



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to Gustav Sohon drawings of
the Pacific Northwest, 1853-1860

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Gustav Sohon drawings of the Pacific Northwest
Date:	1853-1860
Identifier:	NAA.MS385668
Creator:	Sohon, Gustav, 1825-1903
Extent:	25 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, ink, and watercolor, laminated)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated to the United States National Museum by Dr. Elizabeth Sohon, daughter of Gustav Sohon, on 10 June 1947 (USNM accession number 176371). It was transferred from the object collections of the Department of Anthropology to the National Anthropological Archives in August 1969.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds additional drawings by Gustav Sohon in Northern Pacific Railroad Survey drawings (MS 130305) and vocabularies collected by Sohon in MS 4306-a, MS 4306-b, and MS 4306-c.

Processing Information

The items in this collection were originally cataloged individually by the NAA under their USNM catalog numbers. In 2023, the collection was reprocessed and all items were incorporated into a single collection under MS 385668. The archivist replaced the titles previously assigned to the drawings with the titles and/or captions as they appear on the drawings or on the original mounts.

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.
Access to the collection requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Gustav Sohon, also known as Gustavus Sohon and Gustave Sohon, (1825–1903) was an artist, photographer, interpreter, and topographical assistant best known for his pencil sketches and watercolors of the native people and landscapes of the American Northwest.

Sohon was born in 1825 in Tilsit, East Prussia, and immigrated to the United States in 1842. In the early 1850s, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. Over the following decade, he accompanied four historic expeditions across Eastern Washington -- the 1853-1854 Pacific railroad survey, the 1855 treaty tour of Governor Isaac Stevens, the 1858 military campaign of Colonel George Wright against the Plateau tribes, and the construction of a wagon road across the Bitterroot and Rocky Mountains by John Mullan from 1859 to 1862. During this period, Sohon served as an artist, guide, interpreter, and cartographer.

After the completion of Mullan's Road, Sohon accompanied Mullan to Washington, D.C., to assist in the preparation of topographical data, maps, and illustrations for a report on the road's construction. He later operated a photography studio in San Francisco and a shoe business in Washington, D.C. Sohon died in Washington, D.C. in 1903.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of twenty-five (25) drawings in pencil, ink and watercolor by Gustav Sohon. The drawings depict landscapes, missions, forts, council meeting scenes, and native life in the Northwest Plateau. There is also one sketch map.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Coeur d'Alene
- Kalispel (Pend d'Oreilles)
- Niimíipuu (Nez Perce)
- Salish (Flathead)

Cultures:

- Coeur d'Alene
- Kalispel (Pend d'Oreilles)
- Niimíipuu (Nez Perce)
- Salish (Flathead)

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Watercolors
- Works of art

Names:

- Stevens Pacific Railroad Expedition, 1853-1854

Places:

- North America
- Washington Territory

Container Listing

Box 385668, Folder 1 Flathead Indians Crossing A Stream
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 9 x 12 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08539900
USNM Catalog 385691
OPPS NEG 45748
Depicts a group, some on horseback, others on rafts, crossing a stream

Box 385668, Folder 1 Mapping the Wagon Road
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 6.5 x 4.5 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08540000
USNM Catalog 385669
OPPS NEG 45733

Box 385668, Folder 1 Treaty Council
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 11 x 9.5 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08540100
USNM Catalog 385672
OPPS NEG 45736
Group of men in military uniform and men from Northwest Plateau inside a brush arbor

Box 385668, Folder 1 Nez Perce Indians Preparing The Records Of The Walla Walla Council, 1855 June
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 10 x 5.5 inches)
[Image\(s\): "Nez Perce Indians Preparing The Records Of The Walla Walla Council, June 1855" Drawing](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08540200
USNM Catalog 385674
OPPS NEG 45738
Group sitting in a circle with paper, pen and ink. Signed and Dated by Artist: G. Sohon, June, 1855
Published in:
Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 1, p. 4.

Box 385668, Folder 1 Nez Perce Indians Preparing The Records Of The Walla Walla Council, 1855 June
1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 10 x 6 inches)
[Image\(s\): "Nez Perce Indians Preparing The Records Of The Walla Walla Council, June 1855" Drawing](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08540300
USNM Catalog 385675

OPPS NEG 45738?

Group sitting in a circle with paper, pen and ink. Signed and dated by the artist: G. Sohon, June 1855

Box 385668, Folder 2

The "Bloods" Come in Council

1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 8 x 10 inches)

Notes: Four men with weapons and an American flag on horseback. Signed and dated by artist: G. Sohon.

NAA INV 08540400

USNM Catalog 385677

OPPS NEG 45740

Box 385668, Folder 2

Crossing the Bitterroot Mts., 1855 November 20

1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 9 x 11 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08540500

USNM Catalog 385679

OPPS NEG 45742

Group with pack horses, crossing a mountain pass; Dead horse in the foreground. Signed and dated by the artist: G. Sohon, Nov. 20th 1855.

Box 385668, Folder 2

Camas plant

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 10.75 x 7.75 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08540600

USNM Catalog 385680

OPPS NEG 37644C

Published in:

Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 6, p. 14.

