

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Microfilm Publication M37

RECORD GROUP 59

DESPATCHES FROM

SPECIAL AGENTS OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1794-1906

Roll 9

Vol. 18

Ralph R. Gurley, 1849-50

Malcolm W. Mearis, 1851

Joseph Balestier, 1850-51

James E. Harvey, 1849

Leonidas McIntosh, 1849

Robert Greenhow, 1850

George G. Goss, 1853

Robert M. Walsh, 1851 and 1852

Vol. 19

John H. Aulick, 1852

William M. Burwell, 1852

William Miles, 1852

Matthew Perry, Undated

Unnumbered manuscript volume entitled "Journal of  
Journey in Japan," 1853-54, James Morrow

William J. McCluney, 1853-54

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Joel Abbot and Henry A. Adams, 1855

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THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON: 1981

INTRODUCTION

On the 21 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the 51 volumes and unbound papers that compose despatches from special agents of the Department of State, 1794-1906. The records are part of General Records of the Department of State, Record Group (RG) 59.

History

Special agents have been employed by Presidents and Secretaries of State to conduct foreign affairs since the ratification of the Constitution. Special agents have negotiated and exchanged ratifications of treaties, collected information, delivered ceremonial letters, taken testimony in foreign countries, mediated wars and international disputes, inspected U.S. consulates, and observed and reported on political conditions in other countries. During the 18th and 19th centuries, U.S. Navy officers, acting as special agents, were often given special diplomatic missions besides their regular duties.

Records Description

The correspondence from special agents and related material is arranged by the name of the agent and thereunder chronologically. The records include 47 volumes that are numbered 1-24 and 28-50, four unnumbered volumes, and a small amount of unbound material. The unnumbered volumes and unbound records have been filmed with the numbered volumes to which they most closely relate.

For this publication, notes have been prepared and filmed at the start of each roll. The notes give the name of each agent, the purpose of the mission, and the inclusive dates of the despatches and other communications relating to the mission. Cities and countries are identified by names in use when the despatches were written.

Related Records

Records of special missions of the Department of State not included in this publication and additional material relating to special agents are scattered among numerous series in RG 59. Letters from the State Department to special agents appear in diplomatic instructions, 1801-1906 (M77); instructions to special agents, 1823-1906 (rolls 152-155 of M77); consular instructions, 1801-1906 (filmed from 1801 through 1834 on M78); and domestic letters, 1784-1906 (M40). Other related records in RG 59 include notes to and from foreign legations in the United States, 1784-1906; miscellaneous letters, 1789-1906 (MI79); credences; and many small series relating to individual missions that are

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described in *Preliminary Inventory of the General Records of the Department of State*, No. 157 (Washington: 1980). A *List of Documents Relating to Special Agents of the Department of State, 1789-1908*, Special List No. 7 (Washington: 1951), serves as a guide to State Department correspondence with selected special agents.

Records dated after August 1906 relating to special agents are filed by subject in the State Department central-numerical file for the period 1906-10 and in the decimal file after 1910.

Additional documentation concerning special missions of U.S. Navy officers through 1886 can be found in Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library (RG 45) and, after 1886, in General Records of the Department of the Navy, (RG 80).

Sally B. Marks wrote this introduction and arranged the records for filming; Thomas Whitfield edited the introduction.

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Notes: Roll 9

Records relating to the following special agents of the Department of State in volumes 18 and 19 have been microfilmed on this roll.

## Volume 18

Ralph R. Gurley

Special agent to assess the political, economic, and military stability of Liberia for the purpose of determining the U.S. position toward recognition of that country.

Sept. 22, 1849-Feb. 20, 1850

Malcolm W. Mearis

Special agent to investigate, in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, the formation of an armed expedition against Cuba.

