

Ms.
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417

Pocock, Roger, 1865-1941
Correspondence, 1932-1941

Includes material relating to Roger Pocock and the Legion of the Frontiersmen. There is correspondence between Pocock and fellow 'Frontiersman' Charles Palmer, 1932-1941; Driscoll to Palmer; a signed photograph of Pocock; and two Manuals for the Canadian Branch of the Frontiersmen.

Extent: 1 box (7 cm)

Purchased in 1997

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Roger Pocock [1865-1941] British soldier, writer, adventurer, member of the North West Mounted Police, founder of the Legion of the Frontiersmen. After serving on the training ship Wellesley, Pocock went to western Canada to serve with the Royal North-West Mounted Police. Reporting to Winnipeg in 1884, Pocock fought in the second Riel Rebellion and suffered such severe frost bite that he was discharged with a pension and position in the Civil Service. However, this quiet life did not suit him and within a year he was ready to resume his life of adventure. He decided to explore the region of the Rockies, planning a trip that would take him along the Rockies from Canada to Mexico. He travelled by train to British Columbia where he disembarked at Kamloops, where he outfitted himself for his travels. From Kamloops began his 3,600 mile, 200 day journey during which he made his way as journalist, missionary, trader, scout and prospector. An account of this journey including his extensive travels in western Canada can be found in his book *The Frontiersmen*. (see below) In addition to this title, several of his works both non-fiction and fiction deal with Canada, particularly the west. In fact, so much of his material relates to Canada that Pocock's works are listed in Watters.

On his return to Britain in the early 1900s Pocock became preoccupied with what he perceived as Germany's growing threat to Britain, both at home and throughout the Empire. It was with the aim of helping to defend Britain from the war that he predicted would occur with Germany that Pocock founded the Legion of the Frontiersmen. The Legion of the Frontiersmen was founded in London in 1904 by Roger Pocock aided by Colonel Driscoll. The men who would form the Legion were drawn from two groups; those who had been members of Driscoll's Scouts in South Africa, and those men who had served their country throughout the world; men who had lived, fought and roughed it on the frontiers of the Empire; soldiering, seafaring, exploring, mining, engineering, ranching, hunting and doing all those things which go to make an Empire. Branches were to be formed all over the world, including Canada. Pocock believed that he could increase the size of the standing British army by 200,000 men. Pocock saw one of the main functions of the Legion as "field intelligence"; "to see, to run and tell in case of any menace to British Peace." In fact, Pocock himself travelled to Russia in 1904-05 and was responsible for smuggling out the plans to a secret Russian naval base. In the outposts of the Empire, members of the Legion aided in the suppression of gun-running and other rebellions. The Legion ran camps and conducted war games to aid with training. Recruits came from such diverse locales as China and South America.

Even before the official outbreak of war between Britain and Germany, a unit of the Frontiersmen made their way to Belgium as the Manchester Squadron joining with the 3rd Belgian Lancers. In Britain, many units of the Frontiersmen formed their own units and were shipped overseas. Driscoll's unit formed the 25th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers and fought in East Africa. At home the Legion aided with propaganda and other events to "rouse a sleeping nation."

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In Canada the Legion was quite active with organizational officers in Montreal, Edmonton and the Yukon. As Western Canada was considered still "Frontier" country many of the British who were in the west at that time were members of the Legion.--men who had served a period in the Army or Navy, and to whom Canada appealed as the "land of opportunity." When the War was declared the Canadian members of the Legion responded to the call. The Northern Alberta Command of the Legion of the Frontiersmen would form a Home Guard to recruit and train men for duty overseas. Units were formed in Edmonton and Calgary and these units joined together to form the "Frontiersmen's Overseas Unit" and eventually formed the basis of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Of the 600 Canadian Frontiersmen who went overseas with the Princess Patricia's Infantry only 20 survived. In Edmonton, with the co-operation of the Farmers Union, a Mounted Unit was formed.

At the end of the war it was estimated that some 9,000 Frontiersmen had died in the service of Britain and the Empire. At the end of the war the Legion had a period of decline before rebuilding. The conditions were much the same in Canada, there was a scattered membership but no central focus or purpose. However by 1929, the Legion was undergoing a revival in Canada with the arrival of a Frontiersman, Larry Blain, from Britain. Blain approached Colonel Louis Scott (Supervisor of the Soldier Resettlement Board) who saw the potential for such an organization in Canada. The reorganized Legion began in Edmonton and other points in the West and gradually expanded to the Eastern parts of Canada. By 1933 Imperial Headquarters had granted Divisional Status to Canada and a constitution was drawn up by the Frontiersmen in Canada. Units appeared across the country, B.C., Ont., Quebec, New Brunswick, Yukon, NWT and Sask. In 1936 they began their affiliation with the RCMP and helped provide policing in the frontier areas of the country. They also provided security at official functions such as the Royal visit in 1939. The Legion remained active throughout WWII.

David Mason, Bookseller

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Box 1 22 folders	Roger Pocock/Legion of the Frontiersmen Correspondence, 1932-1941 1 black and white signed photograph of Roger Pocock Manuals for the Legion of the Frontiersmen
Folder 1	Roger Pocock to Charles Palmer March 17, 1932 1 ALS
Folder 2	Pocock to Palmer March 11, 1933 1 TLS with envelope
Folder 3	Pocock to Palmer March 28, 1933 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 4	Pocock to Palmer April 10, 1933 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 5	Pocock to Palmer November 24, 1933 1 ALS on 'Imperial Overseas Legion of the Frontiersmen' letterhead with envelope
Folder 6	Pocock to Palmer January 11, 1934 1 ANS with envelope
Folder 7	Pocock to Palmer February 7, 1934 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 8	Pocock to Palmer April 17, 1934 1 ANS with envelope
Folder 9	Pocock to Palmer May 3, 1935 1 ALS with envelope and receipt

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 Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
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Folder 10	Pocock to Palmer May 15, 1935 1 ALS on 'Legion' letterhead with MS and TS and envelope
Folder 11	To Palmer from Outpost Club Bank draft from Barclay's Bank June 24, 1935
Folder 12	Pocock to Palmer May 15, 1936 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 13	Pocock to Palmer May 28, 1936 1 TNS with envelope
Folder 14	Pocock to Palmer July 25, 1936 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 15	Pocock to Palmer October 19, 1936 July 23, 1937 2 ANS
Folder 16	Roger Pocock inscribed to Charles Palmer Large black and white photograph
Folder 17	D. P. Driscoll to Palmer July 20, 1933 1 ALS with envelope
Folder 18	Mick to Charles Palmer 1935 1 ANS (telegram) with envelope
Folder 19	About Lt. Colonel R.G.N. Collins Typed notes on three cards
Folder 20	Imperial Overseas Legion of Frontiersmen Reunion Dinner, The Florence Restaurant, Rupert Street, Piccadilly Circus November 12, 1932 Menu signed by guests

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Folder 21	<i>The Legion of Frontiersmen (Canadian Division) Ontario Provincial Command. Instruction Handbook No. 1 (Police Service and Law) Toronto, 1940. by Major G.R.N. Collins Signed on cover [H. Weatherspoon?]</i>
Folder 22	<i>The Legion of Frontiersmen (Canadian Division) Incorporated by Charter of the Government of Canada. Regulations and Orders. Dominion Headquarters, Edmonton, Alberta, 1st January 1941. Signed on cover [H. Weatherspoon?]</i>