

Guide to the Edwin Cooley Mason and Minerva Needham Mason Letters to Rodney Mason

WA MSS S-4549



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Collection Overview

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

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-4549

CREATOR: Mason family

TITLE: Edwin Cooley Mason and Minerva Needham Mason letters to Rodney Mason

DATES: 1875-1882

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: Collection of 51 letters sent to Rodney Mason from his brother Edwin Cooley Mason and mother Minerva Needham Mason, 1875-1878. The letters were sent as the pair travelled from Newport Barracks, Kentucky; Columbus Barracks, Ohio; Fort Vancouver, Washington; and Portland, Oregon, and document the Edwin Cooley Mason's service in the 21st Infantry Regiment of the Department of Columbia. A majority of the letters relate to the Nez Perce War and the Bannock War and mention generals Oliver Otis Howard and Nelson Miles among others, as well as Indigenous peoples including the Nez Percé (also known as *nimípuu*), Bannock, Coeur d'Alene (also known as Skitswish), Okanagan (also known as Syilx, Okanogan, or Okinagan), Palos (also known as Palouse), and Yakama. Letters dated 1877 chronicle the military service of Edwin Cooley Mason in Idaho, moving from Lapwai to Cow Island before returning to Fort Vancouver. These include mention of Chief Joseph (born Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt), leader of the Wallowa (*wal-lam-wat-kain*) band of the Nez Perce Tribe, and others taken prisoner by Nelson Miles. A letter dated 1878 indicates the beginning of the Bannock War and references Chief Moses (born Kwiltalahun, later called Sulk-stalk-scosum), leader of the Sinkiuse-Columbia.

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

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.ecmason>.

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 Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC on the Winlock William Miller, Jr. Memorial Fund, 2022.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Edwin Cooley Mason and Minerva Needham Mason Letters to Rodney Mason 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

Edwin Cooley Mason and Minerva Needham Mason Letters to Rodney Mason. 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.

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.

Biographical / Historical

Edwin Cooley Mason (1831-1898) of Springfield, Ohio, was the son of United States Congressman Samson Mason (1793-1869) and Minerva Needham Mason (1805-1890). His birth followed those of his brother Rodney Mason (1824-1893) and sister Emily Mason Haynes (1827-1848).

Edwin Cooley Mason served in the United States Army during the American Civil War and was brevetted Brigadier General, United States Volunteers on June 3, 1865. He later served in the United States Army in the Department of Columbia, 21st Infantry Regiment during the Modoc War (1872-1873), Nez Perce War (1877), and Bannock War (1878). He retired from the army in 1895. He was married to Frances Mary Kingsbury Mason (1844-1913), and they had four children: Kathro Montague Mason (1868-1930), Mary Needham Mason Moore (1870-1955), Frances Kingsbury Mason (1874-1907), and Charles Haynes Mason (1881-1951).

Rodney Mason served as a colonel in the United States Army during the American Civil War and resigned in August 1862. He became a patent attorney in Washington, D.C., and was married to Mary Alice Camp Mason (1844-1924).

Scope and Contents

Collection of 51 letters sent to Rodney Mason from his brother Edwin Cooley Mason and mother Minerva Needham Mason, 1875-1878. The letters were sent as the pair travelled from Newport Barracks, Kentucky; Columbus Barracks, Ohio; Fort Vancouver, Washington; and Portland, Oregon, and document the Edwin Cooley Mason's service in the 21st Infantry Regiment of the Department of Columbia.

A majority of the letters relate to the Nez Perce War and the Bannock War and mention generals Oliver Otis Howard and Nelson Miles among others, as well as Indigenous peoples including the Nez Percé (also known as *nimípuu*), Bannock, Coeur d'Alene (also known as *Skitswish*), Okanagan (also known as *Syilx*, *Okanogan*, or *Okinagan*), Paloos (also known as *Palouse*), and Yakama.

Letters dated 1877 chronicle the military service of Edwin Cooley Mason in Idaho, moving from Lapwai to Cow Island before returning to Fort Vancouver. These include mention of Chief Joseph (born *Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt*), leader of the Wallowa (*wal-lam-wat-kain*) band of the Nez Perce Tribe, and others taken prisoner by Nelson Miles. A letter dated 1878 indicates the beginning of the Bannock War and references Chief Moses (born *Kwiltalahun*, later called *Sulk-stalk-scosum*), leader of the Sinkiuse-Columbia.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Letters	1875
b. 1, f. 2-5	Letters	1876
b. 1, f. 6-10	Letters	1877
b. 1, f. 11-12	Letters	1878
b. 1, f. 13	Letters	undated
b. 1, f. 14	Empty envelopes	1882 and undated
b. 1, f. 15	Newspaper clippings	undated
b. 1, f. 16	Promissory note	1875 September 15

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

Bannock Indians -- Wars, 1878
Coeur d'Alene Indians
Indians of North America -- Wars -- 1866-1895
Nez Percé Indians -- Wars, 1877
Okanagan Indians
Paloos Indians
Soldiers -- United States
Yakama Indians

Acquired From

Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC

Occupations

Soldiers -- United States -- 20th Century

Geographic Names

Columbus (Ohio)
Fort Vancouver (Wash.)
Idaho Territory
Lapwai (Idaho)
Newport (Ky.)
Portland (Or.)
Washington Territory

Names

Howard, O. O. (Oliver Otis), 1830-1909
Joseph (Nez Percé Chief), 1840-1904
Mason, Rodney, 1824-1893
Miles, Nelson, 1839-1925
Moses (Chief), approximately 1829-1899

Corporate Bodies

United States. Army. Department of the
Columbia
United States. Army. Infantry Regiment, 21st
(1866-1958)

Contributors

Mason family
Mason, Edwin Cooley, 1831-1898
Mason, Minerva Needham, 1805-1890