Guide to the Andrew Jackson Grayson Papers, 1844-1901

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Note
History --History, California --GeneralGeographical (by Place) --CaliforniaBiological and Medical Sciences --Biological Sciences --Animal Biology
Guide to the Andrew Jackson Grayson Papers, 1844-1901

Collection number: BANC MSS C-B 514

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: Andrew Jackson Grayson Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1844-1901
Collection Number: BANC MSS C-B 514
Creator: Grayson, Andrew Jackson, 1818-1869
Extent: Number of containers: 8 boxes Linear feet: 3.2
Repository: The Bancroft Library.
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library’s online catalog.

Abstract: Pt.I Letters written to and by Grayson and his wife; diary of overland journey to California, 1846; field notebooks; manuscripts of his writings; water colors of birds of California and Mexico; photographs; and clippings relating primarily to his ornithological studies. Letters written after 1869 are primarily concerned with Mrs. Grayson’s efforts to publish his work.–Pt.II Microfilm copy (black and white) of the water color drawings in Pt.I.–Pt.III Microfilm of letters written to and by Grayson; will and other papers of Mrs. Grayson. Originals in various depositories.

Languages Represented: English

Access
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Photographs transferred to the Pictorial Collections of The Bancroft Library

**Identifier/Call Number:** (BANC PIC 19xx.149--PIC).

Watercolors of birds transferred and shelved as

**Identifier/Call Number:** BANC PIC 19xx.117--ffALB.

Drawings from Mexico also transferred and shelved as

**Identifier/Call Number:** BANC PIC 19xx.118--A)

**Biography**

Andrew Jackson Grayson was born in 1819 on the family plantation in Louisiana. Subject to frequent illness he was permitted by his parents to occupy much of his time as he pleased. As a result he passed many of his days in the nearby woods hunting small game and observing birds and other wildlife. He attended a local school until the teacher found him drawing birds during class and told his father. He was promptly sent to college in Missouri with orders not to study drawing. After the death of his father he used his small legacy to go into business in Columbia, Louisiana. But business didn't interest him. He left his clerk in charge of the store while he roamed the woods and the business soon failed. By 1842, the year of his marriage to Frances Jane Timmons, he had decided to move west. In 1844 they moved to St. Louis to prepare for the journey.

In the spring of 1846 Grayson, his wife, and their infant son, Edward, started overland for California with a group that included ex-Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri and, until their tragic turnoff at Fort Bridger, the Donner party. Soon after their arrival in October, Grayson joined the California Battalion. Later he went into business in San Francisco and purchased lots there and in other parts of the bay area.

In 1853 Mrs. Grayson saw an exhibit of Audubon's plates "Birds of America" at the Mercantile Library in San Francisco. She took her husband to see it, and he realized that he must resume his drawing. The family settled in San Jose where he taught himself drawing, paint mixing and taxidermy. After short residencies in Tehuantepec, Mexico, in 1857, and in Napa Valley in 1859, studying and drawing the local birds, Grayson settled in Mazatlan to work on his proposed "Birds of the Pacific Slope."

Grayson spent the last ten years of his life in the area around Mazatlan and nearby Islands, and contributed many articles on natural history to newspapers and magazines in Mexico and California, writing under his own name and the pseudonyms "Wanderer," "Rambler," and "Occidentalus." He sent many birds and other specimens and detailed bird biographies to the Smithsonian Institution. Although discouraged by lack of funds, the repudiation of his contract with the Academy of Science and Literature following the execution of Maximilian, and the accidental death of his son in 1867, Grayson seized every opportunity to complete his project. Financial aid finally came from the Smithsonian but it was too late; Grayson was already ill with coast fever from which he died on August 17, 1869.

Mrs. Grayson returned to California and, in 1872, married George Belden Crane. In 1879, after many unsuccessful attempts to publish Grayson's plates she gave them to the University of California. Prior to her death in 1908 she also gave to the University his letters, notebooks, and manuscripts. The collection relates mainly to Grayson's work in ornithology and to Mrs. Grayson's attempts to secure publication of his work. Much of the correspondence is with Spencer F. Baird of the Smithsonian who encouraged Grayson and helped whenever possible by sending publications and supplies and by providing him with final identification of species. Photographs have been cataloged separately.

A key to arrangement follows.

