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George Suckley Papers, 1849-1861

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Historical Note.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3
Series 1: Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence, 1853-1861. Arranged Alphabetically by Correspondent.....	3
Series 2: Journals, Field Books, and Notes, 1849-1861.....	4
Series 3: Manuscripts, 1861, Arranged Alphabetically.....	5

Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	George Suckley Papers
Identifier:	Record Unit 7191
Date:	1849-1861
Extent:	0.75 cu. ft. (1 document box) (1 half document box)
Creator::	Suckley, George, 1830-1869
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7191, George Suckley Papers

Historical Note

George Suckley (1830-1869) was born in New York City and graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons (now a part of Columbia University) in September 1851. In April 1853 Suckley was appointed assistant surgeon and naturalist to the Pacific Railroad Survey of the 47th and 49th parallels between St. Paul, Minnesota, and Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, under the command of Isaac I. Stevens. His work on the survey included a 1,049 mile, 53-day canoe trip down the Bitter Root, Clark's Fork, and Columbia Rivers to Fort Vancouver, during which he made extensive natural history collections. On December 2, 1853, Suckley was commissioned Assistant Surgeon, United States Army. He was ordered to duty at Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory, where he remained until June 12, 1854, when he was transferred to Fort Dalles, Oregon Territory. In July 1854, Suckley obtained leave of absence for six months, which he partially spent collecting natural history specimens in Panama with James G. Cooper. Suckley resigned from the Army on October 3, 1856, and for the next five years pursued his interest in natural history. During this period, Suckley was assigned to write the reports on the mammals and salmonidae collected by the Northwest Boundary Survey of 1857. In 1859 he co-authored with James G. Cooper, *The Natural History of Washington Territory*, which was based primarily on data and observations made while serving with the Pacific Railroad Survey. On the outbreak of the Civil War, Suckley rejoined the Army and was commissioned Surgeon of Volunteers. He served for the duration of the war, resigning April 22, 1865. Suckley died July 30, 1869, in New York City.

Descriptive Entry

The papers of George Suckley mostly concern his work on the Pacific Railroad Survey of the 47th and 49th parallels, 1853, and on the collections of the Northwest Boundary Survey of 1857. They include incoming and outgoing correspondence, mostly copies; journals, field books, notes, and related materials

concerning the progress of the Railroad Survey, the canoe trip from Fort Owen to Fort Vancouver, Suckley's Panama trip with Cooper, and natural history observations and collecting work; fiscal matters; translation of Indian vocabulary; Suckley's monograph, *The Natural History of Washington Territory*, co-authored with Cooper; and manuscripts of Suckley's reports on the mammals and salmonidae collected on the Northwest Boundary Survey of 1857.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Anthropologists
- Anthropology
- Herpetologists
- Herpetology
- Mammalogists
- Mammalogy
- Natural history
- Naturalists
- Scientific expeditions
- Surgeons

Types of Materials:

- Diaries
- Field notes
- Manuscripts

Names:

- College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of New York
- Cooper, J. G. (James Graham), 1830-1902
- Northwest Boundary Survey, 1857-1861
- Pacific Railroad Survey of the 47th and 49th Parallels
- Stevens, Isaac I.
- Suckley, George, 1830-1869
- United States. Army

Geographic Names:

- Panama
- United States -- History\$yCivil War, 1861-1865

Container Listing

Series 1: Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence, 1853-1861. Arranged Alphabetically by Correspondent.

Correspondents include Spencer F. Baird, James Graham Cooper, George Gibbs, Rodman M. Price, and Isaac I. Stevens. The letter of 1 January 1854 from Suckley to Spencer F. Baird contains notes and observations on the country traveled by the Pacific Railroad Survey of the 47th and 49th parallels. The letters of July 22 and 31, 1856 from Suckley to Rodman M. Price contain accounts of Washington Territory under the administration of Governor Isaac I. Stevens.

Box 1

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1 Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence, 1853-1861

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Journals, Field Books, and Notes, 1849-1861.

Box 1

- Box 1 of 2 Folder 2 Daily journal maintained by George Suckley while serving with the Pacific Railroad Survey of the 47th and 48th parallels from May 24 to December 6, 1853. Includes a record of Suckley's canoe trip from Fort Owen down the Bitter Root, Clark's Fork, and Columbia Rivers to Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, October 15 to December 6, 1853.
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 3 Field book containing observations recorded by Suckley while on a canoe trip from Fort Owens to Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, October 15 to December 6, 1853
- Box 1 of 2 Folders 4-5 Miscellaneous journals, field books, and notes concerning Suckley's work on the Pacific Railroad Survey; his duties as Army Assistant Surgeon at Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory; his collecting trip to Panama with James Graham Cooper; natural history observations; fiscal matters; the translation of Indian vocabulary, and his monograph *The Natural History of Washington Territory* (1859), co-authored with Cooper

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Manuscripts, 1861, Arranged Alphabetically.

Box 1

Box 1 of 2

Folder 6 Manuscript of a report by George Suckley on the mammals collected on the Northwest Boundary Survey of 1857, 1861

[Image\(s\):](#)

Box 2

Box 2 of 2

Manuscript of a report by Suckley on the Salmonidae collected on the Northwest Boundary Survey of 1857, 1861

[Image\(s\): Folder 1](#)

[Image\(s\): Folder 2](#)

[Image\(s\): Folder 3](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)