Aug.-July 29, 1851

Joseph Balestier

Special agent to deliver to the King of Cochin China a letter of friendship and conciliation from the President and to negotiate and conclude a treaty of commerce and friendship, to negotiate with the Government of Siam for the removal or moderation of tonnage duties on U.S. ships, to conclude treaties of friendship and commerce with the Sultan of Brunei and the Rajah of Sarawack (Island of Borneo), to convey to the Rajah of Subi the gratitude of the President for the kind treatment shown the survivors of the *Mary Ellen*, a Boston ship wrecked off the coast of Subi in 1846, to make a show of U.S. naval strength off the coast of the islands of Bali and Lombok, and to visit ports on the west coast of Sumatra.

Dec. 6, 1850-Nov. 25, 1851

Besides the material contained in volume 18, typed copies of correspondence concerning the Balestier mission dated January-May 1851 from Executive letters, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library (RG 45), are filmed on this roll.

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Notes: Roll 9 (con.)

James E. Harvey

Special agent to inform district attorneys, marshals, and collectors in certain U.S. east coast and southern port cities of preparations for an expedition to invade the island of Cuba and to take measures to halt the expedition as soon as hostile intent was ascertained.

Aug. 13, 1849

Leonidas McIntosh

Special agent to obtain information on the projected expedition for the invasion of Cuba, alleged to be reconnoitering near New Orleans.

Aug. 27, 1849

Robert Greenhow

Special agent to collect information concerning the validity of claims, assumed by the U.S. Government under provisions of the U.S.-Mexican Treaty of February 2, 1848, of U.S. citizens against Mexico.

June-Oct. 23, 1850

George G. Goss

Special agent to direct completion of a U.S. cemetery near Mexico City.

Feb. 7-Sept. 14, 1853

Robert M. Walsh

Special agent to negotiate with British and French representatives for the cessation of hostilities between the Dominican Republic and Haiti to make arrangements with the Haitian Government for the reciprocal recognition of consuls.

Feb. 5-June 10, 1851

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Notes: Roll 9 (con.)

Matthew Perry

- Special agent to negotiate a treaty or convention of commerce, navigation, and friendship with the Emperor of Japan to include the following provisions: protection for U.S. seamen shipwrecked off the coast of Japan, permission for U.S. vessels to buy provisions and refit in Japanese ports, and permission for U.S. vessels to sell or barter their cargoes in certain ports of Japan. This material consists of undated notes submitted to the Secretary of the Navy, ca. 1853-54.

Unnumbered Volume

Besides the material concerning Perry in the volume, there is an unnumbered manuscript volume entitled "Journal of Journey in Japan" by James Morrow, covering the period February 26, 1853, to November 10, 1854, filmed on this roll. Morrow was a special agent detailed by the Department of the Navy to accompany Matthew C. Perry's expedition to Japan to observe and collect specimens of plant life and to introduce vegetables not indigenous to the countries visited by the Perry squadron.

William J. McCluney

Special agent to exchange ratifications of a convention of friendship and commerce, concluded by the United States and Borneo on June 23, 1850, with the Sultan of Borneo.

Feb. 6, 1853-Apr. 3, 1854

Thomas Jefferson Page

Special agent to exchange ratifications of a treaty of commerce, concluded by the United States and Paraguay on March 4, 1853, with the President of Paraguay.

June 14, 1853-Jan. 28, 1856

Christopher L. Ward

Special agent to deliver instructions to the U.S. Minister to Mexico about the provisions of a treaty to establish a new boundary between the United States and Mexico.

Oct. 31-Dec. 4, 1853

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Notes: Roll 9 (con.)

Charles R. Buckalew

Special agent to deliver instructions for the exchange of ratifications of a treaty of commerce, concluded by the United States and Paraguay on March 4, 1853, to Thomas Jefferson Page, commander of the U.S.S. *Water Witch*, in the vicinity of Asuncion. In the event of Page's absence, Buchalew was instructed to complete the mission.

Jan. 14, 1855

William L. Cazneau

Special agent to negotitate a treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation with the Dominican Republic (1854) and to collect information on the domestic affairs of that country, including the stability of the government, trade prospects, and the effectiveness of protection afforded foreigners (1859).

