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Guide to the Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon Papers

WA MSS S-1308



by Heather L. Holeman

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1308

CREATOR: Dimon, Charles Augustus Ropes, 1841-1902

TITLE: Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon papers

DATES: 1863-1907

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4.5 linear feet (8 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers contain correspondence and military papers documenting the military career of Charles Dimon in 1864-65.

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

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.dimon>.

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

The collection was purchased from Robert Black in 1959 on the William Robertson Coe Fund for Western Americana.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon 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

Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS ROPES DIMON (1841-1902)

Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon was born in Fairfield, Connecticut in 1841 and moved to Salem, Massachusetts in 1859. He joined the Massachusetts volunteer militia in April 1861, was mustered out in August, and enlisted at Lowell, Massachusetts in September as adjutant of the 30th Massachusetts Infantry. During 1861 and 1862 Dimon saw action in several battles, including the bombardment of Fort Jackson and St. Philip and the capture of New Orleans.

Dimon was promoted to major in the 2nd Louisiana Infantry United States Volunteers, but resigned due to poor health in June 1863. In 1864 he re-enlisted at Point Lookout, Maryland. While serving there and at Norfolk, Virginia, Dimon organized and commanded a volunteer regiment of former Confederate soldiers popularly known as the "Galvanized Yankees." On his recommendation and to encourage rebel prisoners to enlist, the regiment became the 1st United States Volunteer Infantry.

After successfully completing raids out of Norfolk, Dimon was promoted to colonel in August 1864. On orders from General Grant, he traveled with the 1st United States Volunteer Infantry to Fort Rice, Dakota Territory, in the fall of 1864. He commanded Fort Rice for one year with orders to suppress hostile Indians and encourage peaceful trade. Difficulties were encountered with the Blackfoot, Yanktonai, and Onkpapas Indians, who threatened attacks and stole horses, but Dimon was able to secure a general peace.

In July 1865, Dimon became afflicted with chronic laryngitis and left Fort Rice on doctor's orders. After he recovered he was assigned to Lawrence, Kansas, with orders to control mutinous troops. On August 10, 1865, Dimon received a commission as brevet brigadier general and in November 1865 was mustered out of service at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

In 1866, Dimon became the military chief of police in Mobile, Alabama, and in 1869 he married Kate Thompson of Morristown, New Jersey. Returning to Lowell, Massachusetts, he served as alderman and then mayor for two years. He died in Lowell in 1902.

Scope and Contents

The Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon Papers contain correspondence and documents pertaining to Dimon's military career, particularly his recruitment of "Galvanized Yankees" in Maryland and Virginia and his subsequent command of Fort Rice in Dakota Territory. The papers cover the period from 1864 to 1907, but the bulk of material dates from 1864 and 1865.

The papers are arranged in three series. Series I, *Correspondence*, is contained in Boxes 1 and 2. Boxes 3 to 6 house Series II, *Military Papers*, and Box 7 holds Series III, *Other Papers*. Oversize material is located in Box 8.

[Series I, Correspondence](#), contains chronologically arranged correspondence covering a variety of military and family subjects. In addition to Dimon, correspondents include General Benjamin Butler, General John Pope, General Alfred Sully, and Captain Benjamin Dimon, Charles's younger brother. The recruitment of Confederate prisoners of war for the United States Army and the establishment of the 1st United States

Volunteer Infantry are discussed in Dimon's early correspondence. In a letter of March 19, 1864 to General Butler, Dimon suggested designating the recruited prisoners' regiment as Infantry to encourage more enlistments. General Butler complied with Dimon's request and established the regiment under Dimon's command. Dimon also discussed the defense of Norfolk-Portsmouth, the dangers of smallpox, scurvy, and scarlet fever.

In later letters Dimon described the transporting of troops to Fort Rice, a desolate outpost, located in the driest part of Dakota territory. Scurvy, due to lack of fresh vegetables, was rampant and Dimon also wrote about health problems caused by extreme cold weather. In correspondence with General Sully, official policies concerning friendly and hostile Indians are discussed. Dimon was ordered to protect friendly Indians, to encourage trade, and to deliver swift retribution in case of attack. Dimon discussed the use of Indian scouts for mail and reconnaissance. Other topics addressed include the sale of whiskey and ordnance to the Indians, attack by hostile Indians, ongoing peace negotiations, and fights among various Indian tribes.