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**Box 1**

**Letters written by Andrew Jackson Grayson, 1844-1869**

**Scope and Content Note**

Arranged chronologically. Early letters relate mainly to family affairs. Those written after 1859 are concerned with ornithological matters. Some letters are copies in Mrs. Grayson's handwriting. See also letters in Part III (microfilm).
Letters written to Grayson.

Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization with a miscellany of single letters preceding the rest of the file, as follows:

Miscellany

Alemany, Joseph Sadoc, 1814-1888
Scope and Content Note
Letter of recommendation used during visit to Mexico

Allen, Henry Watkins, 1820-1866
Letter, Nov. 20, 1865
Scope and Content Note
Requests Grayson to become a correspondent for Allen's newspaper Mexican Times.

Allen, Joel Asaph, 1838-1921
Letter, June 10, 1868
Scope and Content Note
Requesting information on Mexican birds for Harvard College.

Almada, Gregorio, 1819-1870?
Certificate, July 24, 1861.
Scope and Content Note
Written in Spanish, acknowledging receipt of documents.

Brannan, Samuel, 1819-1889
Letter, Aug. 1, 1859

Cortés, Francisco
Letter, Oct. 1, 1861.
Scope and Content Note
Official letter written in Spanish.

Lawrence, George Newbold, 1806-1895
Letter, Aug. 8, 1869.
Scope and Content Note
see also letter written to Mrs. Grayson.

Magruder, John Bankhead, 1810-1871
Letter, Mar. 11, 1866.
Scope and Content Note
Letter of recommendation addressed to General Jose L. Urage.

Rosecrans, William Starke, 1819-1898
Letter, Apr. 14, 1869.
Scope and Content Note
Written while minister to Mexico; includes two letters of recommendation.

Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
56 letters, 1856-1869.

Scope and Content Note
Relate mainly to Grayson's bird collecting and to his shipments of birds and other specimens to the Smithsonian Institution.
See also letters written to Mrs. Grayson, Box 2.

Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878
6 letters, 1868-1869.
Scope and Content Note
Relate to Grayson's specimen collecting for the Smithsonian Institution.
See also letters written to Mrs. Grayson, Box 2.

Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873
2 letters, 1866.

Rio de la Loza, Leopoldo, 1807-1876
5 letters, 1866.

Smithsonian Institution
See also Baird, Spencer F. and Henry, Joseph.

Xántus, Janos, 1825-1894
4 letters, 1861-1863.

Box 2

Letters written by Mrs. Grayson, 1852-1901
Scope and Content Note
Include also letters written after her marriage. Arranged chronologically. Relate mainly to Grayson's work and her attempts to publish his portfolio of drawings. Some letters are copies of originals in the Smithsonian Institution. See also letters in Part III (microfilm).

Letters written to Mrs. Grayson
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically, with a miscellany of single letters preceding the file, as follows:

Miscellany

Crane, George Belden, 1800-1898
Letter, Dec. 8, 1871.

Lawrence, George Newbold, 1806-1895
Letter, Jan. 11, 1875.
Scope and Content Note
Suggesting that she give Grayson's notes and portfolio of western Mexican birds to the Library of Congress.

Martin, William H.
Letter, June 29, 1876.
Scope and Content Note
Concerns the inclusion of Grayson's bird drawings in the California exhibit at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia.

Mercantile Library Association, San Francisco
Letter, Mar. 10, 1870.
Scope and Content Note
Acknowledgement of gifts. Included also: Certificate of membership.

Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
19 letters, 1865-1885.
Scope and Content Note
Relate mainly to Grayson's work and efforts to secure its publication.
Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878
2 letters, 1869.

Box 3
Diaries, notebooks and manuscripts of Grayson's writings (listed by titles used by Grayson).

Bird biographies. Arranged alphabetically as follows:
- American Peregrine Falcon
- Ash Colored Hawk
- Black Vulture
- Blue-back or Crow Jay
- Blue-billed Long-legged Duck
- Blue Mocking Bird
- Boat Bill Night Heron
- Bull Headed Flycatcher
- Burroughs Vulture
- California Vulture
- Caracara Eagle
- Cooper's Hawk
- Coot
- Cow-pen Blackbird
- Crimson Necked or House Finch
- Double Crested Oriole
- Fantail Flycatcher
- Great Green Macaw
- Great Mexican Creeper
- Great Mexican Tyrant Flycatcher
- Hilgaro
- Jauga or Paradise Oriole
- King Vulture
- Largest Kingfisher
- Least Tit
- Little Gros-beak Finch
- Little Ground Dove
- Little Mexican Crow
- Little Peregrine
- Long Tall Falcon
- Long Tailed Hawk
- Mangrove Rail
- Mazatlan Boat-tailed Blackbird
- Mazatlan Oriole
- Mazatlan Swallow
- Mazatlan Vireo
- Mazatlan or Cactus Woodpecker
- Mexican Curved-bill Thrush
- Mexican Ground Dove
- Mexican Night Hawk or Texas Night Hawk
- Mexican Painted Finch
- Mexican Tyrant Flycatcher
- Orange Legged Hawk
- Orioles
- Patagonia Pigeon
- Pigeon Hawk
- Red Bill or White Wing Pichichine
- Red Crested Flycatcher
- Red Crowned Flycatcher
- Red Cuckoo
- Red Eyed Blackbird
Box 4
Account of trip to California, 1846

