

END OF FUNDING PERIOD REPORT

LAUC Statewide Grants, Research & Professional Development Committee

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TITLE OF PROJECT: A Study of the Photographs of the Northwest Boundary Survey

Time Period of Grant: 2015

Amount of Award Received: \$4,790.00

Original Abstract as Submitted:

The survey establishing the boundary between the Washington Territory and Canada took place between 1857 and 1861. The British survey team made photographs during the 1860-1861 seasons, but the American team was not successful in photographic efforts. Documentation of this survey in the U.S. is sparse; no thorough official report was published until 40 years later, due to the outbreak of the Civil War. Bancroft Library holds a collection of 45 landscape views and portraits made by the British. Such sets are extremely rare, and the full set of images has never been published. Incomplete collections are at Yale and the Library of Congress. The most complete sets, of 80-100 views, are at the Victoria and Albert Museum (London) and the archives of the Royal Corps of Engineers (Kent). I propose to study these sets and the physical evidence they exhibit with regard to order of creation, arrangement by custodians, and the intended narratives they may suggest. I will approach the photographs with these questions: 1) What evidence of chronology or geographic sequence is present in the two sets? 2) What evidence of subsequent use of the views is present on the photographs themselves or in related archival records and reports? 3) What was the official impetus behind, and subsequent use of, the outstanding portraiture of Native Americans of the region? 4) How are the multi-plate panoramic views (identified in the Bancroft collection) presented or identified in the more complete sets, and are there as yet unidentified multi-part views?

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS and EVALUATION

The official end of this project was marked by publication of the article “When Narrative Fails: Context and Physical Evidence as Means of Understanding the Northwest Boundary Survey Photographs of 1857–1862” in the *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies (JCAS)* in November 2015. (Full citation and link are in Section IV, below.)

However, the research undertaken with this LAUC funding will, I anticipate, yield future publications or online resources. I have amassed a body of research notes and images beyond the content of the *JCAS* article, and I hope to write more on the topic in the coming year.

The main research portion of the project was completed in May 2015, with a trip to the two London repositories noted in the project abstract. I completed a close examination of all photographs,

captions, annotations, and documentary sources that were available at the repositories. Reference snapshots were taken of all photographs, with close-ups of all captions, and these image files have been organized for close review.

During this trip I confirmed that the two archival sets of photographs are identical in terms of images present, that they have uniform manuscript captioning, and are numbered in the same sequence. I also discovered that multi-plate panoramas have been titled and numbered as pairs or trios, but that these related images do not always form contiguous panoramas. Some seem to be unconnected views from the same vantage point. There are more multi-plate views than I was aware of based on the Bancroft, Yale, and Library of Congress collections.

There is no evidence of chronology in the sets, and I studied the geographic sequence by mapping, approximately, the image files I created, using Flickr's geo-tagging interface.

I learned that the two English archival sets lack some photographs found at Bancroft Library and the Library of Congress. The sets are complete in themselves, but must be a selective subset of all the plates exposed and printed.

I also identified the best quality print of most images examined and, in September 2015, ordered nineteen high resolution scans from the archives of the Royal Corps of Engineers. I also received permission to publish these images, so the groundwork is laid for future work. I intend to write at least one future article for publication, and intend to complete a catalogue raisonné online, if not in print.

II. IS YOUR PROJECT COMPLETED? Yes X No

If No, what is needed to complete the project? Is more time needed? Or more funds?

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

\$3,755.06 was expended in 2014-2015, with \$1,034.94 remaining.

In 2015-2016, an additional \$462.96 was expended on digital reproductions.

Total expenditures: \$4,218.02

Balance (returned to LAUC): \$571.98

Fiscal 2014-2015 report:

Expenditures reported in June 2015 were for travel, lodging, and meals, plus a small amount for fees at one repository.

Expenses were reasonably close to projections. Air fare (\$1,264) and accommodations (£175 nightly) were slightly more than projected, but fewer nights were spent in London than originally

planned. (A one week stay was reduced to five nights. Repositories' open hours made it impossible to schedule more than four consecutive work days, therefore adding a fifth work day would have required at least four additional hotel nights, from a Friday through the following Tuesday, which was neither possible nor economical.)

The per diem rate for international travel changes quarterly, so the rate identified in winter actually went down by May, making reimbursement for daily expenses slightly lower (\$170 vs. \$180).

Fiscal 2015-2016 report:

£298.30 (\$462.96) was spent for 19 high resolution scans from the museum and archives of the Royal Engineers. This included permission for one-time publication or low-resolution website use. (In late September 2015, the exchange rate was approximately \$1.55 / £1.)

IV. SHARING YOUR PRODUCT/RESULTS

In early November 2015 my first article resulting from this project was published in the online *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*.

Eason, James A. (2015) "When Narrative Fails: Context and Physical Evidence as Means of Understanding the Northwest Boundary Survey Photographs of 1857–1862," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*: Vol. 2, Article 2.
Available at: <http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol2/iss2/2>

This article was submitted in response to a call for papers in 19th century photography made by this professional journal hosted at Yale University. I intend to share other findings made during this research through an online catalogue raisonné of this body of survey photography, and perhaps an additional journal article geared toward the history of photography rather than archival studies.

V. NOTE

Information included in this report may be reprinted or posted on the web for dissemination to UCOP, other UC Libraries, and future potential LAUC grant applicants.