

M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom papers, 1855-2005

Overview of the Collection

Creator	M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom
Title	M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom papers
Dates	1855-2005 (inclusive) 1855 2005 1855-1968 (bulk) 1855 1968
Quantity	0.5 linear ft.
Collection Number	XOE_CPNWS0239Stangroom (collection)
Summary	The collection comprises papers generated by Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad engineer M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom, including correspondence regarding his experiences, work and travel in the Sierra Nevada Region circa 1855-1973.
Repository	Western Washington University, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies Goltz-Murray Archives Building 808 25th St. Bellingham, WA 98225 Telephone: 360-650-7534 cpnws@wwu.edu
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English.

Biographical Note

M. L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom was born in 1832 in England. After attending school in Switzerland, he relocated back to England where he worked for the North Staffordshire Railway. Following a brief stay in India, Stangroom immigrated to the United States, landing initially in New York. Stangroom then traveled to California and Nevada where he engaged in mining speculation and railroad surveying. In 1888, at the request of railroad magnate Pierre Cornwall, Stangroom moved to Bellingham, Washington to assist in building the Bellingham Bay and British Columbia railway. In 1901 he was appointed State Supervising Engineer in Seattle. Stangroom died in 1913 at the age of 81.

Content Description

The M. L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom papers document the early career and activities of an engineer for the Bellingham Bay & British Columbia Railroad. The collection spans the years 1855-2005, with the bulk of the material ranging from 1855-1968. Stangroom's personal papers include a resume and fifteen-page report regarding the construction of the Bellingham Bay & British Columbia railroad (for which he served as engineer).

The bulk of the collection comprises letters from Stangroom to his mother and siblings regarding his travels and experiences in the western United States. In a letter dated 1855, Stangroom writes of his plan to go to the United States from India to enjoy better business prospects. Subsequent correspondence documents Stangroom's experiences in California and the Sierra-Nevada region circa 1855-1873. His letters include reference to the Chinese quarter of Sacramento, the Placerville mining community, and the adverse road and weather conditions he encountered during his travels. Stangroom describes his experiences prospecting for gold in the Sierra Nevadas, life in the mining town of Michigan Bluff in Placer County, California, and the mining processes of the 1850s and 1860s. He writes of a town destroyed by fire in 1856, and also of interactions between white settlers and Native Americans. A June 1858 letter describes how Californians are driven "stark raving mad" by the lure of gold in British Columbia, with hundreds of men leaving daily for the Fraser River. Later letters from 1865 and 1866 refer to Stangroom's work for the Western Pacific Railroad, and to surveying a line between Sacramento and Stockton.

Stangroom's letters provide rich description of western landscapes including California redwood forests and the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The correspondence reveals aspects of his personal and family life, including his courtship and eventual marriage to Emily Stewart in December 1856 in Sulphur Springs, California. An 1857 letter reflects the isolation of many miners and California settlers: when Emily Stangroom falls ill, there is no physician nearby to attend her.

The collection also contains condolence letters to Stangroom's daughter Zoe Stangroom Kindall, written after the death of her husband, and newspaper clippings documenting M. L. Stangroom's achievements. Other documents include an affidavit from Mabel Stangroom Egan affirming her relationship to her sister, Zoe Stangroom.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom Papers, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Heritage Resources, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225-9123.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The M.L (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom papers are organized in accordance with the following series arrangement

- Series I. M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom papers 1855-2005
- Series II. Zoe Stangroom Kindall papers 1940-1968

Acquisition Information

Josephine McNeill, granddaughter of M.L. Stangroom, donated his papers to the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies in February 2006.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series I: M.L. (Marc La Riviere) Stangroom Papers , 1855-2005

Folder 1/2 contains information about Stangroom's leadership in building a railroad line to connect Bellingham Bay with the Canadian Pacific Railway, as well as creating and operating two saw mills, and supplying the towns of Old and New Whatcom with water from Lake Whatcom.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Stangroom Typed Chronology [view]	undated, circa 1901
1/2	Stangroom Report to Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad Company [view]	undated
1/3	M.L. Stangroom Reminiscence and Personal Correspondence [view] [view]	circa 1855-1873
1/4	Newspaper Clippings re M.L. Stangroom	undated, 2005

Series II: Zoe Stangroom Kindall papers, 1940-1968

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/5	Mabel Stangroom affidavit for Zoe Stangroom Kindall 1940	
1/6	Condolence Letter on the death of Joseph W. Kindall	1967-1968

Find Related Collections

Subject Terms :

[Gold mines and mining -- Sierra Nevada Region \(Calif. And Nev.\) -- History -- Sources.](#)

[Gold miners -- Sierra Nevada Region \(Calif. and Nev.\) -- History -- Sources.](#)

[Mining camps -- Placer County \(Calif.\) -- History -- Sources.](#)

[Prospecting -- Sierra Nevada Region \(Calif. and Nev.\) -- History -- Sources.](#)

[Railroad engineers -- United States -- Correspondence -- Sources.](#)

[Railroads -- California -- History -- Sources.](#)

[Railroads -- Washington \(State\) -- Whatcom County -- History -- Sources.](#)

Personal Names :

[Stangroom, M. L. \(Marc La Riviere\), 1832-1913. --Archives](#)

Corporate Names :

[Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad Co. \(creator\)](#)

Geographical Names :

[Sierra Nevada Region \(Calif. and Nev.\) -- Description and travel -- Sources.](#)

[California -- Description and travel -- Sources.](#)

[Placer County \(Calif.\) -- Description and travel -- Sources.](#)