Overview of the Collection

Title: Overland Mail Collection

Dates (inclusive): 1850-1898

Bulk dates: 1850-1887

Collection Number: mssOV 1-110

Creator: Overland Mail Company.

Extent: 166 pieces

Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department

1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2129
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: This collection contains materials related to the development of overland mail service in the United States West (bulk 1850-1887) and is composed of two parts: the papers of Hiram S. Rumfield (75 pieces), assistant treasurer of the Overland Mail Company at Salt Lake City, Utah, which contain documents related to Rumfield family matters, the business affairs of the Overland Mail Company, and Indians in Utah Territory; and the papers of L.P. Williamson (90 pieces), superintendent of the North Western Overland Mail Company and president of the Western Mail and Stage Company, which include reports from stage drivers concerning road conditions.

Language: English.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. Overland Mail Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Purchased by the Library from H. C. Revercomb, June 29, 1946.

Historical Note

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company, organized in 1857, carried mail between St. Louis, Missouri, and San Francisco, California, until the outbreak of the Civil War forced it to move north to the central overland route. It was known as the Central Overland and Pike's Peak Express Company until it was reorganized and General Bela M. Hughes was elected president of the Overland Mail Company in 1861.

Bibliographical


Scope and Content

This collection contains personal correspondence, business papers, 2 photographs, and a scrapbook of newspaper clippings (1865-66) related to the development of overland mail service in the United States West, predominantly for the years preceding the establishment of the railroad. Includes originals and a few letter-press copies.

Two groups of manuscripts integrate this collection:

- (1) The papers of Hiram S. Rumfield, an officer of the Overland Mail Co. (75 pieces, 1850-1867). Rumfield was appointed to the post of mail agent at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1860, but on the outbreak of the Civil War was transferred to the Salt Lake City office as assistant treasurer and remained in that capacity until 1866. He was engaged in a real estate venture in Carson City and acquired 640 acres of land which was laid out as the Rumfield Town Survey. These papers contain documents related to Rumfield family matters, the business affairs of the Overland Mail Company, and Indians in Utah Territory. There are two photographs: a portrait of Rumfield and a photograph of a stagecoach.
• (2) Papers of L. P. Williamson, of Independence, Mo., superintendent of the North Western Overland Mail Company and president of the Western Mail and Stage Co. in 1884; dealing with the company's business and including reports from stage drivers concerning road conditions. (90 pieces, 1880-1898).

Persons represented by 4 or more pieces: William Connor (4 items); Frederick K. Cook (4 items); Hiram S. Rumfield (21 items); and H. A. Todd (5 items).

Some notable items include:
• Carney, Thomas. To John McAllister Schofield. Letter asking military protection for Kansas. 1863 August 10
• Rumfield, Hiram S. To Amos Reed, Indian Supt. Letters interceding on behalf of the Indians, asking help and food for them. 1862 February 10, March 7
• Williamson, R. C. To L. P. Williamson. Letter concerning extension of the mail route into Oregon. 1882, February 2

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Rumfield, Hiram S.
Williamson, L. P.
Overland Mail Company -- Archives.
North Western Overland Mail Company.
Postal service -- West (U.S.) -- History -- Sources.
Indians of North America -- Utah.
Coaching (Transportation) -- West (U.S.) -- History -- Sources.

Forms/Genres
Business records -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century.
Scrapbooks -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century.

Alternate Authors
Williamson, L. P.

Box 1
Volume
Rumfield Papers. 1850-1867
Scrapbook of newspaper clippings. 1861-1868 OV 110
Scrapbook containing 27 pages of newspaper clippings chiefly on transportation-related topics such as railroads, stages, as well as Indians, primarily in Kansas and the Midwest.

Box 2
Williamson Papers. 1880-1898