

Guide to the Thomas Howard Ruger Papers

WA MSS S-2699



Stephanie Bredbenner

2010, 2017

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-2699

CREATOR: Ruger, Thomas Howard, 1833-1907

TITLE: Thomas Howard Ruger papers

DATES: 1821-1958

BULK DATES: 1878-1907

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.21 linear feet (13 boxes) + 1 roll

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, reports, printed material, and maps that document the military career and personal life of United States Army general Thomas Howard Ruger, focusing on his years in Montana, the Dakotas, and Missouri, 1879-1895. The collection contains significant documentation of the relationship between Native Americans and the United States government, especially the Lakota, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho, Crow, and Chiricahua Apache communities. Correspondence and records from Ruger's post as commander of the Department of Dakota document actions taken by United States Army personnel to track Ghost Dance practitioners (including Kicking Bear and Sitting Bull) and to quell the Ghost Dance religious movement during the Ghost Dance War, 1890-1891. The papers also contain correspondence and reports documenting Ruger's and others' reactions to the death of Sitting Bull and the Wounded Knee Massacre. Four cloth maps document geographic details of Sioux reservations in North and South Dakota, and the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre. The collection includes letters from United States Army generals William T. Sherman and Nelson A. Miles, Lakota leader Sitting Bull, United States secretaries of war William Crowninshield Endicott and Redfield Proctor, and United States president Benjamin Harrison.

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

- b. box
- f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from William Reese Co.(Cowan's sale, 2009 June 24, lots 283, 284 and 285) on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2009.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Thomas Howard Ruger Papers is 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

Thomas Howard Ruger Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit. The Thomas Howard Ruger papers was comprehensively reprocessed in 2017. These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

Thomas Howard Ruger (1833-1907)

Thomas Howard Ruger (1833-1907) was born in Lima, New York and graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1854. He saw active duty in the United States Army during the Civil War and in the Reconstruction South, eventually rising to the rank of brigadier general. He was the superintendent of the United States Military Academy, 1871-1876, Commander of the Department of the South, 1876-1878, Commander of the District of Montana, 1879-1886, Commander of the Department of Dakota, 1886-1891, Commander of the Department of California, 1891-1894, Commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, 1894-1895, and Commander of the Department of the East, 1895-1897. Ruger was promoted to major general in 1895 and retired from the Army in 1897. Ruger died on June 3, 1907, in Stamford, Connecticut. He married Helen Lydia Moore in 1857 and they had two daughters, Helen Ruger Hay and Anna Ruger.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, reports, printed material, and maps that document the military career and personal life of United States Army general Thomas Howard Ruger, focusing on his years in Montana, the Dakotas, and Missouri, 1879-1895. The collection contains significant documentation of the relationship between Native Americans and the United States government, especially the Lakota, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho, Crow, and Chiricahua Apache communities. Correspondence and records from Ruger's post as commander of the Department of Dakota document actions taken by United States Army personnel to track Ghost Dance practitioners (including Kicking Bear and Sitting Bull) and to quell the Ghost Dance religious movement during the Ghost Dance War, 1890-1891. The papers also contain correspondence and reports documenting Ruger's and others' reactions to the death of Sitting Bull and the Wounded Knee Massacre. Four cloth maps document geographic details of Sioux reservations in North and South Dakota, and the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre. The collection includes letters from United States Army generals William T. Sherman and Nelson A. Miles, Lakota leader Sitting Bull, United States secretaries of war William Crowinshield Endicott and Redfield Proctor, and United States president Benjamin Harrison.

The collection includes correspondence, reports, and other records documenting the Crow War of 1887, when Ruger served as the commander of the Department of Dakota. Papers from Ruger's post at the Military Division of the Missouri document the treatment of the Chiricahua Apache prisoners of war held at Fort Sill, 1894-1895. The collection contains officers' reports of armed conflicts with Native American tribes, lists of tribal leaders and Native Americans suspected of unrest, and records of Native Americans enlisting in the United States Army as scouts. There are also transcriptions of speeches by Native Americans and accounts of Native Americans' grievances against white settlers, Indian agents, and the United States government.

