

Noland, Thomas Nelson Berkeley, papers

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland papers

1872-2020

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS .16476

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

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Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1028

Unit Date

1872-2020

Unit Date

1872-1906, 1964, 2020

Language

English

Creator

Noland, Thomas Nelson Berkeley , 1846-1913

Extent

.75 Cubic Feet 1 legal document box, 1 small artifact box, and one flat file folder (2 x 3 feet)

Condition Description

Fair to good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was given to the University of Virginia Special Collections Library on November 12, 2021, by Mary Noland Young and Lucy Burwell Young.

Preferred Citation

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland papers, MSS 16476, 1872-1806, 1964, 2020, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland (1846-1913) was born in Hanover County, Virginia, the son of Colonel Callender St. George Noland (1816-1875) and Mary Edmonia Berkeley (1823-1901).

Noland was a student at the Virginia Military Institute, from 1863-1864 and 1867-1870, where he served as a private in Company C, participating in the Battle of New Market during the Civil War.

He was employed both as a civil engineer and a farmer. Noland was employed as a civil engineer by the Peruvian Hydraulic Commission 1873-1874. Noland and Elizabeth M. Mayo (1850-1883) were married in 1883.

Content Description

This collection documents Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland's time in Peru, and contains his journal, a typed transcript of the journal by Mary Noland Young, photographs (chiefly albumen prints) of items, places, and peoples in the Amazon, correspondence (including drafts and translations), and legal documents.

Also present are oversize blueprint maps of the Peruvian Amazon region drawn by Noland, a "Map of a Section of South America - Peru, a Vertical Cross Section of the Continent about the 2nd Degree South Latitude," and two spear points.

Noland's journal records his travels on the Peruvian tributaries of the Amazon from 1873 to 1874. The journal documents his work, describing his travels, the geography, flora and fauna of the area, and his observations and interactions with the various indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon. It includes hand drawn illustrations.

Keywords

Indigenous peoples -- Peru
Amazon River Region
Peru
diaries
Rivers--Peru
Gold
gold mines and mining
Ashaninca
Campa del Pichis
Cashibo indigenous group
Conibo indigenous group
Aguaruna indigenous group
racism -- 1870-1880
South American Description and Travel

Content Warning

This material contains offensive or harmful language based on race and religion. Also present are a few descriptions of violence against Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

The purpose of this note is to give users the opportunity to decide whether they need or want to view these materials, or at least, to mentally or emotionally prepare themselves to view the materials. For archival materials, more specific information about these materials may be available in the finding aid.

Description of Subordinate Components

Contract with Peru, Discharge and Letter of Thanks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209627

Unit Date 1872-1874, 1896-1901

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Scope and Contents

The contract was between Noland, Civil Engineer, and J.R. Tucker, President of the Amazon Hydrographic

Commission of Peru (April 10, 1872). Also present is a letter of thanks for services rendered to the steam launch "Mayro" during the voyage to Iquitos, Peru (August 11, 1873), and a final letter of thanks from the Peruvian government for the successful completion of the mission (December 4, 1874).

There is a letter from Senator Thomas S. Martin describing his efforts through the State Department to secure payment from the Peruvian government for the "claim of the Hydrographic Commission of the Amazon" (March 12, 1896).

Correspondence and Negotiations concerning the Probable Gold Fields located in Peru by Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland and others

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

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Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209628

Unit Date 1899-1900

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Scope and Contents

A packet of typed letters translated and bound together with the notation "C" on the back include the following correspondents and topics: Manuel Santillan wrote Alexander W. Thornely about the opportunities for mining the riches of the area of the Marañon River region of Peru, including gold dust, rubber trees, and chocolate (February 6, 1899).

Abraham Madina wrote to Manuel Santillan about the danger from indigenous peoples in the region creating difficulties in harvesting all the riches of the area but also emphasizing the richness and health of the region (February 4, 1899). Maximiliano Kabsch to Otoniel Melena, describes the situation along the River Napo, mentioning both "civilized" indigenous peoples accustomed to working with foreigners and other indigenous peoples, not used to working with foreigners but who were peaceful. He also mentioned the requirements for successful navigation of the river and other financial opportunities in nearby Ecuador (February 1, 1899).