Box 385668, Folder 2

Coeur D'Alene Mission in 1855, 1855

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 10 x 6.5 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08540700

USNM Catalog 385681

OPPS NEG 37644C

View of the Mission showing a large baroque-style church and wood buildings; A child and a woman carrying an infant in a cradleboard; Group near tipis

Box 385668, Folder 2

Indian Mission, Coeur D'Alene

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 9 x 6 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08540800

USNM Catalog 385682

View of the mission across a lake showing a large Baroque-style church and wood buildings

Box 385668, Folder 3 Indian Mission, Coeur D'Alene
1 Drawings (visual works) (8 x 5.75 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08540900
USNM Catalog 385683
View of the mission across a lake showing a Baroque-style church and wood buildings; Person in a canoe on the water

Box 385668, Folder 3 St. Ignatius Mission of the Pend'Oreilles
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 8 x 8 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08541000
USNM Catalog 385684
View of the mission showing a wood frame church, buildings, and tipis with mountains in the background

Box 385668, Folder 3 Battle on the Spokane Plain, 1858 September 5
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 9.5 x 6.75 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08541100
USNM Catalog 385685
OPPS NEG 45744
View of the open plain showing a large group of American cavalry with horses and infantrymen with guns under the command of Colonel G. Wright against combined Indian forces under cover of smoking prairie grass. Signed and dated by the artist: G. Sohon, 1858.
Published in:
Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 4, p. 8.

Box 385668, Folder 3 Junction of Hellgate R. and Blackfoot R.
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 10 x 5.75 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08541200
USNM Catalog 385686
OPPS NEG 45745
View of a valley showing wood frame houses near the junction of two rivers; Mountains in the background

Box 385668, Folder 3 A. Ft Harvey. B. Ft Benton, 1860 August 4
1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 11.25 x 7 inches)
Notes: NAA INV 08541300
USNM Catalog 385687
OPPS NEG 45746
View of Fort Harvey and Fort Benton in a valley showing a camp of tents and tipis with a boat on the river

Published in:

Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 5, p. 8.

Box 385668, Folder 4

Fort Harvey at Fort Benton

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 9.75 x 7 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08541400

USNM Catalog 385688

OPPS NEG 45747

View of Fort Harvey and Fort Benton in a valley showing camp of tents and tipis with a boat on the river

Box 385668, Folder 4

Map of East Portion of Washington Territory and N.W. Portion of Nebraska Territory, 1857

1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 8 x 10.5 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08541500

USNM Catalog 385668

OPPS NEG 37644A

Published in:

Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 3, p. 6.

Box 385668, Folder 4

Indian Sketches

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 8 x 4.5 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08541600

USNM Catalog 385689

Group in various poses, two on horseback; Signed and dated by artist: G. Sohon, 1857

Box 385668, Folder 4

Playing Ring

1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 105 x 7.5 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08541700

USNM Catalog 385690

OPPS NEG 37644J

Group of men playing a gambling game called "Ring"; Man with a horse; Women near a camp of tipis in the distance. Signed by the artist: G. Sohon.

Published in:

Ewers, John C. *Gustavus Sohon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend D'oreille Indians 1854 (with 22 Plates)*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948, Plate 7, p.18.

Box 385668, Folder 5

Coming for the Walla Walla Council, 1855 May 18

1 Drawings (visual works) (watercolor and pencil, laminated; 10.25 x 14 inches)

Notes: NAA INV08602800

USNM Catalog 385670

OPPS NEG 80-18518

Large group of men wearing body paint arriving on horseback at council meeting with men in military uniform

Box 385668, Folder 5

Arrival of the "Nez Perces." Treaty ground, Walla Walla Valley, 1855 May

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated ; 14 x 10 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08602900

USNM Catalog 385671

OPPS NEG 80-18518

Large group of men arriving on horseback at council meeting with men in military uniform; Signed and dated by the artist: G. Sohon, May 1855

Box 385668, Folder 5

Feast for the Indian Chiefs, 1853

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 12.5 x 10 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08603000

USNM Catalog 385673

Large group of men at a feast inside a pole and brush shelter; Wood frame cabins and tipis in the background

Box 385668, Folder 5

Feast for the Indian Council, 1853

1 Drawings (visual works) (ink, laminated; 12 x 8.75 inches)

[Image\(s\): "Feast for the Indian Council" Drawing](#)

Notes: NAA INV 08603100

USNM Catalog 385676

Large group of men under pole and brush shelter near American flag; Camp of tipis and tents and mountains in the background

Box 385668, Folder 5

Blackfoot Treaty Council

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 13.25 x 9.25 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08603200

USNM Catalog 385678

Large group of men, some with horses, in camp during a treaty council; Tents and tipis in the background. Signed by the artist: G. Sohon

Box 385668, Folder 5

Women Hauling Wood on Horseback

1 Drawings (visual works) (pencil, laminated; 12 x 9.5 inches)

Notes: NAA INV 08603300

USNM Catalog 385692

Two women on horseback leading a wood-laden horse; Camp of tipis nearby