

Guide to the Samuels Anderson Papers

WA MSS S-1292



by Susie R. Bock

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1292

CREATOR: Anderson, S. (Samuel), 1839-1881

TITLE: Samuel Anderson papers

DATES: 1813-1881

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers, which chronicle Anderson's work on the North American Boundary Survey, contain Anderson's letters to his family, a diary from the survey, and other personal papers.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.anderson>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.anderson>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Unspecified, please consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Samuel Anderson Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Samuel Anderson Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Existence and Location of Copies

A microfilm of the transcript and the 1874-1875 letters is available.

SAMUEL ANDERSON (1839-1881)

Samuel Anderson was an officer in the British Royal Engineers. Educated at St. Andrews University, the Military Academy in Edinburgh, and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, he was commissioned a lieutenant in 1858.

In September 1859 Anderson received orders to join the British North American Boundary Survey, then working with the Americans along the 49th parallel. A joint commission had been established, and in 1857 the Americans sent the first field team to the Pacific Northwest. The following summer the British team arrived, composed of army personnel, primarily from the Royal Engineers. Anderson served under Lt. Col. J. S. Hawkins as a surveyor. He stayed with the commission until it returned to England in 1862, but several years later, Anderson was sent back to Washington, D.C. to assist the Americans in drafting the final maps.

During the 1860s, Anderson participated in other British explorations abroad. He also served at the School of Military Engineering in Chatham establishing programs in telegraphy and photography. In 1872 he was raised to the rank of captain and in 1879 became a major.

In the 1870s, the British and Americans set out to complete the survey of the Canadian-American border. Anderson was again assigned to the mission, this time as chief astronomer. Although Capt. Cameron was appointed commissioner, Anderson actually commanded the survey team. He sailed to Quebec in the summer of 1872 and established a base camp at Pembina, Manitoba, now part of North Dakota. The survey worked west from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. In late 1874 and early 1875 Anderson spent time in Ottawa and Washington, D.C. working on the commission's final report.

On his return to England, Anderson married Louisa Dorothea Brown. He served as assistant inspector of the submarine defenses and in 1879 became British commissioner to survey the Servain border. Anderson died in 1881.

For additional biographical information, see Anderson's obituary (Box 2, folder 30) published in the November 1, 1881 issue of *The Royal Engineers Journal*.

Scope and Contents

The Samuel Anderson Papers chronicle Anderson's work on the North American Boundary Survey. The collection spans the years 1813-81, but the bulk of the material falls between 1859-75.

The Samuel Anderson Papers are divided into two groups: Anderson's letters to his family with some other family correspondence (Box 1) and various personal papers (Box 2). The correspondence is arranged chronologically and covers the years 1813-75. Transcripts for 1859-62 and 1872-75, produced by John E. Parsons and donated to the library in 1961, are filed after all the original letters. The transcripts are in

two separately numbered runs and chronologically arranged, each folder containing about fifty pages. Transcripts for 1859 are on pages 1-9, for 1860 on pages 9-67, for 1861 on pages 68-153, for 1862 on pages 153-188. Transcripts for 1872 are on pages 1-56, for 1873 on pages 57-199, for 1874 on pages 200-294, for 1875 pages 295-305. The personal papers are arranged alphabetically by type of material.

The collection begins with one folder of family correspondence, covering the years 1813-40. It contains a letter which seems to be by Anderson's uncle to his grandfather, letters by his sister Mary Christina to his father, and a letter to his father from a friend. Samuel Anderson's letters begin in 1859. Letters for 1859-62 cover the North American survey and focus on: survey work; Anderson's duties; the British and American teams; Indigenous peoples, Mexicans, and miners.

In September 1859 Anderson wrote his family of his appointment as surveyor for the North American Boundary project. Letters for January and October 1860 describe his responsibilities, such as the map making. In January 1861 he reviews the area surveyed, referring to a hand drawn map which does not appear among the present papers. In November he provides a kind of year-end report on the team's activities. Anderson also mentions the hiring of an official photographer in 1860 and cutting down trees to establish a physical border. [This photographer may be responsible for the series of photographs in the Joseph Smith Harris Papers, Yale Collection of Western Americana.]

Many of Anderson's 1860 letters comment on the British personnel. He mentions Col. J. S. Hawkins, British commissioner; Mr. Darrah, astronomer; Wilson, secretary to the commission; Capt. Haig, chief astronomer; Dr. Lyell, surgeon; Bauerman, geologist; Lord, naturalist; and the officers Moody and Gosset. Anderson, in charge of a team, describes his assistants and relations between officers and men. Early in 1860 Anderson comments on disagreements among the officers.

The British team hired Indigenous peoples, Mexicans, and miners to assist them. In 1860 Anderson explained that the Mexicans handled the mules and the Indigenous peoples gathered food. Miners from the area were often hired and the letters describe these pioneers and mining processes. Indigenous peoples interested Anderson a great deal. He admired their way with horses (letter of February 1861), described their New Years celebrations, and wrote of trading with them (letter from March 1860).