Other military papers document Ruger's term as president of the Military Service Institution of the United States, 1901-1907. Personal correspondence documents Ruger's family life and travels, including extensive correspondence with his wife and daughters. Family papers include the correspondence of Ruger's wife Helen Moore Ruger, daughters Helen Ruger Hay and Anna Ruger, and son-in-law Thomas A. H. Hay. Other family papers include genealogical records, wills, and correspondence relating to Ruger's family after his death.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Professional Papers, 1865-1907. II. Maps, 1890-1891. III. Personal Correspondence, 1861-1907. IV. Ruger Family Papers, 1821-1958.

Collection Contents

Series I: Professional Papers, 1865-1907

3.55 linear feet (9 boxes)

English

Correspondence, reports, and other papers documenting Thomas Howard Ruger's career in the United States Army, including his posts as Commander of the District of Montana, 1879-1886, Commander of the Department of Dakota, 1886-1891, Commander of the Department of California, 1891-1894, Commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, 1894-1895, and Commander of the Department of the East, 1895-1897. Includes records of the Ghost Dance War and Wounded Knee Massacre, as well as documentation of the Chiricahua Apache prisoners of war held at Fort Sill.

Series I is organized into four subseries: District of Montana Post, Department of Dakota Post, Military Division of the Missouri Post, and Other Professional Papers.

	District of Montana Post English Arranged chronologically.	1877-1887
b. 1, f. 1	Montana Correspondence Includes a report on Tongue River Agency, a Commission of Military Affairs survey, and correspondence documenting the construction of Fort Assinniboine.	1877-1887
b. 1, f. 2	Montana Notebook Thomas Howard Ruger's notebook during his post as commander of the District of Montana. Includes notes on the Blackfeet Agency, lists of local Native American tribal leaders, and scouting maps of the Black Hills and Badlands. Includes autograph letters from William T. Sherman and Nelson A. Miles.	1879-1883
b. 1, f. 3	Officer Reports	1879
b. 1, f. 4	Montana Correspondence Topics include the construction of Fort Assinniboine and hostilities with Sioux tribes at Fort Belknap Agency.	1879
b. 1, f. 5	Orders and Financial Records	1879-1886
b. 1, f. 6	Orders and Correspondence Includes orders, invitations, circulars, miscellaneous correspondence, and a certificate of assay for ore mined in Montana.	1879-1886
b. 1, f. 7	Correspondence concerning Fort Leavenworth	1880-1885
b. 1, f. 8	Orders concerning Courts-Martial	1880-1881
b. 1, f. 9	Clippings and Notes	1881-1883
b. 1, f. 10	School of Application for Infantry and Cavalry Includes records relating to the regulations, rules, and curriculum of the school.	1882-1885

District of Montana Post (continued)

b. 1, f. 11	Promotion and Orders Records and correspondence documenting Thomas Howard Ruger's promotion to brigadier general and assignment to the Department of Dakota.	1886
	Department of Dakota Post English Arranged chronologically.	1887-1891
b. 1, f. 12	Crow War Correspondence Correspondence and memoranda documenting the Crow War of 1887. Includes information about Crow camps during the conflict and Crow leaders such as Deaf Bull, Crazy Head, and Sword Bearer.	1887
b. 1, f. 13	Crow War Clippings	1887
b. 2, f. 14	Crow War Correspondence Includes correspondence relating to the Crow War, reports of military strategy and troop movements during the Crow War, a list of Crow leaders and families involved in the war, and a copy of a speech by Crow leaders Plenty Coups and Pretty Eagle.	1887
b. 2, f. 15	Crow War Officer Reports	1887
b. 2, f. 16	Correspondence concerning Crow, Cheyenne, and Sioux Tribes Includes correspondence concerning government and intertribal relations with Crow, Cheyenne, and Sioux tribes during and after the Crow War. Includes correspondence concerning Ruger's proposal that Native Americans enlist in the United States Army as scouts.	1887-1890
b. 2, f. 17	Special Orders Records documenting Thomas Howard Ruger's special orders from United States secretary of war Redfield Proctor and United States president Benjamin Harrison. Topics include the Cheyenne Commission and courts of inquiry.	1888-1891
b. 2, f. 18	Yellowstone Correspondence Correspondence concerning the United States Army's management of Yellowstone Park, including the presence of troops in Yellowstone.	1890-1891
b. 2, f. 19	Ghost Dance War Correspondence Correspondence concerning the Ghost Dance movement, including the history of the movement, Thomas Howard Ruger's reports of a visit to Standing Rock Agency, the United States government's assessment of the origins and prevalence of the movement, and a list of Native American leaders of the movement. Includes typescript copies of letters from United States president Benjamin Harrison and Lakota leader Sitting Bull.	1890
b. 2, f. 20	Ghost Dance War Correspondence Correspondence concerning the Ghost Dance War, particularly relating to Sitting Bull. Includes orders for Sitting Bull's arrest, correspondence concerning the movements of United States troops and Sitting Bull in December 1890, and accounts of Sitting Bull's death. Also includes a list of Lakota tribal leaders, the locations of their camps, and the number of people in their bands.	1890