Otoniel Melena to Alexander W. Thornely, described an expedition to the upper Marañon River region, the source of much gold, but also containing rapids and a large whirlpool. The whirlpool resulted in loss of life to San Ramon and several indigenous laborers on the expedition, when he disregarded their advice to avoid it.

During another expedition in 1890 led by an American, Mr. Walf, and a German naturalist, above the Pongo de Mainique (a water gap or canyon) of the Urubamba River, a group was visited by members of the "Nautipus" people who invited them to stay in their village for a few days (February 4, 1899). They brought twelve of the indigenous people with them back to San Antonio, Peru, including a chief named Wamba.

Melena also shared what he has heard about the headwaters of the River Napo and its prospects for mining. He suggests that Noland come to Peru accompanied by a naturalist and mining expert by way of Colón, Panama, then Guayaquil, Ecuador, to Quito, Ecuador. Once in Quito, he should visit Dr. Mestanza and get additional information about the voyage down the Napo River to Iquitos, Peru, Borja, Peru, and the upper Marañon region. (February 4, 1899).

Also present at the back of the group letters is a copy of an undated account of one of the expeditions in search of the historical gold mines of Morillo or Cerro Angaisa by Jose del Carmen Vasquez. This expedition began on August 1, 1882, when he left Moyobamba for the upper Amazon, taking with him fourteen well-armed men. He secured the services of several villagers from Aripari and interpreters for the languages of the "wild tribes."

He described their first encounter with the "Chunchos" indigenous people, a Peruvian Spanish word for the Asháninka people, who occupy the upper region of the Potro River. He sent interpreters to the tribe to ask them to supply canoes for the journey.

They traveled in the canoes to the Asháninka village where they prepared food for the trip, chiefly sweet potatoes, and he insisted the Moyobambinos with him make clothing for the tribe as they typically wore no

clothing. Vasquez and his group stayed with the Asháninka people for eleven days.

He mentioned one of the Asháninka by name, Huapi, who indicated that gold could be found in a distant canyon, but no one else in the expedition was willing to continue at that time. Vasquez and his men had been traveling for seventy-nine days on this first expedition. He briefly described three additional trips which provided more information about the area, but no gold.

Translations of two letters (4 copies):

Manuel Santillan to Mr. A.W. Thornely, April 16, 1899, reporting that the port of Iquitos had recently seen its first American Man of War, the gunboat "Wilmington," believed to be in the area to investigate the reports of the wealth of the products of the upper Amazon. He also mentioned Mr. Bruner and a company of Americans exploring the placer mines of the River Napo.

Colonel Fisher, former American representative to Chile, on behalf of Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland, to Don Alvares Calderon, Minister Plenipotentiary of Peru, August 1900, wrote concerning the possibility of opening up the mining district of the upper Amazon by a Special Concession to a company in the United States associated with Noland for hydraulic mining of gold to make it easier to raise capital for the venture.

Also in this folder is a draft undated memorandum of agreement between Carl H. Nolting, Louisa County, Virginia, and Noland, and a letter from J.F. Spofford to Noland about the rates of passage to Peru, October 9, 1900.

Correspondence and Negotiations concerning the Probable Gold Fields located in Peru by Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland and others

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

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Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209629

Unit Date 1904-1906, 1964

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Scope and Contents

Contains a print copy in Spanish and hand-written English translation of the transfer of an agreement of The Inca Gold Development Corporation of Peru, Limited, with the government of Peru for the right to dredge the Inambari River, Province of Carabaya, April 29, 1904.

Other correspondents writing about the project or furnishing letters of introduction March 22-23, 1906) include A.J. Montague, E.B. Thomason, Nelson B. Noland, Irving B. Dudley, Z.A. Loreda. The folder also contained a letter from Mary Bleecker Miller Noland (1889-1985) to the National Geographic Society offering Noland's papers as a gift, June 20, 1964.

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland's Peruvian Amazon Exploration Journal

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Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209630

Unit Date 1873 February 18-1874 December 1

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Journal

The journal kept by Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland describes his travels and adventures as a member of the Hydraulic Commission of Peru in the upper Amazon region while making accurate navigational charts for the tributaries of the Amazon. The Commission began their mission by leaving Iquitos, Peru, with two boats, the launch "Mairo" and the steamer, the "Tambo, with Noland being aboard the "Mairo" as the civil engineer.