Although the American and British teams did not work together, Anderson had many chances to observe the "Yankees." He explains the reason for clearing trees in a January 20, 1860 letter as a safeguard against the Americans "disputing" the border. In the same letter, he compares the two teams, giving a good overview of each. The groups did socialize and Anderson describes parties in January and February 1861.

Anderson touches on many other topics in his letters. Early in 1860 his letters discuss American words, such as "packing." In March Anderson's letters discuss the Anglo-American argument over San Juan Island. Throughout his letters, he describes the mining towns and settlements of British Columbia and Washington Territory. Since the British had barracks in Victoria, Vancouver Island, he writes a good deal about society there. In a folder of photographs there is a picture of the "suburban portion" of Victoria, probably one of the earliest photographs of that town.

The British Royal Engineers left the Northwest in 1862, but Anderson returned to America in 1869 to cooperate with American officials in drafting the final maps. His letters describe a reception given by President Grant at the White House.

In 1872 the British and Americans again cooperated to settle remaining border issues between Canada and the United States. Anderson, chief astronomer for the British team, wrote about the survey work, the British team, the American team, and Indigenous peoples.

Once Anderson reached Manitoba, where survey work began, he explains the plan of action in an October 1872 letter. He describes the 1826 survey monument from which they were to start work. An October 13, 1872 letter notes that Cameron "has saddled me with the whole executive charge of the mission." The following January he wrote about the telegraph wires connecting Pembina and Chicago, used to communicate astronomical readings. One of Anderson's fullest accounts of survey work is enclosed in a letter of February 6, 1873. It is a report he prepared for Sir Edward Thornton, British minister in Washington, giving information on the astronomical stations he established. The letter also contains abstracts from a

letter by Cameron to Thornton commenting on Anderson's fine work. In April Anderson was busy drafting maps and more reports. A month later he complained of the difficulty of finding suitable help in Canada.

As before, Anderson's letters give information on the survey personnel. He mentions the commissioner, Capt. Cameron; Capt. Featherstonhaugh and Lt. Galway, who commanded the work teams; Maj. Ward, secretary; Lt. Col Forrest, surveyor; Herchimer, commissariat; Dr. Burgess, surgeon; and Rowe, an officer who joined them in 1873. The bulk of Anderson's remarks, however, are about his superior, Cameron, whom he criticizes and tries to avoid.

Anderson had a better opinion of his American counterpart, Col. Farquhar. During the first winter, Anderson describes the plight of the badly equipped American team. At the beginning relations were good between the British and Americans, but by 1873 trouble arose. After the English found a mistake in the American readings and called for changes, the Americans demanded a halt to the surveying and would not agree on fifty-seven miles of the border. The delay annoyed Anderson, who later characterized the Americans as "dilly dallying" (March 21, 1874). Nevertheless, the groups still socialized and threw parties for each other in 1874.

When the survey teams reached the Great Plains, Anderson spent time describing the Indigenous team members and mentioned perceived problems with the Sioux. Anderson's command ended in 1875, and once again he worked in Ottawa and Washington writing the reports.

The collection concludes with seven folders of personal papers. The diary and recommendation letters contain additional information on the second survey. The diary has daily notes for February and March 1873. Anderson recorded astronomical readings in his entry for February 14. The recommendations, one from Hawkins to Cameron, and the other from Cameron to the Earl of Derby, British foreign secretary, praise Anderson's work. Personal papers also includes an appointment of Anderson's father as notary public, Anderson's graduation certificate, obituary, and photographs. Folder 33, supporting material, has information on the collection. Included are some notes and a list of correspondence produced in early surveys of the papers. There is an article from the *Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto, Annual Report and Transactions*, 1927-1928, which mentions Anderson.

Collection Contents

Correspondence, 1813-1875

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1813-40
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1859
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1860
b. 1, f. 4-5	Correspondence	1861
b. 1, f. 6	Correspondence	1862
b. 1, f. 7	Correspondence	1869-70
b. 1, f. 8	Correspondence	1872
b. 1, f. 9-11	Correspondence	1873
b. 1, f. 12-15	Correspondence	1874
b. 1, f. 16	Correspondence	1875
b. 1, f. 17-20	Transcripts	1859-62
b. 1, f. 21-26	Transcripts	1872-75

Personal Papers, 1818-1881, undated

b. 2, f. 27	Appointment of Samuel Anderson's father	1818 Jun 18
b. 2, f. 28	Diary	1873 Feb-Mar
b. 2, f. 29	Graduation certificate	1858 Dec 31
b. 2, f. 30	Obituary	1881 Nov 1
b. 2, f. 31	Photographs	n.d.
b. 2, f. 32	Recommendation letters	1876
b. 2, f. 33	Supporting material	n.d.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Indians of North America -- Great Plains
Indians of North America -- Manitoba

Geographic Names

Canada -- Boundaries -- United States
Manitoba -- Description and travel
Northwest, Pacific -- Description and travel
Northwest, Pacific -- Surveys
Northwest boundary of the United States
United States -- Boundaries -- Canada
Victoria (B.C.)

Occupations

Surveyors -- Great Britain

Names

Anderson, S. (Samuel), 1839-1881
Cameron, Donald Roderick, 1834-1905

Corporate Bodies

North American Boundary Commission
Northwest Boundary Commission, 1857-1869