Jan. 23, 1854-July 1, 1861

Joel Abbot and Henry A. Adams

Special agents to exchange ratifications of the treaty of peace and friendship, concluded between the United States and Japan on March 31, 1854, with the Emperor of Japan.

Apr. 3-June 25, 1855

Joseph W. Fabens

Special agent to investigate circumstances surrounding the U.S. naval bombardment of San Juan del Norte (formerly Greytown), Nicaragua, in July 1854, and the validity of resulting property claims against the United States.

Dec. 21, 1854-Feb. 21, 1855

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Roll 9

Target 3

Malcolm W. Mearis (United States)

1851



Malcom M. Meares, Esq-  
Special Agent U.S.

Dept of State,  
Washington 31 July 49

Sir,

Secret information of an important character having been furnished by you since the 23<sup>d</sup> instant, of the enlistment and equipping of an armed expedition in the U. States for some foreign destination, and objects as yet unascertained, the President deems it necessary, with a view to the maintenance of our neutral relations with foreign countries, and the safety of our foreign intercourse, that you should continue, until further orders, your investigation, in regard to this expedition.

For this purpose it will be absolutely necessary that you should visit the cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, and perhaps Boston.

You will conduct this investigation with the utmost secrecy, and make reports to this Department from time to time as the facts connected with the expedition may be developed.

Your compensation will be at the rate of six dollars a day, commencing with the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst, and your necessary travelling expenses will be <sup>allowed</sup> ~~paid~~ on presenting your account to this Department on your return to this city. The sum of a hundred dollars is now advanced to you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
John A. ...

Wed 11 Aug, '49

Humble

John M. Clayton

Sir

ANOTHER STARTLING STORY.—The New York Herald has a revised story of a new expedition from New Orleans to take the Mexican Rio Grande country, of which "nobody knows nothing" but the Herald man. On the authority of a letter from New Orleans, it is stated that 500 men have been enlisted there for a "secret" expedition, and that considerable arms are accumulated. Each man is made acquainted with secret signs, by which he knows his fellows, and they are to divulge nothing. How, then, does the correspondent know so much about it?

By referring to

Herald and other papers

will find mention of the

expedition fitting out they speak

of New Orleans.

My report and

full report shall be

by Wednesday or before if

there is any communication where

out of importance to notice

have then reported on under

chief. The enlistment proceeds

steadily all along this line -

I have the honor to be

Sir With Great Respect for Mr. Clayton

M. J. Davis

THE  
you  
E  
IN  
Steadily

Aug 11 Aug 10.

Portraits Baltimore - 10 Aug 49.

Mr. H. Clayton  
Dear Sir

I wrote you a hurried note from this place having this morning just returned from New York by what I deemed imperative circumstances from my brother to these movements. denoting active at this city I think the first of this nature was first planned. but has there been any activity elsewhere

As I stated before they are very cautious of their instructions and as to their destination, which they inform the private or some other affairs state told them upon the respective help being ready to start.

But this much I can positively say that they are not active here for any part of Maryland as is reported by the public. the most probable place is Pennsylvania.

P. J. Owen

[Please Turn Over]

And their object the overthrow of  
Merrimack, but of this even  
we is certain though I hold  
that I have the most reliable  
information.

I think from all  
the information obtained by my  
land my assistants, that, God will  
will command the division -  
There will be no  
men raised in New Orleans or  
in any other Port. and it is  
repeated to me by letter from  
them that they will be ready  
soon to start. But the number  
by the Herald and the papers  
have exaggerated, at this time  
they have not 500 men unless  
but they will be ready. I think  
between the 20<sup>th</sup> Aug and 1<sup>st</sup> Sep  
the time they wish to start from  
here. Philad. N York & Wash

A good many of the  
recruits have been sent out  
here. N York and elsewhere  
The schooner that  
carried the Powder, to day  
P. J. C.

was the Anna Elizabeth Caspary  
reached her father my absence  
and has since sailed for  
St. Johns, N. B.

