

TITLE: John William (Jack) Swilling Collection

DATE RANGE: 1830-1978

CALL NUMBER: FM MSS #28

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.5 linear ft (5 boxes)

PROVENANCE: Donated by the families of Mark Shields and Geoffrey P. Mawn.

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CREDIT LINE: Jack Swilling Collection, FM MSS 28, Arizona Historical Foundation

PROCESSED BY: Paul Hollmann, April 2010

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Soldier, prospector, entrepreneur, and gentleman John William (Jack) Swilling was born in South Carolina on April 1, 1830. He spent the formative years of his life in the South before enlisting in the military in 1848 when he served in the Mexican-American War. In 1854, he sustained a painful head injury which would affect him the rest of his life. He married and had a child in Alabama as before he moved West. Swilling joined the ox train of the El Paso-Fort Yuma (Leach) Wagon Road at that time and later served as captain of the Gila Rangers, a militia formed to respond to Indian attacks within the Gadsden Purchase area. In 1860, Swilling settled in the Pinos Altos area and joined the Arizona Guard. His unit was integrated into the Confederacies' fighting forces during the Civil War, but Swilling deserted by July 1862. Swilling continued prospecting in the Gila and Hassayampa River areas. He married Trinidad Escalante of Tucson in April of 1864.

After numerous other mining and farming ventures, Swilling settled in the Salt River Valley in 1867, founded the first ditch company and constructed the canals that would feed the township that was to become Phoenix. In addition to ditch construction Swilling also served as Justice of the Peace, postmaster, and president of the counties' Democratic Convention. He later moved to Black Canyon and started a successful mining company before he retired, mainly due to the growing discomfort associated with earlier injuries and substance abuse issues. In April of 1878 Swilling went to exhume the remains of friend Jacob Snively for Christian burial. During this journey he and two friends were accused of an armed stagecoach robbery and held for a pre-trial hearing. Although eventually found innocent, Swilling died in captivity on August 12, 1878 while awaiting trial.

Chronology (submitted by Al Bates 2011)

June 30, 1847 – Enrolled for service in the Mexican War

July 13, 1848 – Discharged

1852 – Married Mary Jane Gray of Wetumpka, Alabama

April 2, 1853 – Birth of his daughter Elizabeth Price Davis Swilling

1854 – Suffers serious head injury

April 1, 1856 – Leaves wife and daughter for unknown reasons/destination

April 13, 1858 – At Fort Belknap, Texas joins Leach Wagon Road Company

January 1860 – Leads Gila Rangers in pursuit of Indian stock thieves

May 1863 – Guides Joseph R. Walker party to gold near today's Prescott

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: This collection contains a variety of primary and secondary sources compiled by historians Mark Shields and Geoffrey P. Mawn. Items within the collection include biographical manuscripts, research notes, articles, correspondence, genealogies, and records of military service. Of significance is a surviving journal from the Phoenix Ditch Company chronicling financial dealings between the years 1870-1883.

The collection is organized into two series: **Series I.** Primary Sources and **Series II.** Secondary Sources. Arranged alphabetically and chronologically within.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Primary Sources: Arrest & Death	1878-1879
	2	Primary Sources: Career	1857-1878
	3	Primary Sources: Civil War Service	1861-1962
	4	Primary Sources: Irrigation & Canal Company Land Claim/Plans	1867-1964
	5	Primary Sources: Miscellaneous Research Notes	n.d.
	6	Primary Sources: News Clippings	1860-1957
	7	Primary Sources: Phoenix Ditch Company Journal	1870-1883
	8	Primary Sources: Swilling Genealogy/Family History	1792-1963
2	1	Secondary Sources: Arizona Guards Materials & Notes	1861-1862
	2	Secondary Sources: Articles, Notes, & Maps	1857-1860
	3	Secondary Sources: Family History & Early Years	1830-1856
	4	Secondary Sources: Jack Swilling Manuscripts	1939-1973
	5	Secondary Sources: News Clippings	1873-1978
	6	Secondary Sources: Prospecting Career	1863-1867
	7	Secondary Sources: Various News Items	1867-1873
3	1	Secondary Sources: Geoffrey Mawn Correspondence	1973
	2	Secondary Sources: Jack Swilling: A Re-Evaluation early versions with notes	1973-1976
	3	Secondary Sources: Jack Swilling: A Re-Evaluation	1976
	4	Secondary Sources: Jack Swilling Materials: Notes, Maps, Articles, and Water Rights Information	1872-1927
	5	Secondary Sources: John William Swilling: A Study	n.d.
	6	Secondary Sources: Promoters, Speculators, and the Selection of the Phoenix Townsite	n.d.
	7	Secondary Sources: The Swilling Legacy/Swilling Articles by Earl Zarbin	1978

4	1	Secondary Sources: Mark Shields Research Notes (index cards)	n.d.
5	1	Secondary Sources: Mark Shields Correspondence	1947-1966
	2	Secondary Sources: Shields Correspondence - Elizabeth M. Stover (Swilling grandniece)	1949-1964
	3	Secondary Sources: Shields Correspondence - Dr. Benjamin Sacks	1962-1966
	4	Secondary Sources: Shields Correspondence - Nona Barrick	1961-1966
	5	Secondary Sources: Shields Correspondence re: Butterfield Overland Co.	1947-1964
	6	Secondary Sources: Correspondence re: Swilling's First Marriage	1947-1963
	7	Secondary Sources: Correspondence re: Swilling's First Marriage, cont.	1947-1955
	8	Secondary Sources: Shields Correspondence w/ Senator Carl Hayden	1947-1961
	9	Secondary Sources: News Clippings	1861-1963
	10	Secondary Sources: Mark Shields Manuscripts	n.d.