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Online Library Catalog (ODIN)

Manuscripts by Subject - Family / Local History - #10046

Title: Dana Monroe Wright Papers

Dates: 1889-1963

Collection Number: 10046

Quantity: 8 feet

Abstract: Consists of correspondence, subject files, biographies, research notes, and maps. Papers relate primarily to local and family history, archeological surveys, and the State Historical Society of North Dakota, diaries, correspondence, newspaper clippings, family histories, and memorabilia, and notes and an 1863 map of the military trail of General H.H. Sibley in Burleigh, Kidder and Stutsman County ND.

Provenance: The State Historical Society of North Dakota acquired the Dana Wright Papers from Mrs. Dana Wright in May 1966. Juliann Henriksen prepared the inventory to the Dana Monroe Wright Papers in August 1983 and Amy Sakariassen in July 1985.

Property Rights: The State Historical Society of North Dakota owns the property rights to this collection.

Copyrights: Copyrights to materials in this collection remain with the donor, publisher, author, or author's heirs. Researchers should consult the 1976 Copyright Act, Public Law 94-553, Title 17, U.S. Code and an archivist at this repository if clarification of copyright requirements is needed.

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Citation: Researchers are requested to cite collection title, collection name, and the State Historical Society of North Dakota in all footnote and bibliographic references.

Transfer: One hundred and forty-eight photographs and twenty-four negatives were transferred to photograph collection 00101. Records of the State Historical Society of North Dakota--approximately ½ cubic feet--were removed from the papers and transferred to the agency archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dana Monroe Wright was born on August 30, 1878 in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. He moved with his parents to farm near Jamestown in 1882, and left that area in 1898 to enlist in the North Dakota National Guard. Wright served in the military during the Spanish-American War in the Philippines and later in the Mexican Border War and World War I.

Wright had a variety of jobs between his active duty military service. After returning to the United States from the Philippines, he taught school at Sydney, North Dakota and then homesteaded at Montpelier, North Dakota. In 1902, he became an employee of the Northern Pacific as a fireman and locomotive engineer and held that position for ten years. Wright was elected sheriff of Stutsman County in 1913 and in 1917 served in the State House of Representatives. After World War I, he was elected to another term as county sheriff. He was hired in 1927 by the U.S. Customs Service and was posted on the Canadian border near St. John, North Dakota. Wright retired from the customs service in 1941 and became a game warden and custodian of the state game farm through 1949.

Dana M. Wright was elected a director of the State Historical Society Board in 1915; later, as chairman of the State Parks Committee, he had the responsibility of locating sites of historical interest. Wright wrote articles concerning North Dakota history which were published in the Society's historical quarterly and by a number of newspapers. The reorganization of the State Historical Society resulted in his resignation from the Board in 1962.

Dana Wright married Sybella Henderson Pearson on May 4, 1904. They had four children: Sybella Luneta, Sivilla Jeanne, Jean Laurie, and Monroe Dana. Dana M. Wright died on February 16, 1964 in Rolla, North Dakota.

Sources: Turtle Mountain Star, February 20, 1964; Fargo Forum, December 2, 1956; and the Fargo Forum, February 17, 1964.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Dana Monroe Wright Papers date from 1920 to 1963 and occupy eight feet. Three series, with five subseries, have been established to organize the Wright material. Series I consists of correspondence for the years 1920-1963. Series II is entitled Research Materials, ca. 1930-1960, Series III, Miscellaneous, ca. 1950-1960.