Department of Dakota Post (continued)

b. 2, f. 21	Ghost Dance War correspondence Contains correspondence and reports concerning the Ghost Dance War, written and received during Thomas Howard Ruger's post at the Department of California.	1890-1891
b. 2, f. 22	Wounded Knee Reports and Correspondence Reports and correspondence from multiple United States Army officers in the wake of the Wounded Knee Massacre. Includes accounts of troop movements and orders in the days before the massacre on December 29, 1890. Includes conflicting accounts and a dispute between two officers about the surrender and imprisonment of the Lakota at Fort Sully.	1891
b. 3, f. 23	Wounded Knee Reports Contains reports documenting United States military action before and after the Wounded Knee Massacre, including an officer's report and a report about an officer who died during the campaign.	1891
b. 3, f. 24	Dakota Correspondence Topics include infantry drill regulations, the division of Sioux agencies into multiple reservations, and Thomas Howard Ruger's comments on proposed changes to the officer promotion system of the United States Army. Includes letters from United States secretaries of war Redfield Proctor and William Crowninshield Endicott.	1888-1891
b. 3, f. 25	Dakota Correspondence Topics include the appointment of a commander for the Infantry and Cavalry School of Application and Thomas Howard Ruger's appointment to command the Military Division of the Pacific and the Department of California.	1890-1891
b. 3, f. 26	Scrapbook of Clippings about the Ghost Dance War	1890-1891
	Military Division of the Missouri Post English Arranged chronologically.	1894-1895
b. 4, f. 27	Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency Crimes and Grievances Includes a list of grievances raised by the Native Americans of Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency against white settlers and an account of crimes committed by white settlers and Native Americans at Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency.	1894-1895
b. 4, f. 28	Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency Reports Reports about the population, resources, land, and rations of Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency.	1894-1895
b. 4, f. 29	Correspondence concerning Apache Prisoners of War at Fort Sill Correspondence concerning several hundred Chiricahua Apache prisoners of war, including their transportation to Fort Sill and the United States government's provisions for them, including shelter, food, clothing, tools, and education for the children. Includes letters from Nelson A. Miles.	1894-1895
b. 4, f. 30	Correspondence concerning Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache near Fort Sill Correspondence concerning Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche tribes near Fort Sill, including recommendations for an increased Indian police force.	1894-1895

Military Division of the Missouri Post (continued)

b. 4, f. 31	Indian Territory Correspondence Includes reports on relations between Native Americans and white settlers in Oklahoma and correspondence concerning the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Wichita tribes. Includes a memorandum entitled "In Regard to the Troubles in the Indian Territory" and a list of the tribes, Native American population, and Indian agents of every Native American reservation in the Military Division of the Missouri.	1895
b. 4, f. 32	Military Division of the Missouri Orders and Correspondence Orders and general correspondence during Thomas Howard Ruger's post at the Military Division of the Missouri. Topics include wells at Fort Reno and Thomas Howard Ruger's promotion to major general.	1894-1895
b. 4, f. 33	Newspaper Clippings Three newspaper clippings about the Chickasaw tribe and train robberies.	1894-1895
	Other Professional Papers English Includes correspondence, reports, and financial records from Thomas Howard Ruger's other military posts, including his service during the Civil War, 1864-1865, the Department of the South, 1876-1878, the Department of California, 1890-1891, and the Department of the East, 1895-1897. Includes miscellaneous professional papers, orders, and correspondence, including invitations, circulars, and correspondence concerning Ruger's retirement from the United States Army. Arranged chronologically.	1865-1907
b. 5, f. 34	Orders	1865-1866
b. 5, f. 35	Financial Records Includes receipts, bills, checks, financial correspondence, and quartermaster records.	1864-1894
b. 5, f. 36	Department of the South Orders and Correspondence	1876-1878
b. 5, f. 37	Department of California Orders and Correspondence Topics include drill regulations, financial records, invitations, and the boundary between Fort Canby and Cape Disappointment.	1891-1895
b. 5, f. 38	Department of California Correspondence Topics include Thomas Howard Ruger's command of the Department of the Columbia and the possibility of war with Great Britain in 1892.	1892-1894
b. 5, f. 39	Department of California Reports and Correspondence Topics include the appointment of messengers, invitations, firing practice, and reports on infantry regulations.	1893-1894
b. 5, f. 40	Correspondence Includes invitations and correspondence concerning the United States Army Signal Corps.	1894-1895
b. 5, f. 41-43	Letters of Congratulations on Promotion to Major General	1895
b. 6, f. 44-45	Letters of Congratulations on Promotion to Major General	1895
b. 6, f. 46	Correspondence concerning a Confederate Memorial in Chicago	1895