As commander of Fort Rice, Dimon was responsible for ordnance supplies, and his letters frequently refer to discrepancies between his records and those of the War Department. He mentioned court-martial proceedings, specifically the execution of a deserter, Private William Dowdy. Dimon also touched on such issues as the breadth of martial law at Fort Rice, the condition of neighboring forts, and steamship traffic along the Missouri River.

Dimon's correspondence with his family and fiancée, Sarah Braden, covers the social life of Salem and Lowell, Massachusetts, the death of their friend Captain Wheeler, and the end of Dimon's engagement to Sarah Braden. Dimon and his brother, Benjamin, who was stationed at Fort Berthold, Dakota Territory, discussed the poor conditions of that fort, peace negotiations with the Indians, and the maintenance of peaceful and lawful trade.

[Series II, Military Papers](#), contains a variety of official papers covering Dimon's service in Virginia and North Dakota in 1864 and 1865. Papers concerning the court-martial of Enoch A. Adams include charges, specifications, and minutes of proceedings; Adams, editor of the *Frontier Scout* at Fort Rice, was charged with slandering Dimon, encouraging soldiers to desert, and frequenting a house of "ill-fame." Also included are charges, specifications, and minutes of Private Dowdy's court-martial. The depositions provide additional information relating to court-martials. A mutilated issue of *Frontier Scout*, Vol. I [No. 2], is included.

The maps detail winter routes between Fort Rice and Fort Sully and distances between other Dakota Territory forts. The map of Nebraska, Dakota Territory, and Montana marks the locations of United States military posts. Also included are ground and building plans for Fort Rice.

Dimon's memorandum books contain lists of steamship arrivals and departures, notations on mail delivery, and a handful of daily entries. The muster rolls list members of companies B, C, D, E, H, and K of the 1st United States Volunteer Infantry for 1864 and 1865. The forms indicate enlistment date, location of enlistment, years in service, and last day of pay.

General and special orders document the purpose and intent of the military presence in Dakota Territory. Orders from the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, Department of Norfolk-Portsmouth, Department of the North West, and printed orders from the United States War Department are included. Internal regimental orders issued by Dimon also appear. Ordnance records are found in a variety of forms, including abstracts, inventories, invoices, quarterly returns, receipts, and requisitions. Together these records provide information on the ordering and shipping of supplies, supplies held in store, and procedures for distribution and return of supplies. The records include documentation from Norfolk, Virginia, and Fort Rice. Dimon maintained a journal and kept some cryptic notes on a raid he led outside Norfolk, Virginia. Also included in the series are quartermaster store records and miscellaneous receipts from Norfolk and Fort Rice.

[Series III, Other Papers](#), is arranged alphabetically by material type and spans the dates 1864-1907. Dimon's commission as brevet brigadier general and his official discharge are filed here. An unsigned essay, "Disloyal Preaching," chastises ministers who did not uphold constitutional principles. A copy of the *Journal of the Military Service Institute*, 1907, contains an obituary of Thomas Howard Ruger. Dimon's

lecture, "Army life Among the Hostile Indians in Dakota Territory, 1864-1865," includes reminiscences of his Fort Rice command. A memorandum, prepared after Dimon's death, provides a detailed biography of Dimon's military and civilian careers. Also present are two works by Enoch G. Adams, "Wilderness [Expressions]," and an untitled poem.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1863-1902

1 linear foot (2 Boxes)

Series I, *Correspondence*, is arranged chronologically. Undated correspondence and letter fragments are placed at the end of the series.

