
Finding Aid for the Daniel Ammen Papers, 1836-1898

Collection number: 811

UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
Manuscripts Division

Los Angeles, CA

Contact Information

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Daniel Ammen Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1836-1898

Collection number: 811

Creator: Ammen, Daniel, 1820-1898

Extent: 4 boxes (2 linear ft.) 1 oversize folder

Repository: University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Department of Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

Abstract: Daniel Ammen (1819-1896) served in the U.S. Navy (1836-1868), was in charge of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Bureau of Navigation (1868-78), and served as Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission (1872-76). He was also an advocate of a Nicaraguan canal route, a representative of the U.S. at the Inter-oceanic Canal Congress in Paris (1879), and designer the Ammen ram. The collection contains correspondence, papers, documents, photographs, dueling pistols, and blueprints concerning Admiral Ammen's career in the U.S. Navy, his activities as Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission (1872-1876), as representative from the U.S. to the Inter-oceanic Canal Congress at Paris in 1879, and his various efforts in support of the Nicaraguan canal route. The collection also contains papers relating to the design and construction of the Ammen ram.

Physical location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.

Language: English

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Restrictions on Access

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Advance notice required for access.

Additional Physical Form Available

A copy of the original version of this online finding aid is available at the UCLA Department of Special Collections for in-house consultation and may be obtained for a fee. Please contact:

- Public Services Division
- UCLA Library, Department of Special Collections
- Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
- Box 951575
- Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575
- Telephone: 310/825-4988 (10:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., Pacific Time)
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Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Francis Dupont Ammen, 1963, purchase.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Daniel Ammen Papers (Collection 811). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Biography

Ammen was born on May 16, 1819; was boyhood friend of Ulysses S. Grant; became a midshipman in 1836; undertook long voyages to China and Japan (1845-47), went on expedition up the Paraguay River (1853-54), sailed on Pacific cruise (1857-60); in Civil War, took part in the attack upon Port Royal in the gunboat Seneca and participated in the bombardment of Fort McAllister in the monitor Patapsco; was called from sea duty through President Grant's influence; in charge of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, and the Bureau of Navigation, 1868-78; was named Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission (1872-76), where he became an advocate of a Nicaraguan canal route; represented the U.S. at the Inter-oceanic Canal Congress in Paris, 1879; designed the Ammen ram, a small coast-defense vessel, one of which, the Katahdin, was built and accepted for service; wrote several books, including *The Old Navy and the New* (1891); died at Ammendale, near Washington, D.C., on July 11, 1898.

Scope and Content

Collection contains correspondence, papers, documents, photographs, dueling pistols, and blueprints concerning Admiral Ammen's career in the U.S. Navy and his activities as Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission (1872-1876), as representative from the U.S. to the Inter-oceanic Canal Congress at Paris in 1879, and his various efforts in support of the Nicaraguan canal route. Correspondents include Frederick Douglass, Millard Fillmore, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, Andrew Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, William Tecumseh Sherman, Zachary Taylor, and John Tyler, and the Nicaraguan Canal Association. Also contains papers relating to the design and construction of the Ammen ram, a small coast-defense vessel; a prototype, the Katahdin, was completed and accepted for service on January 4, 1896.

Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in the following series:

1. Correspondence and memorabilia (Box 1).
2. Papers concerning the Ammen ram (Box 1).
3. Papers relating to the Nicaraguan canal route (Box 2-3).

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4. Admiral Daniel Ammen's dueling pistols (Box 4).
 5. Plans (blueprints) of Balsa, Portsmouth, NH Naval Yard (Box 5).

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Ammen, Daniel, 1820-1898--Archives.

United States--Navy--Officers

Nicaragua Canal (Nicaragua).

Note

A Selected List of Authors and Recipients of Letters, Documents, etc. Whose Names Appear in the Numbered Collections Catalog with a Reference to their Location in the Papers