Series I, Correspondence, measures 3/4 cubic foot and dates from 1920 to 1963. The series consists of chronologically arranged outgoing letters and alphabetically organized incoming letters. The focus of the letters is on the work and research conducted by Wright. Wright was a knowledgeable and frequently consulted authority on many facets of North Dakota history. Of particular and consuming interest to Dana Wright were the old trails that cross North Dakota and her history. On the subject of these trails he was an untiring collector of information. For the main part, the correspondence found in Series I concerns the old trails followed by explorers, traders, Indians, military figures and outfitters during the 1800s. The letters relate or request specific information and details about the trails and those who traveled and even died on them. Among the trails mentioned are those used by the La Verendrye expedition in the 1700s, the Sully campaign of 1864, General Sibley and his soldiers in 1863 and 1864, and George Armstrong Custer. Some exchanges of information on the 1869 route of Captain Twining and the 1873 trail of Lt. Greene are also present in the papers. Wright sought to establish exact locations of campsites, river crossings, skirmishes, and burials along these trails and also along the routes between Fort Totten and other forts in North Dakota, or Dakota Territory. Fort Abercrombie, Fort Seward, and Fort Stevenson are mentioned in connection with Fort Totten, because of the trails that linked them in the 1800s. Wright's efforts and meticulous approach have made the information he collected valuable and valued to other scholars and historians who are interested in reconstructing, with accuracy, the old trails in the state.

In his work for the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Wright's responsibilities included arranging for commemorative markers to be placed by historic landmarks. A great deal of correspondence pertains to details involved in his duties of research, collection, preservation and marking of historic places. Pursued via correspondence are researches into grave sites on old trails and the genealogies of Turtle Mountains pioneer families, Souris River trading posts, and North Dakota place name origins. Business letters concerning Metigoshe State Park are also present, as Wright was involved with the park and camp as another of his work responsibilities.

Series II, Research Materials, Subseries I: Biographies, is contained in Boxes 2 and 3. This unit consists of queries, responses, notes, obituaries, and genealogies on settlers who came to the Turtle Mountains in the mid and late 1800s. Wright collected family histories, interviews and statements in the 1950s. Genealogies, anecdotes and reminiscences involving such families as the Hormuth family, the Bottineau family, the Prescott family, the Wohlgemuth family, and the Martineau family are found among Wright's historical information. Prominent among the individuals infamous or somehow important in the history of the region in the early years Wright researched, are Albert Boudoin, E. W. Brenner and Mary MacDonald, Brave Bear (hanged in 1882 for murder), and General Pincott, and early Sheyenne River settler. Wright has included sketch maps of homestead locations, grave sites and cemeteries. His attention to detail and accuracy is evident throughout this series.

Subseries II, within Series II, consists of county history material, including maps, notes, and histories. This subseries is arranged alphabetically by county name. For each county, Wright attempted to record significant facts and historical information. As a consequence the material collected for each county varies a great deal, in accordance with the specific attributes, development and historic importance of a certain county. Wright recorded the names of early settlers, points of historic interest, landmarks, geographic features, town plats and descriptions of old buildings, cemeteries and prehistoric grave sites. Assorted county affidavits and business records appear for some but not all counties. The oldest item is dated 1883. For the most part, the county histories encompass the period of years from the 1840s to the early 1900s.

Subseries III, Subject Files, Boxes 4 and 5 contains material on a variety of topics, all of which are historical in content, concerning places and events in the early history of North Dakota and Manitoba. Areas that interested Wright -- the Turtle Mountains, the Selkirk Settlement, and battleground where the Battle of the Grand Coteau was fought, terrain crossed by any of the great old trails -- are mentioned in the collected material within this series. The Metis culture, the Mouse or Souris, the James and the Red Rivers and their history and settlements are also subjects represented by information found in the collection. County maps, accounts and anecdotes written by descendants of the Turtle Mountain settlers are included.

Most of Series III: Miscellaneous Records, ca. 1950-1960 focuses on North Dakota history, historic sites and trails. A copy of a handwritten Turtle Mountain Protection Association Constitution dates to 1894, but beyond that, and with the exception of a small amount of personal material relating to Wright's World War I experience, the papers date from the 1950s. Clippings form the rest of the Dana Wright collection, and these date from 1920 and the 1950s. Again, the focus of the newspaper articles is North Dakota history. They were taken from the Fargo Forum, the Jamestown Sun, the Devils Lake Journal, and the Turtle Mountain Star, newspapers based in the areas which most interested Wright.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I. Correspondence, 1920 to 1963, Box 1-2

Consists of outgoing and incoming letters.