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1863
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1864 Jan
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1864 Feb
b. 1, f. 4-5	Correspondence	1864 Mar
b. 1, f. 6-9	Correspondence	1864 Apr
b. 1, f. 10-11	Correspondence	1864 May
b. 1, f. 12-14	Correspondence	1864 Jun
b. 1, f. 15-16	Correspondence	1864 Jul
b. 1, f. 17-18	Correspondence	1864 Aug
b. 1, f. 19-20	Correspondence	1864 Sep
b. 1, f. 21	Correspondence See also: Oversize, Box 8, folder 191	1864 Oct
b. 1, f. 22-23	Correspondence	1864 Nov
b. 1, f. 24-25	Correspondence	1864 Dec
b. 1, f. 26-29	Correspondence	1865 Jan
b. 1, f. 30-33	Correspondence See also: Oversize, Box 8, folder 192	1865 Feb
b. 1, f. 34-36	Correspondence	1865 Mar
b. 1, f. 37-38	Correspondence	1865 Apr
b. 2, f. 39-42	Correspondence	1865 May
b. 2, f. 43-47	Correspondence	1865 Jun
b. 2, f. 48-52	Correspondence	1865 Jul
b. 2, f. 53	Correspondence	1865 Aug
b. 2, f. 54	Correspondence	1865 Sep
b. 2, f. 55-56	Correspondence	1865 Oct
b. 2, f. 57	Correspondence	1865 Nov

b. 2, f. 58	Correspondence	1865 Dec
b. 2, f. 59	Correspondence: letter book	1864-65
b. 2, f. 60	Correspondence: letter book	1865
b. 2, f. 61	Correspondence	1866-68
b. 2, f. 62	Correspondence	1892
b. 2, f. 63-64	Correspondence	n.d.
b. 2, f. 65	Correspondence: fragments	n.d.

Series II: Military Papers, 1864-1865*2 linear feet (4 Boxes)*Series II, *Military Papers*, is arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

Court Martials		
b. 3, f. 66	Adams, Enoch G.	1865 Oct
b. 3, f. 67	Dowdy, William	1864
b. 3, f. 68	Michie, James C.	1865
b. 3, f. 69	Pease, F. D.	1864-65
b. 3, f. 70	Upton, William B.	1865
Depositions		
b. 3, f. 71	Archibald, H. C.	1865 Oct
b. 3, f. 72	Dimon, C. A. R.	1865
b. 3, f. 73	Edwards, R. A. E.	1865
b. 3, f. 74	LaBarge, Joseph	1865
b. 3, f. 75	Miscellaneous depositions	1865, n.d.
b. 3, f. 76	Ordnance depositions	1864-65
b. 3, f. 77	Southall, Luther	1865
b. 3, f. 78	Guest register: Fort Rice	n.d.
b. 3, f. 79	Journal: promotion list, document and ordnance receipts	1864
b. 3, f. 80-81	Lists, miscellaneous	1864-65, n.d.
Maps		
See also: Oversize, Box 8, folders 193-97		
b. 3, f. 82	Dakotah Territory; list of distances	n.d.
b. 3, f. 83	Nebraska, Dakota, and Montana	n.d.
b. 3, f. 84	Report on Cheyenne River, Cherry River, Craw Creek, Little Missouri, and Powder River	1865
b. 3, f. 85	Winter route between Fort Rice and Fort Sully	1865
b. 3, f. 86-88	Memorandum books	1864-65, n.d.
Muster rolls		
See also: Oversize, Box 8, folders 198-209		
b. 4, f. 89	Muster-in	1864 May 6
b. 4, f. 90	Muster-in	1864 Aug 13

Muster rolls (continued)

b. 4, f. 91	Muster-out	1864 Aug 13
b. 4, f. 92	Note book	1865
Orders		
b. 4, f. 93	Department of Missouri: printed	1864-65
b. 4, f. 94	General Curtis	1865 Oct 5
b. 4, f. 95	Headquarters, Department of the Northwest	1864 Aug
b. 4, f. 96	Headquarters, Department of Virginia and North Carolina	1864 Mar-Aug
b. 4, f. 97	Headquarters, District of Kansas	1865 Sep
b. 4, f. 98	Headquarters, District of Iowa	1865 Jan
b. 4, f. 99	Headquarters, Expedition Purgo	1864 Jun
b. 4, f. 100	Headquarters, Norfolk and Portsmouth	1864 May-Jun
b. 4, f. 101-03	Headquarters, North Western Indian Expedition	1864-65
b. 4, f. 104	Headquarters, Post Commandant	1864 Dec
b. 4, f. 105-06	Index books	1864-65
b. 4, f. 107-08	War Department; printed	1865
Ordnance records		
b. 4, f. 109-10	Abstract of articles	1864 Apr
b. 4, f. 111	Abstract of expenditures	1864
b. 4, f. 112	Abstract of materials consumed	1864
b. 4, f. 113	Abstract of receipts See: Oversize, Box 8, folders 210-11	1864
b. 4, f. 114	Board of survey proceedings	1865 Mar
b. 4, f. 115-20	Inventories	1864-65, n.d.
b. 5, f. 121-30	Invoices	1864
b. 5, f. 131-33	Invoices	1865
b. 5, f. 134-38	Quarterly returns	1864-65, n.d.
b. 5, f. 139-57	Receipts	1864-65, n.d.
b. 6, f. 158-59	Receipt journals	1864-65
b. 6, f. 160	Requisitions	1864, n.d.
b. 6, f. 161	Reports	1864 May 7

