).

In Box 3 are a notebook with the 1849 charter of a company to build a ship canal across Nicaragua, with text in both Spanish and English (Folder 1); and a scrapbook dated 1868 apparently kept by Squier's nephew Frank.

In Oversize OM 0056 are a number of drawings and maps of archaeological sites, and photostats of an 1850 article on Nicaragua. In rolled storage in this collection are four panels of a drawing entitled "View of Plain of Leon."

A calendar of Squier's correspondence, with an index of correspondence, is available in the Indiana Historical Society Library.

Some of the material in this collection, including a listing, a biographical summary and other biographical material, and correspondence, is recorded on microfilm F 353.

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## **BOX AND FOLDER INVENTORY**

### **BOX 1**

<b>FOLDER</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>
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- 1 Biographical
- 2 Obituaries
- 3 Re: Mrs. Squier's first marriage
- 4 Squier correspondence--1842
- 5 Squier correspondence --1843-1844
- 6 Squier correspondence --1845-1849
- 7 Squier correspondence --1851
- 8 Squier correspondence --1852-1853
- 9 Squier correspondence --1854
- 10 Squier correspondence --1855
- 11 Squier correspondence --1856
- 12 Squier correspondence --1857-1858
- 13 Squier correspondence --1859
- 14 Squier correspondence --1860
- 15 Squier correspondence --1863-1864
- 16 Squier correspondence --1865
- 17 Squier correspondence --1866-1867
- 18 Squier correspondence --1868
- 19 Squier correspondence --1869
- 20 Squier correspondence --1870-1874
- 21 Squier correspondence --1874-1905
- 22 Squier correspondence --n.d.

### **Transcripts of correspondence**

- 23 From Francis Parkman 1849-1868
- 24 From David Dixon Porter 1869-1871
- 25 From others

### **Printed correspondence**

- 26 To Joseph Henry 1850
- 27 Diplomatic correspondence in Spanish 1849
- 28 Diplomatic correspondence 1852-1853

### **Writings**

- 29 Re: Seneca and Algonquian Indians
- 30 Articles in Encyclopaedia Britannica
- 31 Printed articles
- 32 Clippings re: EGS and Walt Whitman

### **Business**

- 33 Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway
- 34 SS Osceola

### **Miscellaneous**

- 35 Honduras bond 1867
- 36 Poyaisian land debenture 1868
- 37 Clipping re: Dallas-Clarendon Convention 1856
- 38 Notes, some in Squier's handwriting. from books in Squier collection
- 39 Clippings etc. from between pages of Notes on Central America Vol. I.
- 40 Clippings etc. from between pages of Notes on Central America Vol. II.

### **BOX 2: Notebooks and scrapbooks**

- | FOLDER | CONTENTS   |
|--------|--|
| 1      | Scrapbooks and diary 1839  |
| 2      | Photostats of "The Triumph of the Mind" pp 9-17 of 1839 scrapbook              |
| 3      | Scrapbook 1839-1846; Poems by Squier; Reviews of books and magazines by Squier |

- 4 Notebook ca. 1845-- archaeology, Indian vocabulary
- 5 Items laid in 1845 notebook
- 6 Scrapbook 1847-- "Mss on American Antiquities"
- 7 Items laid in 1847 scrapbook

### **BOX 3**

FOLDER	CONTENTS
1	Charter of Nicaraguan ship canal company, 1849
2	Scrapbook 1868 (Frank Squier)

### **OVERSIZE (OM 0056)**

Folder 1	Maps and drawings of archaeological sites
Folder 2	Photostat of New-York Daily Tribune 12-13 November 1850--long article about Nicaragua and prospects of a canal there
Folder 3	(rolled storage) Four panels, "View of Plain of Leon"
Folder 4	(Flat File: FF 11-f ) Maps and drawings of archaeological sites

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### **CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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