

**TITLE:** Oatman Massacre Collection

**DATE RANGE:** 1850 - 2006

**CALL NUMBER:** Y-MS 6

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1 box (.5 linear feet)

**PROVENANCE:** Unknown

**COPYRIGHT:** Unknown

**RESTRICTIONS:** This collection is unrestricted.

**CREDIT LINE:** Oatman Massacre Collection, Y-MS 6, Arizona Historical Society-Rio Colorado Division, Yuma

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

The Oatman Massacre occurred in the early months (February or March) of 1851. Royce Oatman and his family, pioneers looking to find a new life in California, were traveling towards Fort Yuma from Tucson. The family set out alone, having decided to press on when the pioneer caravan they were travelling with had opted to rest and resupply at a friendly Pima village. The Oatman family were attacked by a hostile tribe (the survivors identified the group as Tonto Apache, while others have said Yavapai or even Maricopa). The parents, eldest daughter, and two youngest children were killed in the attack. Two daughters, the 13 year old Olive and the seven year-old Mary were taken captive and the eldest son, Lorenzo was beaten and left for dead.

Lorenzo survived and eventually began a long effort to rescue his sisters. Meanwhile, Olive and Mary spent a year doing slave labor before being traded to the daughter of a Mojave chieftain. Mary eventually succumbed to starvation and a weak constitution but Olive survived. After four years among the Mojave, Olive was ransomed to the military at Fort Yuma, where she was quickly reunited with her brother Lorenzo. The life of the Oatman siblings after the reunion is sketchy, and filled with contradictory rumors. A very successful book was written about the events by Royal B. Stratton apparently under the direct narration of the Oatman siblings. To promote the book, Olive herself toured through many states giving lectures about her experiences. In 1865 she married John Fairchild. Her marriage marked the end of her lecturing. The Fairchild's adopted a daughter and eventually settled in Sherman Texas, where Olive died in 1903. Little is known about Lorenzo save that he seems to have run a hotel in Illinois. The town of Oatman, Arizona in Mohave County was named after Olive Oatman.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:** Contains secondary sources regarding the Oatman Massacre, Olive Oatman's captivity and release. Also includes photocopies of original materials such Olive's re-published lecture notes, and other original sources held by the Bancroft Library.

**CONTAINER LIST:**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
1	1	<b>Biographical:</b> Oatman Family Genealogy	1998
	2	<b>Biographical:</b> Oatman Massacre Documents	1889 – 2006
	3	<b>Biographical:</b> Oatman Massacre Documents	n.d.
	4	<b>Biographical:</b> Olive Oatman Lecture Notes (photocopies) and various related correspondence (copies from the Huntington Library)	1968, n.d.
	5	<b>Biographical:</b> Other	1956, n.d
	6	<b>Historic Sites:</b> Documents	1945 – 2006
	7	<b>Historic Sites:</b> Yuma County Historical Society Oatman Massacre Site Tour VHS	2006
	8	<b>News Clippings:</b> Oatman Lilac Bushes	1994 – 2004