
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MS 524 (Rare)
Expeditions and Land Surveys of Mexico 1831-1857

DESCRIPTION

A ledger book, in one unidentified person's handwriting, of accounts by several authors which mostly detail survey data from expeditions throughout Mexico between 1831 and 1857.

1 box, .25 linear feet.

ACQUISITION

This manuscript was donated by W. J. Holliday.

ACCESS

Restricted due to fragile condition; prior arrangements must be made to view this material.

LANGUAGE

The majority of the manuscript is handwritten in French and Spanish. There are also several entries in German and English, as well as some Latin references. At times several languages are used within a particular section.

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PROCESSING

The collection was processed by Kim Anglesey, under the supervision of Riva Dean in April, 1998.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The ledger begins with various listings of expenses incurred on an “Excursion to the Orizaba Volcano.” This is followed by a letter to a General thanking him for his assistance and mentioning the role of the “valiant Commander, Don Anastasio Fuentes.” There is some brief survey data on the provinces of Tlascala, Tamaulipas, Michoacán, and Mexico. This is followed by a table listing the site departed from, direction traveled, the district the site is located in, towns, climate, agricultural products, latitude, longitude, and altitude.

On page 9 begins more survey data from other areas including Aguas calientas, Colima, Canton de Matamoros, Río Yaqui, San Juan de los Lagos, Rio Bravo, Loconusco, Querétaro (observation in 1831 by Francisco Camargo), Yucatan, Chiapas, Isla del Carmen, Guanajuato, Orizaba, Cordoba, and others. These entries contain very detailed information on the types of products produced, definitions of various Spanish terms (such as hacienda, sitios, ranchos), economy, and many other distinct observations.

Beginning on page 34 is “Statistical notes of the State of Sonora, by José F. Velazco, Mexico, completed in 1850.” This information is much the same as in the previous paragraph, except it details the state of Sonora in general, followed by a listing of presidios, with historical notes on each. Tucson is mentioned on page 46, Arizona on page 49. This section is written in French and ends on page 53.

A short section on Chiapas follows by Manuel Larranizar, completed in 1843. Pages 55-60 is a section on the “Mexican Review of the Society for Promotion of Better Materials. Established in Mexico City under the authority of General Don Juan N. Almonte.” First edition, January 1852. This section names the members of the commission and describes specific projects of the organization and is written in Spanish. It begins with a short introduction that lays out its purpose:

All people that are constituted independent, contract with themselves the obligation, and they also contract with the entire world, not only to conserve its existence, but to promote its progression. Look at the great obligation that was imposed on the Mexican people when it declared its independence. If our republic, remaining steadfast and resigned to the initial issues, neglects its true interests, what fate does it expect? There will not be another such ignominious defeat, in which its native sons form the last and most degraded class of the new society. Impetuosity and laziness, by necessity, produce slavery.

Pages 60-70 lists expeditions to Sonora, Rio Atoyac (and the littoral), Rio de Nautla, Port of Manzanillo (by Manuel Aliphah, Oct. 1850), and Oaxaca, with detailed information about commerce, food production, land quality, water use and availability, economic data, etc.

On page 70 begins the “The Journal of the trip of the Border Commission, written by Luis Berlandier and Rafael Chovel, by order of General Manuel _____ (illegible) and _____ (illegible) Navarro, Mexico 1850.” The trip begins in Mexico City on 10 Nov. 1827 and ends in Matamoros on Dec. 18, 1831. The account is written mostly in French, with some Spanish interspersed. It notes some of the longitude and latitude of the places surveyed and gives information about agriculture, population, geological features, and some historical information (for instance San Agustín in Laredo, as well as other places). This

account ends on page 90, where another apparently related expedition from Matamoros to Monterey begins on 1 April 1831. This expedition ends on 8 April and an account of the return to Matamoros begins on page 91. The entries for this journey are from 12-24 April 1831. On page 92 begins another journal entitled "Hunting of bear and bison" in Cíbolo, which begins on 19 November 1828 and lists 7 December as the last entry. There is some mention of the Comanches, bison, rivers, and zoological classifications. Continuing, still in French, on page 93 is an entry of the botany of the State of Tamaulipas, which ends on page 96.