I shall deem  
it requisite to put my story  
here until Monday morning  
or Tuesday and then proceed  
to New York and elsewhere, both  
all dispatch, as from this  
point in Washington all their  
orders and money - come - from -

I will state to  
you a fact which will show  
how they manage to screen  
it from Public view, the Col  
or Capt. has. in his office, they  
go there and enlist, but are  
not allowed to come about  
(again only those that are hunting  
up recruits,) unless sent for &  
and you can not see any thing  
very subtle to attract attention

I shall increase  
y watchfulness if possible.  
P. J. Owen

leaving nothing by which I may so  
please it before you that when  
the full development of the  
Plot is laid before you there  
shall be no land at a moment  
notice the requisite to their  
defeat with in all the above  
named premises

I Have the Honor to Ack  
of Sir Pitt Rivers  
Your most obedient  
and faithful servant

M. F. Mass

Bath Aug 10 1849 -

No 15 Marsh Pond Road

Sept 27 Sept. 49

Amble

John M. Clayton

Respected Sir

As I sta-  
ted in my last I started for  
New York and Boston, stopping  
at Phila<sup>a</sup>.

[PREVAILING] I was taken down with  
the prevailing Epidemic or something  
similar by which I came near  
losing my life - but thanks  
to my Master above I am about  
again this will be a measure  
safe for my next writing -

But alas the same  
time my subs. have not been  
able - I proceed to state  
In New York a meeting  
of all the Officers was held  
three days after the Proclamation  
and they determined to use  
all and every exertion to get  
the same off at an early  
day as possible say the  
30<sup>th</sup> of September, at the same

P. J. Omer



time an expression of their opinion  
in reference to the Proclamation  
they laughed at the idea of its  
having any influence upon their  
movements as to the finale - but  
determined to be more cautious  
in their communications out of doors  
and they said if, in any way defec-  
in this, that they would soon  
start another - that they had  
entered into it to make them  
and would succeed at one  
time or other.

Baltimore is pulling  
up her band slowly - but with  
some spirit manifested as to  
their early departure -

Phila<sup>d</sup> has so  
enlisted and will easily make  
up her quota, when ready to start  
she will be able to send more  
than Balto. but not such heavy  
ones

New York they have the  
names of some million thousands  
down and want to get more  
some most desperate

P. S. U

looking creatures as ever were seen  
would murder a man for ten dollars  
they are not wanting (as is repre-  
sented by themselves) in funds -  
the officers live freely - This I think  
will be the first starting point -  
from here all their implements  
have or will be shipped -  
as to their destination, I can  
make no more positive  
assertion, farther than has been  
published. but be certain  
I will know, apart from specu-  
lation on the eye of their departure.  
As my health will improve  
rapidly I hope you will hear  
from me more frequent -

I Have the Honor to be  
Respected Sir, With Great Respect  
Yours Most Faithfull Servant  
M. H. Morris

At the near approach of their  
departure, you shall be advised  
more in particular, I have the Honor  
M. H. Morris

Wmble: John M. Clayton Esq Sir, I have

state to you that there is in circulation a rumor of another expedition of Ten Thousand men. Some report it for Japan

It may be that the venturied course of the defeated Cubans is for this purpose.

But whatever may be the drift of this last report I will find it out. &c &c.

I have the Honor To be  
Yours With Great Respect  
John Mast Esq Agent  
M. J. Morris

Wm Baltimore Oct 16: 1849

Amble  
John M. Clayton  
N. C.

I wrote you  
yesterday in reference to a  
reported, contemplated invasion  
some foreign territory, represented  
by the newspapers as for Japan  
the force to consist of ten thousand  
men from this country.

It is stated  
that they have means sufficient  
in hand at this time

I have hereto-  
fore informed you that the late  
force intended for Cuba, would  
as soon as they succeeded in  
raising the necessary funds,  
get off for some point of plunder

If at any time  
they had disbanded, the force  
in each city, I would have  
thought that they had given up  
the idea of very illegal  
J. C.