Box 5
Autobiography
Birds of the Pacific Slope. Field notebooks. 3 vols.
Catalog of Birds Collected in Northwestern and Western Mexico, Chiefly in the Locality of Mazatlan. With Remarks about their Migrations, etc.
Exploring Expedition to the Island of Socorro from Mazatlan, Mexico. For the Academy of Science, Mexico. An appeal for increased zoological research.
List of Birds Described by A. J. Grayson
List of Socorro Island birds collected by A. J. Grayson, May, 1867.
Little Journal of Incidents Whilst on a Surveying Party with Von Schmidt in the fall of 1853 in the Tulare Plains.
[Miscellaneous lists and notes on birds.]
[Pocket notebook containing list of species, with references to field notebooks.]
[Pocket notebook containing sketches and notes on birds shot near Tehuantepec, 1857.]
Report upon the birds etc. the Tres Marias Islands on the western coast of Mexico
Socorro Island Exploring Expedition, Catalog of birds collected
State of Sinaloa
Systematized List of Mazatlan Birds So Far Recorded by A. J. Grayson
Tres Marias Islands
Voyage from Mazatlan to Tres Marias Islands

Box 6
Copies of published writings
Copy of the Hesperian, Vol. II, 1859 containing articles and reproductions of paintings of the following:
Crimson-necked House Finch
Red Cuckoo
Red-breasted or Cinnamon Teal
Swallow-tailed Flycatcher
Bearded Jay
Largest Oriole
Reprint of Natural History of the Tres Marias and Socorro from the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History, June 7, 1871.
Copy of the Mazatlan Times (pp. 1-2) containing the article A Visit to Socorro Island.
Journal kept by Frances Grayson on trip from Tepic to Mexico City and return.

Scope and Content Note
Contains clippings of articles written by Grayson and published in various newspapers and magazines including the Daily Alta California, Hutchings' California Magazine, Overland Monthly, Mazatlan Times, Mexican Times, California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences, and the St. Helena Star. Also contains articles and clippings about Grayson including an article from Overland Monthly by Bret Harte; obituaries; articles about Mrs. Grayson, George Belden Crane, California history, and miscellaneous poems, etc.

Box 7

Publications by other ornithologists

Baird, Spencer Fullerton
Scope and Content Note
Review of American Birds in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. 1864-ca. 1866

Coues, Elliott
Scope and Content Note
Prodrome of a Work on the Ornithology of Arizona Territory, 1866.

Lawrence, George Newbold
Birds of Southwestern Mexico collected by Francis E. Sumichrast for the United States National Museum, 1875.
Birds of Western and Northwestern Mexico, 1874. (Based on collections sent to the Smithsonian Institution by Grayson and others)
Descriptions of New Species of American Birds, 1867.
Descriptions of Six New Species of Birds, 1866.
List of a Collection of Birds from Northern Yucatan, 1869.

Box 8

Personalia
Scope and Content Note
Includes biographies of Grayson; passports and marriage certificate of Mrs. Grayson and George B. Crane.
See also: Scrapbook in Box 6 and will and papers re Mrs. Crane's estate in Part III.

Drawings and sketches by Grayson of scenes, mainly in Mexico: Transferred to pictorial collection.
Scope and Content Note
One pencil sketch is titled "Encampment on Kings river slough, 1853."

Genealogy of Grayson family.

Invitations for social events in San Francisco and Benicia, 1847-1853.

Obituary
See also: Scrapbook

Receipts, bill of lading, etc.

Autograph album
Scope and Content Note
Compiled by Mrs. Grayson in Mexico; some signatures from former Confederate officers.

Clippings
See also Scrapbook

Miscellany