Other Professional Papers (continued)

b. 6, f. 47-51	Invitations and Circulars	1895-1903
b. 6, f. 52-53	Department of the East Orders and Correspondence Topics include infantry drills, machine gun regulations, the appointment of messengers and clerks, and invitations.	1895-1896
b. 7, f. 54-56	Correspondence concerning Chinese Ambassador Li Hongzhang's Visit to the United States	1896
b. 7, f. 57-58	Preparations for War with Great Britain Correspondence, reports, and orders concerning preparations for a possible war with Great Britain during the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895-1896.	1896
b. 7, f. 59	Invitations	1897
b. 8, f. 60	New York Chief of Police Correspondence Correspondence concerning Mayor of New York City William Lafayette Strong's offer to appoint Thomas Howard Ruger as the chief of police for New York City.	1897
b. 8, f. 61	Correspondence Contents include invitations, correspondence concerning Thomas Howard Ruger's international travel, and Ruger's passport.	1897
b. 8, f. 62	Invitations and Circulars	1897-1901
b. 8, f. 63	Retirement Orders and Congratulations	1897
b. 8, f. 64	Invitations and Professional Organizations Includes invitations and nominations from the American Institute of Civics and the American Forestry Association.	1898
b. 8, f. 65	Correspondence Topics include the Spanish-American War, the use of shoulder rifles in the United States Army, and Thomas Howard Ruger's proposal that retired Army officers return to active duty during the Spanish-American War.	1898
b. 8, f. 66	Military Service Institution Correspondence	1899-1907
b. 8, f. 67	Society of the Army of Ohio Correspondence	1902-1903
b. 8, f. 68-69	Correspondence and Invitations	1904-1907
b. 8, f. 70	Receipts	1905-1907
b. 9	Chinese Painting on Silk Scroll Most likely a diplomatic gift from Chinese ambassador Li Hongzhang's visit to the United States in 1896.	circa 1896

Series II: Maps, 1890-1891*4 Items (1 roll)*

English

Four cyanotype cloth maps documenting United States Army forts and Native American reservations during the Ghost Dance War and Wounded Knee Massacre, 1890-1891.

b. Roll 10	Map of Country Comprising Forts Meade, Custer, Keogh, and McKenney	1890
b. Roll 10	Map of Country Comprising the Sioux Indian Reservations in North and South Dakota	1890
b. Roll 10	Scene of the Fight with Big Foot's Band (2 copies)	1891

Series III: Personal Correspondence, 1861-1907*0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

English

Thomas Howard Ruger's personal correspondence, primarily with his wife Helen Moore Ruger and daughters Helen Ruger Hay and Anna Ruger. Other correspondents include Ruger's father, Thomas Jefferson Ruger; brother, William Ruger; and sisters, Adelaide Ruger Dunbar and Cornelia Ruger Pease.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