Series II. Research Materials, ca. 1930-1960, Box 2-5

Consists of notes, obituaries, family genealogies, maps, and manuscripts.

Series III. Miscellaneous Records, ca. 1950 to 1960, Box 5-6

Consists of manuscripts, maps, notes, newspaper clippings, reports, letters, and receipts

BOX / FOLDER INVENTORY

Series I: Correspondence

Box 1:

1 Outgoing Letters 1920-1929

2 Outgoing Letters 1930-1939

3 Outgoing Letters 1940-1949

4 Outgoing Letters 1950-1951

5 Outgoing Letters 1952-1953

6 Outgoing Letters 1954-1955

7 Outgoing Letters 1956-1957

8 Outgoing Letters 1958-1959

9 Outgoing Letters 1960-1963

10 Incoming Letters A-E, 1946-1960

Box 2:

1 Incoming Letters F-J, 1946-1960

2 Incoming Letters K-N, 1946-1960

3 Incoming Letters O-R, 1946-1960

4 Incoming Letters S-Z, 1946-1960

Series II: Research Material: Biographies, County History Material, Subject Files

5 Biographies A-B

6 Biographies Boudoin, Albert

7 Biographies Bottineau Family

8 Biographies Brave Bear

9 Biographies Brenner, E.W.

10 Biographies Casey, Mrs. James

11 Biographies D-H

12 Biographies Hormuth Family

13 Biographies Inkster, George

14 Biographies Jarvis, Fred

15 Biographies Jeanotte Family

16 Biographies Johnson, Clarence

17 Biographies Johnson, Edward

18 Biographies Kanick

19 Biographies Kildahl

20 Biographies Kiplin, Maggie McLeod

21 Biographies Kurtz, William

22 Biographies L

Box 3:

1 Biographies M

2 Biographies Martineau Family

3 Biographies Moorhead, William

4 Biographies N-P

5 Biographies Prescott-Wolgemuth Family

6 Biographies Rondeau Family

7 Biographies S-T

8 Biographies W

9 Biographies Willink, Mrs. John

10 County History Material - Barnes

11 County History Material - Benson

12 County History Material - Billings

13 County History Material - Bottineau

14 County History Material - Burke

15 County History Material - Burleigh

16 County History Material - Cass

17 County History Material - Cavalier

18 County History Material - Dickey

19 County History Material - Divide

20 County History Material - Dunn

21 County History Material - Eddy

22 County History Material - Emmons

23 County History Material - Foster

24 County History Material - Golden Valley

25 County History Material - Grand Forks

26 County History Material - Grant

27 County History Material - Griggs

28 County History Material - Hettinger

29 County History Material - Kidder

30 County History Material - LaMoure

31 County History Material - Logan

32 County History Material - McHenry

33 County History Material - McIntosh

34 County History Material - McKenzie

35 County History Material - McLean

36 County History Material - Mercer

37 County History Material - Morton

38 County History Material - Mountrail

39 County History Material - Nelson

40 County History Material - Oliver

41 County History Material - Pembina

Box 4:

1 County History Material - Pierce

2 County History Material - Ramsey

3 County History Material - Ransom

4 County History Material - Rolette

5 County History Material - Sargent

6 County History Material - Sheridan

7 County History Material - Sioux

8 County History Material - Slope

9 County History Material - Stark

10 County History Material - Steele

11 County History Material - Stutsman

12 County History Material - Towner

13 County History Material - Traill

14 County History Material - Walsh

15 County History Material - Wells

16 County History Material - Williams

17 Subject Files: Antler Creek Area

18 Subject Files: Boundary Survey

19 Subject Files: Brenner's Crossing

20 Subject Files: Canada

21 Subject Files: Canada-Emerson Area

22 Subject Files: Canada-Wakopa Area

23 Subject Files: Glyndon, Minnesota

24 Subject Files: Grand Coteau Battle

25 Subject Files: Hatch's Battalion

26 Subject Files: Hudson's Bay Company

27 Subject Files: Indians

28 Subject Files: James River

29 Subject Files: Manitoba Geographical Society

30 Subject Files: Manitoba Historical Society

31 Subject Files: Military

32 Subject Files: Metigoshe Lake

Box 5:

1 Subject Files: Metis

2 Subject Files: Mouse River

3 Subject Files: Northern Pacific Railway

4 Subject Files: Palliser's Rambles and Adventures

5 Subject Files: Pingree Area

6 Subject Files: Red River

7 Subject Files: St. Cloud Church Records

8 Subject Files: Selkirk Settlers

9 Subject Files: Snake Creek

10 Subject Files: South Dakota

11 Subject Files: Stage Lines

12 Subject Files: John Tanner: "Grey Hawk"

13 Subject Files: Trails: Bismarck to the Black Hills

14 Subject Files: Trails - Fort Totten to Fort Abercrombie

15 Subject Files: Trails - Fort Totten to Fort Seward

16 Subject Files: Trails - Fort Totten to Fort Stevenson

17 Subject Files: Trails - Sibley

18 Subject Files: Trails - Miscellaneous

19 Subject Files: Turtle Mountain area

20 Subject Files: Twin Lakes Stockage

21 Subject Files: La Verendrye - David Thompson Monument

22 Subject Files: Winona area

23 Subject Files: Miscellaneous

Series III. Miscellaneous, ca. 1950-1960, Box 5-6

24 Brackett, George A. "A Winter Evening's Tale"

25 Fleming, John. "Pioneer Days"

26 Fuglestad, Torkle T. "Memories from the School of Life"

27 Johnson, Roy. "The Watson Crossing of the Maple River"

28 Kildahl, N. Johanna. "Reminiscences"

29 Lee, Charles H. "The Long Ago"

30 MacFarlane, Robert S. "The Lewis and Clark Country--A Century and a Half Later"

31 Manitoba Women's Institute manuscripts

32 Maps

Box 6:

1 Map purchases

2 Newspaper Clippings

3 State Historical Society of North Dakota Site Reports

4 Turtle Mountain Protection Association--Constitution

5 Wanberg, Mrs. R.T. "Know Your North Dakota District--Know Your State"

6 Wright, Dana: Personal Papers

Oversize Township Plats - Western North Dakota (many old township plats) 1889

Box 7:

1 Ft. Totten Indian School, Information 1913, 1960

2 Negatives of Standing Rock and Sheyenne River

3 Correspondence and information on Devils Lake/Sheyenne area 1920's

4 Sully, Ft. Rice and West, 1864

5 Totten-Georgetown Trail 1950's

6 Ft. Totten, Memoir of Jean Baptiste Fairbault, notes on military cemetery by Mrs. Archie Miller

7 Pictures/negatives of camps on Sibley Expedition

8 Diary of Enoch Eastman, Teamster with Gen. Sibley, 1863

9 Charles Atchison (with Gen. Sibley) and Camp Atchison

10 Mackinaw Boat destroyed by Sioux, 1863

11 Photos on Big Mound

12 Notes and Correspondence on Sibley Trail and Camps

13 First Sibley Story, 1863

14 Notes and Correspondence, Tour of Sibley Trail--Valley City to Atcheson (Minnie J. Nielson) 1953

15 Notes on Griggs County Historic Sites

16 Major Buell

17 Notes on Sibley in Griggs County 1954

18 Notes on Sibley Trail and Camp Atchison, 1862-1866 1960

19 Notes from Letter File of 1900 at Ft. Totten

20 Maps

21 Photo of Sheyenne River west of Camp Wharton, Ransom County

22 Ft. Totten 1867 1950's

23 Historical Notes on Sibley, Sibley Trail

24 Trail between Ft. Seward and Ft. Totten

25 Sully Expedition, Devils Lake, Sentinel Butte 1864 1953

26 Ft. Totten School, Harold Schunke, Sam Feld Schools

27 Ft. Totten, Sully Hill, Guy Robbins

28 Ft. Totten Trail South to Abercrombie and Seward

29 John Thune, Griggs County

30 Sully, Sentinel Butte to Yellowstone, 1864

31 Sibley Expedition 1863

32 Manual Lisa Trading Post

33 Stevenson-Totten Trails

34 Big Mound Battle, Kidder County

35 Kittson-Rolette Pembina Trail

36 Sibley Expedition 1863

37 Notes on John C. Fremont; Charles B. Atchison; other members of Sibley's company

38 Camp Forbes--Sibley

39 Camp Corning Park

40 Camp Carter

41 Camp Gilfillian, NE of Woodworth

42 Camp Buell

43 History of St. John, ND

44 Camp Willison, South of Pettibone

45 Camp All, north of Melville

46 Correspondence with Ray Lingk, Beach; Sully Expedition 1864

47 Sibley Trail, Camp Grant 1863

48 Camp Libby, SE Ashtabula

49 Camp Arnold, Barnes County

50 Camp Smith, Barnes County

51 McPhaill Butte

52 Sully Corral 1864

53 Camp Olin 1863

54 Camp Sheardown, Valley City

55 Sully to Killdeer 1864

56 John Burman Park

Box 8:

1 Sibley Trail in Barnes County

2 Sibley in Ransom County

3 Sibley in Burleigh County

4 Sibley in Kidder County

5 Camp Pope

6 Camp William H. Kimball State Park

7 Sibley in Stutsman County

8 Sibley Trail in Griggs County

9 Sibley in Foster County

10 Records of the War Dept., National Archives, 1869-1870

Box 9:

1 Photos--Military Camps

2 Photos--Military Camps, Camp Perry, Ohio

3 Photos--Military Camp, Devils Lake

4 Photos---Military Camps

5 Photos--Ft. Lincoln, Devils Lake, others

Box 10:

1 Company H, First Infantry, ND National Guard

2 Military Records and Correspondence of Major Dana Wright

3 Information and Correspondence--Major Dana Wright

4 Photos--ND First Infantry

5 Field Notes--Ft. Lincoln

6 Field Notes--Ft. Lincoln

Box 11 - there is no box 11

Box 12:

1 Personal Journals of Dana Wright, July 1897-Jan. 1898

2 Personal Journals of Dana Wright, July 1897-Jan. 1898

3 War Diary 1916

4 Personal Journals, Jan. 1936-Dec. 1936

5 Personal Journals, Jan. 1936-Dec. 1936

6 Personal Journals, Jan 1937-June 1938

7 Personal Journals, July 1938-Oct. 1939

8 Personal Journals, Jan. 1937-June 1938

9 Personal Journals, July 1938-Oct. 1939

10 Personal Journals, April 1, 1948-Dec. 1953; Jan-May 1955

Box 13:

1 Personal Journals 1948-1953, 1955

2 Personal Journals, May 1955-Feb. 1956

3 Personal Journals, Nov-Dec. 1956

4 Personal Journals, Feb. 1956-Sept. 1956

5 Personal Journals 1959

6 Personal Journals 1959

7 Personal Journals 1963

Box 14:

1 Sioux Expedition Map, General Sibley's, 1863

2 Officers of General Sibley, 1863

3 Soldier Deaths during Indian Expeditions 1933-1954

4 Weiser, Dr. J. S. Gravesite

5 Burham, J. W., Diary of 1863 Expedition 1955-1956

6 Camps and Mileage 1863 Expedition 1913-1957

7 Correspondence and Clippings, Misc. 1922-1954

8 Correspondence and Clippings, Misc. 1923-1986

9 Belcourt Chapel, Walhalla

10 Notes, Sibley Expedition/Trail 1863

11 Correspondence and Notes--Dana Wright

12 Field Notes and Photos--Sibley Camps

Box 15:

Duplicates of Dana Wright Materials

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