

Alfred P. Rockwell Papers
1846-1903
Mss.B.R59p

American Philosophical Society
2004
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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	5
Scope & content	6
Administrative Information	7
Related Materials	7
Indexing Terms	7
Collection Inventory	9
Series I. Correspondence and notes.....	9
Series II. Notebooks.....	13

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903
Title	Alfred P. Rockwell Papers
Date [inclusive]	1846-1903
Call number	Mss.B.R59p
Extent	0.5 Linear feet Ca. 8 volumes; 60 items
Location	LH-B-22-3; LH-SB-Black Case-29 (OS)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>After receiving his PhB at Yale's Sheffield Scientific School in 1858, Alfred P. Rockwell continued his studies at the Museum of Practical Geology in London and the Bergakademie Freiberg, focused largely on mining engineering and coal geology. After service in the Civil War, he held positions at Yale and MIT before leaving academia in 1873 to pursue other opportunities. He later served as president of the Eastern Rail Road and Treasurer of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company, a textile firm in New Hampshire.</p> <p>The small collection of the papers of Alfred P. Rockwell document his interest in coal geology during the period of his postgraduate study at the Museum of Practical Geology and the Bergakademie, 1858-1859. Although the correspondence is slight, the collection includes a suite of notes on collieries, coal mining technology, and the economics of coal. Of particular note in the collection are the eight notebooks on mining engineering (some containing sketches), including two volumes of notes on John Percy's lectures at the Museum of Practical Geology, 1858, three</p>

volumes kept during his stay at the Bergakademie Freiberg, including one on a course on metallurgy taught by Bernhard von Cotta, 1858-1859, and one of an industrial tour through Germany and Belgium (June 1859). The other volumes include two on collieries in northern England, and one including of production records for the Great Falls Manufacturing Company, 1879-1886.

Preferred Citation

Cite as: Alfred Perkins Rockwell Papers, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

Born into a prominent Connecticut family, the geologist, educator, and industrialist Alfred Perkins Rockwell (1834-1903) was at turns a war hero, a professor, and a corporate executive. The son of a two-term Whig congressman, Rockwell received his AB from Yale in 1855, and remained in New Haven for his MA and PhB (1858) at the Sheffield Scientific School. Looking to build a foundation for a career in geology, he furthered his education by taking the standard European tour, spending time at the Museum of Practical Geology in London and at the prestigious Bergakademie at Freiberg, Saxony, where he studied metallurgy and coal geology. During his European sojourn, Rockwell also visited a succession of collieries in Northern England and Germany, familiarizing himself with advanced mining technology and with the economics of the industry.

At the outset of the Civil War, Rockwell returned to the United States and accepted a commission as Captain of the 1st Connecticut Light Artillery, earning a promotion to Colonel of the 6th Connecticut Infantry during the Petersburg Campaign of 1864 and finally a brevet to Brigadier General. He married Katharine Virginia Foote (1839-1902) after mustering out of the service in June 1865, and served briefly on the Board of Visitors at the U.S. Military Academy before returning to his alma mater as professor of mining at the Sheffield School. Barely three years later, he moved to a similar position at MIT, however by 1873, he made the decision to leave academia for other opportunities. In the aftermath of the devastating fire of 1872 that consumed much of downtown Boston, Rockwell was appointed Chairman of the Board of the Fire Commissioners in Boston, after which he served president of the Eastern Railroad (1876-1879) and from 1879 until his retirement in 1886, as treasurer of the Great Falls (N.H.) Manufacturing Co., a textile firm. Rockwell also earned income from land and other investments, including stock in the Minas Nuevas Mining Company, a lead and silver mining company in Mexico.

Never a prolific scholar, Rockwell wrote two books, *Great Fires and Fire Extinction* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1878) and *Roads and Pavements in France* (NY: Wiley, 1896). He and his wife had four children, of whom only one survived to adulthood: Mary Foote (1868-1868), Frances Beatrice (1872-1886), Samuel Edmund Foote (1873-1884), and Diana Ward (b. 1873). Rockwell died at his home in New Haven on Dec. 24, 1903.

Scope & content

The small collection of the papers of Alfred P. Rockwell document his interest in coal geology during the period of his postgraduate study at the Museum of Practical Geology, London, and the Bergakademie Freiberg, 1858-1859. Although the correspondence is slight, the collection includes a suite of notes on collieries, coal mining technology, and the economics of coal.

Of particular note in the collection are the eight notebooks on mining engineering (some containing sketches), including two volumes of notes on John Percy's lectures at the Museum of Practical Geology, 1858, three volumes kept during his stay at the Bergakademie Freiberg, including one on a course on metallurgy taught by Bernhard von Cotta, 1858-1859, and one of an industrial tour through Germany and Belgium (June 1859). The other volumes include two on collieries in northern England, and one including of production records for the Great Falls Manufacturing Company, 1879-1886.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2004

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Acquired 1983 and 1984 (accn. no 1983-1019ms, 1984-551ms).

Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, 2004.

Related Materials

Related Material

The Institute Archives and Special Collections at MIT houses a small collection of the papers of Alfred P. Rockwell, 1868-1869, pertaining to his appointment at MIT. The Beinecke Library, Yale, includes a diary of Rockwell's kept during a visit to the Menominee Indians of Wisconsin, 1855-1856, as well as a set of lecture notes kept during a course on metallurgy, 1857.

The Godkin Family Papers (MS Am 1083.2) at the Houghton Library, Harvard, includes several letters written to Rockwell and his wife.