The handwritten journal also contains some drawings, photographs, and news clippings. Apparently some photographs had been removed by Noland, possibly by relatives or for use as illustrations for some articles he wrote for "Appleton's Journal" in 1875.

The "Mairo" first explored the River Nanay from September 17, 1873 until its return to Iquitos, Peru, on October 3, 1873. On October 27, 1873, still aboard the "Mairo," Noland and his group left Iquitos to explore the Morona, Potro, Pastaza and Tigre rivers. They returned on December 4, 1873, to Iquitos from those explorations.

2) Noland described an indigenous settlement at Courahualie, where the people, with heavily painted faces, came to see them off the next day, speaking the Incan language and with the girls carrying monkeys upon their heads (February 23-24, 1873).

Later he described a canoe which was made from a single tree and propelled by ten indigenous men on the Ucayali River. The "Mairo" passed it but later heard the same group of indigenous men during the night coming into Puca-Cura, playing music and singing "a wild kind of melody, as they paddled, very sweet" (March 6, 1873).

The next morning, they saw one of the men, tattooed on his face and hands, being lashed by a man

named Martinez (?) who owned the farmhouse, land, and the canoe (March 7, 1873).

3) Anchored at Sara-Yuca, they saw several aboriginal canoes who came along side and offered them masato to drink. One of the individuals, with a "musical instrument made of pieces of reed of different sizes and lengths," played the same song Noland had heard earlier down the river (March 9, 1873) in "the Incan tongue."

He also described the Old Church and other buildings constructed by the Jesuits who founded it two hundred years ago (March 10, 1873).

He saw other indigenous people at the Bepuano chacara who he said were "the wildest I have seen and have their war clubs, bows and arrows arranged in their houses ready for use" (March 11, 1873).

4) Noland met a boy who had been captured by the Conibo ethnic group from the Cashibo ethnic group. The Cashibos along the River Pachitea were rumored to be cannibals (March 14, 1873).

He also met an older monk, at the Cashaboya station of the Order of St. Francis, trying to arrange three indigenous languages into some kind of form and prepare a dictionary for the Incan language (March 16, 1873).

They purchased plantains, ground peas and a monkey from some of the indigenous people as they left their anchor site about fifty miles from Calleria. When they anchored for the night at a Conibo settlement two miles from the mouth of the Pachitea River, they also purchased some wild hogs (wangana) and more plantains (March 25-26, 1873).

Noland wrote about being on the border of cannibal country and recounts the story of two Peruvian officers who were killed and eaten about twelve miles above them some time ago (March 26, 1873).

5) Noland described the Commission's arrangement with "Old Clemente" who had his warriors cut wood with axes for use as fuel in the "Tambo" and deliver it in the indigenous canoes.

This production of wood was interrupted when the warriors went on a war expedition against the Cashibos "to steal their women and children." Noland also described their beliefs about burning the house of any member of the group who dies, cut up his canoe, kill his enslaved persons and destroy all their belongings out of fear of being bewitched.

On page 10, he has also drawn a picture of the Conibo knife carried by each man. (March 31-April 2, 1873).

6) Noland furnished additional information about the indigenous warriors, their preparations, an aside about the production of "masato de yuca" by the older indigenous women, and the failure of the mission of the warriors due to the superior numbers of the Cashibos (April 3 and 8, 1873). He described one of the Conibo houses and how it was arranged (May 1, 1873).

Noland also wrote of being lost deep in the forest on the border between the Conibos and the Cashibos while hunting with a guide and how difficult it was to get back to the river (May 10, 1873). Noland's entry for May 12th says that the chief of the local indigenous group predicted the "Tambo" was coming up the river and would arrive soon because of the waterfowl which was disturbed by the steamer's advance and flew in advance of it on the upper Ucayali River.

7) On May 14, 1873, the "Tambo" had finally arrived to join Noland's group (on the advance launch "Mairo") near the mouth of the Pachitea River, apparently full of animal and bird species both alive and mounted as specimens.

The arrival of the "Tambo" was so late in the season that it was unsafe for either vessel to proceed up the Pachitea River to do the survey, so the Hydraulic Commission purchased six canoes from the Conibo indigenous group to carry the members of the commission and their provisions for five to six weeks up the Pachitea River, two to three hundred miles.