Attempts elsewhere, but to the  
contrary they have kept up their  
vigilant attention.

I have the honor to be  
Sir, with great respect  
Yours faithfully & obedt. Agent  
M. J. Morris

Boston 17 1849

W. Peares, Esq.

Baltimore, Md.

D.S. W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr. 51.

Sir :

If you can make  
it convenient to visit this  
city soon, in the course of  
the current week, or next  
night, you will oblige  
by affording me the opportunity  
by calling on me.  
A few minutes conversation with you  
would be truly,

W. S. D.

Wed 30 July

Chi

The notorious, the  
Bantline, no, here - come  
round from the York by sea  
on a steamer - is full  
of Cuba Patrocinium -

I have made  
it my business, to keep an  
eye on him -

And it is my  
opinion that, his object is to  
effect some arrangement  
as to men & co. for (not the  
present) a future, mish and  
capture, of that, Salvador

I hope they have to be  
Chi with great respect  
Yours etc etc

M. N. Morris

429:57

Roll 9

Target 5

James E. Harvey (Cuba)

1849



4

Philadelphia

August 13. 1869

My dear Sir,

I had an interview this morning with Mr. Collector Lewis & Mr. District Attorney Chamberlain, on the subject of the supposed expedition. The U.S. District Marshal is not in the City at present, but is expected to-morrow. Upon his arrival, I shall immediately communicate with him and endeavor to organize an efficient corps of investigation between these federal functionaries & such co-operation from the Municipal police, as can be obtained, which I suppose will be limited, since there is the <sup>office</sup> <sup>under</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>indue</sup> <sup>ment</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>activity</sup> <sup>or</sup> <sup>vigilance</sup>. Mr. Lewis was to have conferred with the Mayor of the City this afternoon on the subject generally, with a view of obtaining information & eliciting his official support. I cannot predict the success of this Conference, knowing as I do, how difficult it is to involve and yoke the local authorities without substantial considerations.

An immediate examination will be made through the books of the Custom House, with a view of ascertaining, whether arms or ammunition have been shipped from this port within the last month.

or two and if so, & what points & with what objects.  
So far as I have been able to investigate during the day  
I feel assured, no organization of an armed force has  
been made in this city, nor can I learn from any quarter  
that such an expedition has been attempted, even with  
the abundance of materials, which the surrounding  
districts are prepared to furnish for an enterprise of  
this character. However I shall probe it thro'  
roughly & report as soon as the facts are in my pos-  
session.

Your letter addressed to W. Ashmead, was  
delivered by me in person.

Very faithfully,

Your friend

James E. Hardy

Mr. Clayton

Confidential.

Department of State - Washington -

August 9. 1849.

To James R. Harvey Esq.

Sir,

The President this day appointed you a special agent to discharge a highly important <sup>responsible</sup> ~~public~~ office.

I have commended to you in private conversation as full a statement as the facts ~~concerned~~ <sup>concerned</sup> to be in the possession of this department will establish, of the projected expedition now fitting out in <sup>some of</sup> the Republics of the United States to invade the island of Cuba or some of the Possessions of Mexico. I am of the opinion that Cuba is the destination of the troops enlisted & about to be enlisted.

New Orleans, <sup>Mobile</sup> Baltimore, <sup>Philadelphia</sup> New York & Boston are the points particularly to be worn regard. You will forthwith proceed to <sup>Baltimore &</sup> Philadelphia and attract the attention of the District attorney & collector <sup>at</sup> <sup>the markets</sup> <sup>east of</sup> these ports and induce them to institute the most searching scrutiny to ascertain with the aid of the City Police <sup>inhabitants</sup> (if possible) whether any <sup>of the kind</sup> movement is in progress in <sup>any</sup> <sup>one</sup> City. Give no time in these plans, but proceed quickly to New York & <sup>then</sup> <sup>to</sup> Boston.