b. 11, f. 71	Dunbar, Adelaide Ruger	1878
b. 11, f. 72	Hay, Helen Ruger	1879-1907
b. 11, f. 73	Heaston, William	1884
b. 11, f. 74	Pease, Cornelia Ruger	circa 1883
b. 11, f. 75	Pease, John J. R.	1879-1882
b. 11, f. 76	Roode, John	1883
b. 11, f. 77-78	Ruger, Anna	1879-1884
b. 11, f. 79	Ruger, Eliza	1883
b. 11, f. 80	Ruger, Frank	1877
b. 11, f. 81-82	Ruger, Helen Moore	1879
b. 11, f. 83-84	Ruger, Helen Moore	1882-1883
b. 12, f. 85-87	Ruger, Helen Moore	1884
b. 12, f. 88	Ruger, Thomas Howard, Letters to Helen Ruger Hay	1882-1888
b. 12, f. 89	Ruger, Thomas Howard, Letters to Anna Ruger	1885-1900
b. 12, f. 90	Ruger, Thomas Howard, Letters to Helen Moore Ruger	1861-1889
b. 12, f. 91	Ruger, Thomas Howard, Letters to Helen Moore Ruger	1895-1902
b. 12, f. 92	Ruger, Thomas Jefferson	1868-1870
b. 12, f. 93	Ruger, William	1877-1906
b. 13, f. 94	Envelopes	1879-1884

Series IV: Ruger Family Papers, 1821-1958*0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

English

Correspondence, wills, and other papers documenting the Ruger, Hay, Dickinson, and Wilson families in Ireland, England, and the United States. Includes Thomas Howard Ruger and Helen Moore Ruger's marriage certificate and letters of condolence after Thomas Howard Ruger's death in 1907.

Arranged alphabetically.

b. 13, f. 95	Dickinson, Annie Wilson Hay, Will and Probate	1941-1958
b. 13, f. 96-97	Hay, Helen Ruger, Correspondence	1881-1892
b. 13, f. 98	Hay, Helen Ruger and Thomas A. H. Hay, Marriage Certificate and Correspondence	1881-1909
b. 13, f. 99	Hay, Thomas A. H., Correspondence	1879
b. 13, f. 100-101	Ruger, Anna, Correspondence	1881-1927
b. 13, f. 102-103	Ruger, Anna, European Tour Diaries	1895
b. 14, f. 104	Ruger, Helen Moore and Thomas Howard Ruger, Marriage Certificate	1857
b. 14, f. 105-108	Ruger, Helen Moore, Correspondence	1879-1911
b. 14, f. 109	Ruger, Maria Hutchins, Letter	1844
b. 14, f. 110	Wilson Family Papers Deeds, indentures, correspondence, and other papers concerning John Wilson (1803-1840), Alexander Wilson (1809-1884), and Jacob B. Odenwelder (1809-1884).	1829-1899
b. 14, f. 111	Wilson, Alexander, United States Naturalization Certificate	1835
b. 14, f. 112-113	Wilson, Alexander and James Wilson, Correspondence	1821-1845

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

Apache Indians
Arapaho Indians
Cheyenne Indians
Chiricahua Indians
Crow Indians
Crow Indians -- Wars
Dakota Indians
Dakota Indians -- Wars, 1890-1891
Generals -- United States
Generals -- United States
Ghost dance
Hunkpapa Indians
Indian scouts -- United States
Indians of North America -- Government relations
Indians of North America -- Great Plains
Indians of North America -- Montana
Indians of North America -- North Dakota
Indians of North America -- Oklahoma
Indians of North America -- South Dakota
Indians of North America -- Wars -- 1866-1895
Indians of North America -- Wyoming
Lakota Indians
Lakota Indians -- Wars
Miniconjou Indians
Oglala Indians
Siksika Indians -- Montana
Wounded Knee Massacre, S.D., 1890 -- Maps

Geographic Names

Fort Sill (Okla.)
Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (Mont.)
South Dakota -- Maps
West (U.S.) -- Description and travel

Genres / Formats

Maps (documents)

Names

Hay, Helen Ruger, 1859-1920
Kicking Bear, 1853-1904
Miles, Nelson Appleton, 1839-1925

Ruger, Anna, 1867-1944
Ruger, Helen Moore, 1837-1912
Ruger, Thomas Howard, 1833-1907
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh),
1820-1891
Sitting Bull, 1831-1890

Corporate Bodies

Military Service Institution of the United States
United States. Army. Department of California
(1865-1913)
United States. Army. Department of Dakota
United States. Army. Department of the East
United States. Army. District of Montana
United States. Army. Military Division of the
Missouri
United States. Army (Officers)
United States. Office of Indian Affairs.
Blackfeet Agency
United States Infantry and Cavalry School
(1886-1901)