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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the M.D. Ball Papers

WA MSS S-2359



by Ellen Doon

May 2000

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-2359

CREATOR: Ball, M. D. (Mottrom Dulany), 1835-1887

TITLE: M. D. Ball papers

DATES: 1868-1927

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.09 linear feet (2 boxes) + 1 broadside folder

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist primarily of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, manuscript notes, and Congressional bills regarding Alaska, but also include correspondence, customs documents, writings, maps, and a few photographs and printed illustrations. They document Ball's work as Customs Collector in Sitka at a time when that office was the chief representative of the U. S. government in Alaska; his term as Alaska's first delegate to Congress, 1882-85, and his campaign for representation and governance for the Territory; and other events in Alaskan history to 1887. Particularly well documented are the events of the winter of 1878-79, when U. S. citizens in Sitka appealed to a British warship for protection from native tribes. Ball's correspondence includes letters from Benjamin Harrison, William Dall, M. P. Deady, E. P. Lull, Marcus Baker, and John H. Mitchell, as well as from the Pacific Coast Steamship Company regarding his writing for their pamphlet "All About Alaska." The papers also include letters to Ball's daughter from James Wickersham, a 1927 blueprint for the Alaska flag, several printed and manuscript maps of Alaska, a manuscript map showing military operations of the Crimean War, and two photographs of St. Peter's by the Sea, a church in Sitka.

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

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.ball>.

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

Purchased from Edward Eberstadt and Sons on the William Robertson Coe Western Americana Fund, 1957.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The M. D. Ball 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

M. D. Ball Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mottrom Dulany Ball (1835-1887) was born in Fairfax County, Virginia, and was educated at the College of William and Mary. He taught school until the outbreak of the Civil War, when he formed a cavalry company and rose to the rank of Colonel in the Confederate Army. After the war, he practiced law and founded the *Virginia Sentinel*, which folded in 1876. In January 1878, he was appointed Collector of Customs for Alaska, and moved to Sitka with his wife, Sallie Lewis Wright Ball, and children. In September of 1881, he was elected Alaska's first unofficial delegate to Congress. Ball served as U. S. District Attorney for Alaska from 1885 to 1887, and was the founding editor of the *Alaskan*, a Sitka newspaper.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist primarily of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, manuscript notes, and Congressional bills regarding Alaska, but also include correspondence, customs documents, writings, maps, and a few photographs and printed illustrations. They document Ball's work as Customs Collector in Sitka at a time when that office was the chief representative of the U. S. Government in Alaska; his term as Alaska's first delegate to Congress, 1882-1885, and his campaign for representation and governance for the Territory; and other events in Alaskan history to 1887.

[Series I, Correspondence](#), includes letters to Ball from Benjamin Harrison, William Dall, M. P. Deady, E. P. Lull, Marcus Baker of the USGS, and John H. Mitchell, as well as from the Pacific Steamship Company regarding his writing for their pamphlet "All About Alaska." Also present are letters to Ball's daughter from James Wickersham.

[Series II, Papers](#), is organized in two subseries, Documents and Writings. Documents include customs receipts from 1877 to 1879, petitions for Ball's election as delegate to Congress, printed bills and statements by Ball to Congress, a subscription for the 1880 4th of July celebration in Sitka, and a report on mining in Cook's Inlet in 1898 by B. Frank Hand. Writings consists of two draft chapters from a larger

work about Alaska culture and history, a prospectus about travel in Alaska written for tourists, and a draft article about mining.

[Series III, Scrapbooks](#), consists of two bound scrapbooks and two loose pages from a third volume. The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings, manuscript notes, congressional bills, and printed maps. The first volume, in Folder 21, largely concerns the events of the winter of 1878-1879, when U. S. citizens in Sitka appealed to a British warship for protection from native tribes, and the ensuing controversy.

[Series IV, Visual Material](#), consists of a 1927 Blueprint for the Alaska flag, several printed and manuscript maps of Alaska, a manuscript map showing military operations of the Crimean war, two photographs of St. Peter's by the SEa, a church in Sitka, and two lithographs removed from a Russian book, one of them showing the Sitka harbor.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1879-1925

12 folders (.08 linear feet)

TO M. D. BALL

b. 1, f. 1	Beardslee, Captain, U.S.S. <i>Jamestown</i> , Sitka	1879 Jun 18
b. 1, f. 2	Brown, George, U.S.S. <i>Alaska</i> , Sitka	1879
b. 1, f. 3	Butler, M. C., Washington, D.C.	1880 Jun 17
b. 1, f. 4	Dall, William H., Washington, D.C.	1886 Feb 6
b. 1, f. 5	Deady, Matthew P., Portland, Oregon	1881 Jul 27
b. 1, f. 6	Goodall Perkins & Co. (Pacific Coast Steamship Company), San Francisco	1886 Jun 11
b. 1, f. 7	Harrison, Benjamin, Washington, D.C.	1885-86
b. 1, f. 8	Lull, Edward P., U.S.S. <i>Wachusett</i> , Sitka	1881 Oct 1
b. 1, f. 9	Mitchell, John H., Washington, D.C.	1886
b. 1, f. 10	United States Geological Survey, Marcus Baker	1886

OTHER LETTERS

b. 1, f. 11	de St. Marceaux & Co., Reims, to Monsieur le Consul de France, Nouv. Arkhangel [Sitka]	1880 Aug 3
b. 1, f. 12	Wickersham, James, Juneau, to Sallie Lewis Ball [daughter of MDB], Washington, D.C.	1925