impart all the knowledge on this subject you possess to the  
District Attorneys of the United States <sup>the Marshals</sup> & the Collectors at  
the Ports. See that every legal effort is promptly made  
(with the aid of the local Police if it can be obtained)  
to detect the execution of any secret and expedited  
threats against and to arrest its progress as soon as  
a hostile intent against the country of any friendly power  
is ascertained. Call the attention of these officers <sup>especially</sup> to the  
provisions of the act of the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1818 & inform  
them that the President demands of them a faithful use  
of all laws intended to secure the faith of treaties &  
every exertion in your power to detect, expose & defeat the  
contemplated expeditions and report to this department  
from time to time the result of your diligent labours.

The expeditions from all accounts will be  
before the 20<sup>th</sup> & 25 August. No time therefore must  
be lost in our attempt to <sup>arrest</sup> defeat it. If necessary the  
of war in this part must cooperate with the civil  
(X insert X)

Very respectfully  
Yours  
J. C.

P.S. The President has ordered that \$500 be advanced  
you to defray your expenses of which retain an account  
~~at least~~ <sup>without secrecy</sup> on your part as to the objects of your  
mission will be indispensable as well for your own  
safety as for

THE PURPOSE  
YOU HAVE IN  
VIEW

Confidential

<sup>17</sup>  
Merrill

J. Prescott Hall, Esq.  
U. S. Dist. Attorney - New York

Department of State  
Washington, 6<sup>th</sup> Sept, 1849.

Dear Sir

In answer to yours, just received,  
I have to say, arrest any man belonging to  
the Cuban Expedition against whom you  
have what you deem to be sufficient or  
reasonable evidence.

J. M. Clayton

Confidential

(geographic.)

(Department of State,  
Wash<sup>ton</sup>. - 6 Sept. 1849.

To  
J. Prescott Hall, Esq.,  
U.S. District attorney  
New York

Sir,

Your attention  
is again called to your instructions respecting  
the Expedition against Cuba - Arrest any  
vessel engaged in it - We learn here that  
they are about to sail.

Yours respectfully,  
J. M. Clayton

To James E. Harvey, Astor House  
New York.

See the District attorney. If he  
is not in N. York, send for him  
J. M. Clayton

63  
Telegraphic

Confidential.

J. Prescott Hall Esq.

U. S. District Attorney - New York.

Department of State,  
Washington, 7<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1849

Sir:

Act according to your own discretion in the case of Carr, and the vessels also. Break up the enterprise - that is the great object. If the government had no other object, it is all important to save the lives of the ignorant dupes of the project. Their fate in Cuba would be most disastrous. - No vindictive proceedings are desirable, in my judgment, after the enterprise is broken up. - They are making pronunciamientos in Cuba.

Very respectfully yours,

J. M. C.

4 Telegram.

State Department of State  
25<sup>th</sup> May 1850

To Henry Williams, U.S. District atty, Savannah

Proceed according to Law to have  
Gene Lopez arrested for a violation of the  
act of Congress of the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1818 &  
held in custody until he can be transferred  
to the proper district for trial

Wm. C.  
Secy, State.



Roll 9

Target 6.

Leonidas McIntosh (Cuba)

1849

~~Confidential~~

Leonidas Mc Intosh, Esq.

Special Agent, &c.

Department of State,

Washington, 27<sup>th</sup> Aug., 1849

Sir:

You are hereby appointed a Special Agent of this Department to proceed to New Orleans to obtain all the information you can in respect to the information you can in respect to the projected <sup>expedition for the</sup> invasion of Cuba, or some other friendly power, now fitting out in or near that city, and make report of all the facts connected with the subject which come to your knowledge. The verbal instructions which I have given you make it unnecessary to dwell upon the duties devolved upon you, or the manner in which you are to discharge them.

The sum of one hundred dollars  
is now advanced to you by this Department  
in full compensation for your services  
in this character.

I am, Sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

John M. Clayton -