Alcock, Sir Rutherford, 1809-1897.Box 1, folder 1
Bayard, Thomas Francis, 1828-1898.Box 2, folder 18
Beale, Edward Fitzgerald, 1822-1893.Box 2, folder 18
Biddle, James Stokes, 1818-1900.Box 2, folder 17
Billings, Frederick, 1823-1890.Box 3, folder 1
Brooke, James Rutter, 1838-1926.Box 1, folder 3
Buckler, Thomas Hepburn, 1812-1901.Box 3, folder 3
Carzaro, Evaristo (president of Nicaragua).Box 3, folder 8
Cárdenas, Adán, 1836-1916.Box 3, folders 4-6
Childs, George William, 1829-1894.Box 1, folder 6
Conness, John, 1821-1909.Box 3, folder 9
Crowninshield, Arent Schuyler, 1843-1908.Box 2, folder 17
Dickerson, Mahlon, 1770-1853, document signed.Box 6
Douglass, Frederick, 1817-1895.Box 2, folder 18
DuPont, Henry Algernon, 1838-1926.Box 1, folder 7
Edmunds, George Franklin, 1828-1919.Box 2, folder 17
Evarts, Willaim Maxwell, 1818-1901.Box 2, folder 16
Farenholt, Oscar Walter, 1845-1920.Box 1, folder 10
Fillmore, Millard (president of the U.S.), 1800-1874, document signed. Box 6
Gibbons, James (Cardinal), 1834-1921.Box 1, folder 11
Grant, Ulysses Simpson (president of the U.S.), 1822-1885, box 1, folder 11 A and documents signed. Box 6
Griscom, Clement Acton, 1841-1912, document signed.Box 6
Hayes, Rutherford Birchard (president of the U.S.), 1822-1893.Box 1, folder 2 and box 2, folder 1 and Box 6
Hotchkiss, Horace Leslie, 1842-1929.Box 2, folder 2
Hurlbert, William Henry, 1827-1895.Box 2, folder 18
Johnson, Andrew (president of the U.S.), 1808-1875, document signed. Box 6
Jones, John Percival, 1829-1912.Box 1, folder 12
Le Gendre, Charles William, 1830-1899.Box 1, folder 13
Lincoln, Abraham (president of the U.S.), 1809-1865, document signed. Box 6
McAlpine, William Jarvis, 1812-1890.Box 2, folder 17
Mahan, Alfred Thayer, 1840-1914.Box 1, folder 16
Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua, New York.Box 2, folder 18
Merry, William Lawrence.Box 1, folder 18
Morgan, John Tyler, 1824-1907.Box 2, folder 7
Newton, John, 1823-1895.Box 2, folder 18

Nicaraguan Canal Association, New York.Box 2, folder 8
Paine, Charles Jackson, 1833-1916.Box 1, folder 20
Ramsay, Francis Munroe, 1835-1914.Box 1, folder 21
Robeson, George Maxwell, 1829-1897. Box 1, folder 21 and documents signed.Box 6
Sacasa, Roberto, 1840-1896.Box 2, folder 11
Sherman, William Tecumseh, 1820-1891.Box 1, folder 23
Strother, David Hunter, 1816-1888.Box 1, folder 24
Taylor, Henry Clay, 1845-1904.Box 2, folder 13
Taylor Zachary (president of the U.S.), 1784-1850, document signed. Box 6
Ten Broeck, Richard, 1812-1892.Box 1, folder 25
Tyler, John (president of the U.S.), 1790-1862, document signed. Box 6
Ward, Aaron, 1851-1918.Box 2, folder 18
Watson, James Craig, 1838-1880.Box 1, folder 28
Zelaya, José Santos, 1853-1930.Box 2, folder 15

General Correspondence

Box 1, Folders 1-30 **Arranged alphabetically by correspondents.**

Scope and Content Note

- Including letters, etc. relating to Admiral Ammen's personal affairs and to his career in the United States Navy.
- Also included is Ammen memorabilia.
- Some of the letters contain references to the Nicaraguan canal project.

Letters to Joseph Marshall Stoddart (1845-1921).

Physical Description: 7 pieces.

Scope and Content Note

Stoddart was editor of *Lippincott's Magazine*. These letters (1889-1891) concern the possibility of publishing portions of Admiral Ammen's memoirs in the magazine. Mention is made of the Nicaragua experiences and letters from General Grant.

Note

Added to Daniel Ammen Papers, Collection 811 (by D. Luckenbill, December 1974).

General Papers

Box 6 **Contains 22 documents affirming Admiral Ammen's various naval and other appointments, arranged chronologically.**

Papers Concerning the Ammen Rams

Box 1, Folders 31-41 **Letters, photographs, blueprints etc. re the construction and design of the Ammen ram.**

Box 2, Folders 1-21

Papers re the Nicaraguan Canal Route

Box 3, Folders 1-12

Chiefly letters arranged alphabetically by correspondents in box 2-3.

Scope and Content Note

Box 2, folders 19-21 contain some papers, printed government documents and a few clippings.

Box 5

Plans of Balsa, Portsmouth, New Hampshire Naval Yard May 1870.

Physical Description: 3 blueprints.

Miscellaneous

Box 4

Admiral Daniel Ammen's Dueling Pistols.

Note

Housed in safe.