Noland went on to describe the Conibo canoes, their dimensions, stability, construction, arrangement of the indigenous crew in the canoe, and the distribution of the Commission members and soldiers among the crafts (May 15-19, 1873).

Some indigenous Cashibos, who had been captured and enslaved by Pedro, the brother of Clemente (both being members of the Conibo group) also joined the expedition (May 20-21, 1873).

8) Noland also described the Conibos' fear of being in the territory of their neighbors, the Cashibos, reported to be cannibals and related a story involving a Peruvian gunboat who landed on a small island (Chouta Isla) and whose captain and 2nd commander were killed by the Cashibos. Both were reported as eaten by the group of Cashibos (May 21, 1873). He described an attack by the Cashibos upon the pilot canoe, during the daylight hours (May 24, 1873).

9) He described the canoes passing under cliffs of colored lava, where some bore a type of "hieroglyphic" writing, possibly the most eastern trace of the Incas yet known (May 26, 1873) and exchanging presents with some of the Cashibos along the banks (May 30, 1873). This "gift exchange" turned into an armed altercation shortly thereafter. They arrived at the mouth of the Pichis River and began its exploration (June 4-6, 1873).

A desertion by eight of their men was caused by fear of the Campas indigenous people, known as "the most fierce of all the Indians of Peru" according to Noland (June 7-11, 1873). They continued on further into the territory of the Campas and he related stories and information about them and the local flora and fauna in his journal (June 12-16, 1873).

10) While headed back towards the steamers, they ran across a larger than normal war party of Conibos about to attack the Cashibos (June 27, 1873) who would be either killed or enslaved by them, and then sold to the whites of Iquitos, Peru, although this was against the law.

Noland mentioned the trafficking of shrunken heads made from captives taken in war by interior indigenous peoples, also against Peruvian law. The Conibo expedition was later reported to be unsuccessful (October 28, 1873).

An account was attached after page 27, describing the story about the shrunken head of Tibi, the fearsome chief of the "Antipas" ethnic group, defeated by the indigenous group, the "Aguaruna."

11) On June 28, 1873, the group reached the steamers, still anchored within the mouth of the Pachitea, after being aboard the canoes for forty-one days.

Following this entry, Noland began a long paragraph with his own observations about the indigenous people in the region they had been exploring. On July 1, 1873, the Hydraulic Commission began traveling up the Ucayali River, stopping at Sara-Yacu on July 9, where he purchased a young "tiger" and employed the local umbrella, a palm thatch, during a severe thunderstorm.

On August 24, 1873, they arrived back at Iquitos, where the boats were greeted by the entire village. Noland then began a lengthy description of the inhabitants of Iquitos, Peru, and their customs. He also mentions meeting James Orton (1830-1877) author of "Andes and Amazon."

12) On September 17, 1873, the group began the second series of explorations, beginning at the River Nanay. The local indigenous people were called the Iquitos (September 23, 1873).

Noland described the multi-ethnic composition of the crew of his launch, some of their more interesting meals, and the great number of butterflies they had seen on the Nanay River (September 26, 1873).

Upon their arrival back in Iquitos, the entire crew was ill, probably due to malaria (October 1, 1873). On October 13-15, they conducted a short exploration of the River Itaya, which is important only because the river enters the Amazon at Iquitos, Peru.

In October, both the "Tambo" and the steamer "Alceste" arrived with provisions. Unfortunately, the "Alceste" also carried smallpox to Iquitos. Noland described the fear of smallpox by the indigenous people who were known to desert their villages until the disease departed (October 24, 1873).

13) They began their exploration up the River Potro which emptied into the River Marañon (October 26, 1873). Noland mentioned a story about the death of an indigenous man who was known as a good pilot for the upper waters during an attack by the "Mouratos" people (November 5-7, 1873).

He described Borja as being situated at the head of the Marañon River in a rich gold region. The Spanish had garrisoned two hundred soldiers there to force the indigenous people to bring in gold. Upon the independence of Peru and the withdrawal of the soldiers, the local population destroyed the town, killed the inhabitants, and forced the governor to drink liquid gold according to local legend. Borja had never been successfully rebuilt.