On page 96, there is a ½ page entry in English, which is a handwritten table of routes to various destinations in the United States from England and the distance in nautical miles. The next page begins with a short paragraph in German that says, "Attempting a true representation of the Republic of Mexico, by Eduardo Mühlenpfordt, Hannover, 1844." Following this short paragraph is a description, in French and occasionally in German, of plant types found in Oaxaca. Then it lists virtually all types of products found in Mexico, such as grains, fruits, vegetables, coffee, cocoa, vanilla, tobacco, cotton, silk, etc. and where they may be found, how they are cultivated and marketed. On page 123, the author gives physical characteristics of the land: its rivers, the climate, types of sicknesses, types of livestock, insects, and animals. Page 135-6 lists certain diseases, such as "black vomit," smallpox, typhoid fever, etc., with some dates of epidemics and how the disease was introduced. From page 136-142 the following titles are listed: Indian repartimientos, Law of classification of rents, foreign debt, active army expenditures (1825-1840), Seal of Alexander VI, Industry, Mines (list of mining companies).

The next section gives similar information by state, in French and occasionally in German, beginning with Yucatan on page 143. The other states listed by page number are as follows: Chiapas (146), Tabasco (147), Vera Cruz (149), Oaxaca (160), Puebla (173), Tlascalala and Mexico (175), Michoacan (188), Talisco (191), Sinaloa (194), Sonora (196), Querétaro (200), Guanajuato (201), Zacatecas (203), San Luis Potosí (206), Nuevo Leon (207), Coahuila (208), Durango (209), and Chihuahua (210).

The title on page 211 is "The Emigrant's Manual America – 1852." This section begins in French, but is mostly written in English. This manual gives the prospective immigrant valuable information about the immigration process from England to the United States and Canada. It begins with the cost of passage and continues with the following sections: Cautions and advice, Land Sales from the Emigration Commission Circular of 1851, Companies with land sales, Choice of Allotment and subsequent proceedings, Choice of Land, Emigrants (immigration restraints), trade wages, costs for consumer goods, laws affecting immigrants, Purchase and Employment of Land, Surveyor General of Public Lands, American Villages, Characteristics of Americans, Hospitals, laws protecting immigrants, and Hints to Emigrants to New York. It ends on a very interesting note:

America is the home of the industrious, the enterprising, the temperate, the steady. Nowhere is intelligence and good conduct more highly prized. Idleness, pride of birth, and depravity, meet no countenance. In a word, no one need cross the Atlantic unless possessing hands and a will to work, along with an earnest determination to achieve respectability of character.

On page 234 is the following entry, “The Popular Nomenclature of the American Flora” by Berthold Inmann, 1851. The heading reads, *The terms of modern science waver daily; names undergo an annual change, fade with the leaf, and give place to others; but the ancient terms, which some may ridicule, have remained for centuries, and will yet remain, till nature is swallowed up by art.* The Journal of a naturalist. On pages 235-289 is an alphabetical list of plants found in Mexico. Each entry lists the Mexican name and the Latin term for the same plant.

The pages following the above section are not numbered. It begins with measure equivalents of all types (in French). Then there is a short section on uncultivated land and colonization in Yucatan, followed by a report sent to the *Ministerio de Fomento* (Ministry of Fuel?) on 15 Oct. 1856 by Tomás Azucar Barbachano, concerning uncultivated land in Yucatan. This account switches back and forth in Spanish and French. The last part of this section describes the Ruins of Palenque and the lands of Tuxtla. It describes a volcanic eruption that enriched the land for 100 leagues to the South and East. Written in Mexico City, November 3, 1831.

The last part of the ledger book is written upside-down (as if it were started on both ends of the book). It has pieces of maps pasted on it, corresponding to the areas that have been explored in this document. The first written page is titled, *Excursion to Orizaba Volcano* and contains various notes about people who went and apparently some things that were seen. There are more maps pasted, a letter written in French, and a one page journal with the date of 19 May (no year). It ends with a few pages detailing a survey (Nivellement in French). It contains a lot of calculations and references to four volumes about the survey.