b. 6, f. 162	Printed Works: <i>Frontier Scout</i> , Vol. 1 [No. 2]	[1865]
	Quartermaster's stores	
b. 6, f. 163	Inventories	1864 Mar-May
b. 6, f. 164	Monthly returns	1864 Mar-Apr
b. 6, f. 165-79	Receipts	1864-65, n.d.
b. 6, f. 180	Report: Purgo Expedition	1864 Jun 14-18
b. 6, f. 181	Whiskey sales: Fort Rice	1865

Series III: Other Papers, 1863-1907*2 linear feet (2 boxes)*Series III, *Other Papers*, is alphabetically arranged by subject or title.

b. 7, f. 182	Certificates: discharge See also: Oversize, Box 8, folders 212-14	1865 Nov 22
b. 7, f. 183	Commission: Brevet Brigadier General	1865 Aug 10
b. 7, f. 184	Essay: "Disloyal Preaching"	n.d.
b. 7, f. 185	<i>Journal of the Military Service</i> Institution No. 148	1907
b. 7, f. 186	Lecture: "Army Life Among the Hostile Indians in Dakota Territory 1864-65," General Charles A. R. Dimon	[1901]
b. 7, f. 187	Memoriam: Brevet Brigadier General Charles Augustus Ropes Dimon	1902
b. 7, f. 188	Miscellaneous papers	1864-65, n.d.
b. 7, f. 189	Poem: untitled, [Enoch G. Adams]	n.d.
b. 7, f. 190	"Wilderness [Expressions]," Enoch G. Adams	1865-66

Oversize

CORRESPONDENCE		
b. 8, f. 191	Correspondence	1864 Oct 27
b. 8, f. 192	Correspondence	1865 Feb 5
MILITARY PAPERS		
Maps		
b. 8, f. 193	Dakotah Territory	n.d.
b. 8, f. 194	Plans for Fort Rice	1864 Jul
b. 8, f. 195-97	Plans for Fort Rice	n.d.
Muster rolls		
b. 8, f. 198	Company "B"	1864
b. 8, f. 199-200	Company "C"	1864-65
b. 8, f. 201-02	Company "D"	1864-65
b. 8, f. 203-04	Company "E"	1864-65
b. 8, f. 205-06	Company "H"	1864-65
b. 8, f. 207	Company "K"	1864
b. 8, f. 208-09	Field and staff	1864-65
Ordnance records		
b. 8, f. 210	Abstract of expenditures	1865
b. 8, f. 211	Abstract of provisions	
OTHER PAPERS		
b. 8, f. 212-214	Certificates: provisional commissions	1864

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.

Geographic Names

Fort Berthold (N.D.)
Fort Rice (N.D.)
Missouri River
North Dakota -- History
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
-- Prisoners and prisons

Corporate Bodies

United States. Army. Volunteer Infantry, 1st (1864-1865)
United States. Army (Military life)
United States. Army -- Health and hygiene

Subjects

Courts-martial and courts of inquiry -- United States
Dakota Indians -- Wars, 1862-1865
Frontier and pioneer life
Indians of North America -- Commerce
Indians of North America -- North Dakota
Martial law -- United States
Military bases -- United States
Ordnance
Prisoners of War
Scurvy
Soldiers -- United States

Genres / Formats

Depositions -- United States
Military orders -- United States
Muster rolls -- United States

Names

Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1818-1893
Dimon, Benjamin
Dimon, Charles Augustus Ropes, 1841-1902
Pope, John, 1822-1892
Sully, Alfred, 1821-1879

Families

Diamond family