14) After about a month spent exploring the four tributaries of the Upper Marañon, they arrived back in Iquitos, Peru (December 7, 1873). Noland comments on the mixture of backgrounds and races of the persons in the villages of the Amazon, which include indigenous, "Negro," Spanish and Portuguese.

He also referred to the prevalence of smallpox in the town and described the harmonious and beautiful music of the local indigenous people (December 13, 1873). Noland also recorded his disparaging thoughts on the results of "the combination of races" in Brazil and Peru (end of section for January 4, 1874).

15) Noland and Mr. Sparrow decided to leave Iquitos behind for the duration of the Carnival celebrations and avoid some of its excesses (February 20, 1874). On March 21, 1874, Sparrow and Noland sailed on the steamer "Pastaza" to finish the survey of the Marañon River and returned to Borja (March 22-April 5, 1874). He described the town of Iquitos as a kind of Peruvian Botany Bay for offending officers and Peru as weak country with a poor government (April 27, 1874).

16) The finances of Peru were in such bad shape that there was no money for the members of the Commission to be paid or to get home. They were forced to personally borrow money to settle their accounts in the office of the commissary. The steamer "Morona" arrived late and in a damaged condition. They left on the "Morona" still hoping to make the connection with the Brazilian boat in time to get home by October.

On the next day, the steamer "Morona" ran aground on a playa along the river. Although the Peruvian boat, the "Pastaza" came along shortly afterwards, the captain prevented them from boarding his boat and left them stranded in the falling river levels (August 22-September 23, 1874).

17) Noland and the others remain stuck on the playa from September 23 until October 12, 1874, when they managed to get the "Morona" off the playa and back into the river. In this section of the journal, he made several disparaging remarks about the efficiency of the Peruvian navy and the "Latin" temperament.

By October 20th, Noland's group arrived at the Brazilian frontier fort, "Tabatinga" which he described. He also continued to share his negative opinions about the mixture of races in South America, using an African American Padre as an example (October 23, 1874).

After a six day stay in Manaus, Brazil, they left on the boat "Marajo" (October 26, 1874), and reached Obidos, Brazil, on October 28, the head of tide water on the Amazon and five hundred miles from the mouth of the river. Noland mentioned that there was an American colony there of former Confederates.

18) Noland and Sparrow decide to take the schooner "Charles E. Moody" bound for New York and led by Captain Collamore, a New Englander with early Yankee ancestors who merit Noland's approval.

He makes much of the crew being white and the captain a Yankee, as opposed to the crews and captains of most of the boats in Peru and Brazil (October 31-December 1, 1874). By November 29, 1874, the schooner was near Cape Henry, Virginia, and on December 1, 1874, the ship made it to a pier in New York City on the East River.

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland's Peruvian Amazon Exploration Journal - Excerpts selected for possible publication

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209631

Unit Date 1875

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland's Peruvian Amazon Exploration Journal - Transcription by Mary Noland Young, with a copy of the "Report of the Hydrographic Commission of Peru on the Amazon River"

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209632

Unit Date 2020 March

Mixed Materials [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Map of a Section of South America - Peru, a "Vertical Cross Section of the Continent about the 2nd Degree South Latitude"

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209633

Unit Date 1899 March 15

Mixed Materials [X031750668] 1 (Oversize_Flat_File_folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Scope and Contents

Consists of the framed original map and 4 copies of the map which was hand drawn by Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland. The map has a list of both rivers and places in the area covered. Three copies are on blueprint paper.

Reports of Thomas Nelson Berkeley Noland on the existence of Gold Fields in the Peruvian Amazon area

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209634

Unit Date circa 1975

Manuscripts [X031750667] 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Extent 1 folder(s)

Scope and Contents

Reports include A "Some Facts About the Peruvian Amazon,B "Recapitulated and Condensed," and "Something about Gold Fields, know to exist, but not now definitely located, in Rich Peru." Noland wrote these to interest investors and raise money to find and mine gold in the Peruvian Amazon region.

2 Spear Points, presumably from the Peruvian Amazon region

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/209635

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials Oversized Box AB-47 (box)

Container 1 (Artifact)

Extent 2 items

Scope and Contents

The two spear points were identified by the Peabody Museum, New Haven, Connecticut as a Red Brown Chert and a Red Brown Chert Tang.