Series II: Papers, 1877-98*8 folders (.08 linear feet)*

DOCUMENTS

b. 1, f. 13	Customs receipts and orders	1877-79
b. 1, f. 14	Subscription for 4th of July celebration at Sitka	1880
b. 1, f. 15	Petitions and ratifications of the election of MDB to represent Alaska at the 47th Congress	1881
b. 1, f. 16	Printed bills, statements and reports by MDB to the 47th Congress	1882-83
b. 1, f. 17	Typescript carbon, corrected, of report about mining in Cook's Inlet by B. Frank Hand, mining engineer	[1898]

WRITINGS

b. 1, f. 18	"Illustrative Stories" and "Slavery and Witchcraft," manuscript chapters from a larger work	n.d.
b. 1, f. 19	"Prospectus: The Great North West," manuscript and typescript	n.d.
b. 1, f. 20	Article on mining, manuscript draft, corrected	n.d.

Series III: Scrapbooks, 1868-87

5 folders (.21 linear feet)

b. 1, f. 21	Volume containing manuscript notes and clippings regarding Alaska's history, culture, and resources Includes a detailed account (p. 67) of MDB's actions as Customs Collector 1878-79; many of the clippings concern Sitka's appeal to a British warship for protection from native tribes in February 1879, and its aftermath	1868-80
b. 1, f. 22	Loose clippings removed from pages 96-97 of above volume Loose clippings removed from pages 96-97 of above volume Stored in: Oversize	[ca. 1880s] 1886-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 23	Loose clippings removed from pages 102-103 of above volume Loose clippings removed from pages 102-103 of above volume Stored in: Oversize	1885, n.d. 1886-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 24	Bound volume titled "M. D. Ball/ Sketch-Book," containing clippings and maps Includes biographical article and portrait of MDB, 1882; clippings from the <i>Alaska Herald</i> 1874, <i>Presbyterian Home Missionary</i> [ca. 1885?] and <i>Congressional Record</i> for 1886; a census of the School Population of Southeastern Alaska 1885-86; other loose items; two maps tipped in at the back of the volume	1874-86
b. 1, f. 25	Two loose pages of clippings regarding the need for Territorial government and representation in Congress for Alaska	1881-84

Series IV: Visual Material, 1878-1927

4 folders (.04 linear feet)

MAPS

b. 1, f. 26	Printed map of Alaska showing timber, tundra, and glaciers, from the tenth census of the United States	1882
b. 1, f. 27	Manuscript map showing currents flowing down the West coast of North America (fragment)	n.d.
	Printed map, "Route of the Military Reconnaissance of 1883," with manuscript annotations by MDB See: Box 1, folder 24	[1886]
	Printed map, "Alaska and Adjoining Region" [to the West] See: Box 1, folder 24	n.d.
	Manuscript map, on cloth, of Tchitchagoff and Baranoff Islands and Chatham Strait, Alaska (fragment) Stored in: Oversize	n.d.
	Manuscript map, on cloth, of Chatham Strait, Prince Frederick Sound, and nearby islands, Alaska (fragment) Stored in: Oversize	n.d.
	Manuscript map of the Crimea, showing Sevastopol, Balaclava, and military positions in the area, ca. 1855 Stored in: Oversize	[ca. 1878?]

OTHER VISUAL MATERIAL

b. 1, f. 28	2 photographs of St. Peter's by the Sea, Sitka, one interior and one exterior view	n.d.
b. 1, f. 29	2 lithographs from a Russian book, one showing Sitka's harbor, the other a portrait of Alexander [Taranov?]	n.d.
	Blueprint, "The Official Flag of Alaska, Adopted May 2, 1927," with swatch of blue silk Stored in: Oversize	1927 May

Oversize*5 folders (1.67 linear feet)*

b. 2, f. 30	Clippings removed from pages 96-97 of scrapbook in folder 21	1886-87, n.d.
b. bsd, folder 31	Clippings removed from pages 102-103 of scrapbook in folder 21	1886-87, n.d.
b. 2, f. 32	Two maps of Chatham Strait, Baranoff Island, and nearby region	n.d.
b. 2, f. 33	Map of the Crimea ca. 1855	[ca. 1878?]
b. 2, f. 34	Blueprint for Flag of Alaska	1927 May

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

Crimean War, 1853-1856 -- Maps
Flags -- Alaska
Indians of North America -- Alaska
Indians of North America -- Alaska --
Government relations
Indians of North America -- Alcohol use --
Alaska
Proportional representation -- Alaska
Representative government and
representation -- Alaska

Geographic Names

Alaska -- Description and travel
Alaska -- History -- 1867-1959
Alaska -- Politics and government -- 1867-1959
Sitka (Alaska)

Genres / Formats

Clippings (information artifacts)
Maps (documents)
Photographic prints
Territorial records

Occupations

Politicians -- Alaska

Names

Baker, Marcus, 1849-1903
Ball, M. D. (Mottrom Dulany), 1835-1887
Dall, William Healey, 1845-1927
Deady, Matthew P. (Matthew Paul), 1824-1893
Harrison, Benjamin, 1833-1901
Lull, Edward Phelps, 1836-1887
Mitchell, John H. (John Hipple), 1835-1905
Wickersham, James, 1857-1939

Corporate Body

Pacific Coast Steamship Company