Indexing Terms

Corporate Name(s)

- Bergakademie Freiberg
- Great Falls Manufacturing Company
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Museum of Practical Geology (Great Britain)

- Yale University. Sheffield Scientific School.

Genre(s)

- Pencil works
- Photographs

Personal Name(s)

- Cotta, Bernhard von, 1808-1879
- Percy, John, 1817-1889
- Rockwell, Katherine Virginia Foote, 1839-1902

Subject(s)

- Coal mines and mining--Germany
- Coal mines and mining--Great Britain
- Geology--Germany
- Geology--Great Britain
- Metallurgy--Study and teaching
- Mining engineering--Great Britain
- Railroads--Massachusetts
- Textile industry--New Hampshire

Series I. Correspondence and notes

Collection Inventory

Series I. Correspondence and notes	1846-1903	3 lin. feet	Box 1
Atkinson, W. G. ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1867 Oct. 11	4p.	
Backworth Colliery -- Accounts	1856-1858	14p.	
Backworth Colliery -- Abstract of work done and cost of borehole	1856-1858	2p.	
Circular coke ovens -- Cost estimate	1858	1p.	
Coke ovens -- Sketch, construction	1858 May 26	1p.	
Collieries -- Miscellany	1858-1859	8 items	
D'Arcy, George Frederick, Earl of Durham Memorandum of agreement re: collieries	1856 Mar. 29	11p.	
Durham Colliery -- Pumping account	1857 Aug.	1p.	
Elliott, Charles W. ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1866 Mar. 15	2p.	
Elliott, F. B. ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1871 June 11	3p.	
Farnsworth, Fred ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1881 Nov. 11	3p.	
Gerolt, Baron von ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1866-1867	2 items	
	1855 June 21	4p.	

Series I. Correspondence and notes

Hetton Colliery -- Specification for the
building of 50 Pitmen's cottages at Hetton

Hornby, John ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1879 Dec. 10	1p.
Jackson, George E. B. ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1878 Nov. 4	2p.
Janin, Louis ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1879 Feb. 29	2p.
Kilnhurst, Yorkshire -- Specification and contract for sinking a shaft at Kilnhurst	1858	4p.
King, George B. ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1879 Apr. 9	4p.
Knight, Octavius ALS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1879 Oct. 17	1p.
Re: 50 shares of stock in the Norton House and Ship Ventilator Co.		
Lund Hill Colliery -- List of prices paid to Colliers and other workmen	1858	1p.
Mason, James Form for receiving coal in deeding away real estate	1865 Mar.	2p.
Minas Nuevas Mining Co.	1879 1881-1884	3 items
Mining accounts (cost of making crib bed)	n.d.	4p.
Oaks Colliery -- Abstract of the Lease...	1846 July 15	4p.
Oaks Colliery, Yorkshire -- Ventilation returns	1859	1p.
Pouson's Treatise on coal mining (notes)	n.d.	2p.

Series I. Correspondence and notes

Railroads -- Litigations of Eastern Rail Road 1877		8p.
Robson, George Report on the system pursued in working coal in the West Riding of the County of York...	1853 May	8p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Accounts	1879-1881	5p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Biographical notes	1903	3p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Financial correspondence	1867-1888	12 items
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Lectures on meteorology and Outline of Lectures on Astronomy Printed outlines with mss. notes by Rockwell.	n.d.	pp. 17-24
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 ALsS to Joe	1881-1883	6 items
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Memorandum of enquiries in relation to coal and coal mines	n.d.	17p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Norwich Grammar School report card	1849 June 16	1p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 Notes from Pal. Rep. on accidents in mines, 1835	ca.1858?	7p.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903	n.d.	5p.

Series I. Correspondence and notes

Photograph of Alfred P. and daughter Diana
W. Rockwell

Rockwell, Charles H. ALsS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1866	2 items
Rockwell, John A. ALsS to Alfred P. Rockwell	1864-1865	2 items
Rockwell, John A. Estate	1861-1879	4 items
Rockwell, Katharine	1865-1888	11 items
Rockwell-Elliott Family genealogy	n.d.	Cy, 6p.
West Auckland Colliery -- Construction accounts	1858 May 26	1p.
Wharnccliffe Silkstone Colliery -- Account of strata in the neighbourhood	1856 June	Cy, 2p.

Series II. Notebooks

Series II. Notebooks	1857-1886	8 volumes
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 1 Lectures on Metallurgy by Dr. John Percy, FRS For lectures held at the Museum of Practical Geology, London.	1857 Oct. 23	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 2 Lectures on Metallurgy by Dr. John Percy, FRS For lectures held at the Museum of Practical Geology, London.	1857 Nov.	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 3 Notes on Collieries near Barnsby, Yorkshire Includes pencil sketches.	1858 July 30	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 4 Notes on Collieries in Yorkshire and Scotland	1858	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 5 Notes from Prof. Cotta's Gesteinlehre, Freiburg Includes rough pencil sketch of Niagara Falls, based on Bernhard von Cotta's lecture. In German and English.	1858-1859	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 6 "Freiburg" Includes pencil sketches.	1859	1 vol.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903 7 Tour in the Harz [and other notes on geology in Germany, Belgium)	1859 June 25	1 vol.

Series II. Notebooks

Includes pencil sketches.

Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903	1879-1886	1 vol.
8 Great Falls Mfg. Co. Record of textile milling		

9 Freiburg	1859	1 vol.
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Includes pencil sketches

Custodial History

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