

Title:	George Henry Seymour fonds, 1855-1860		
Creator:	George Henry Seymour		
Dates of Material:	1855-1860	Record Group Number:	RG 662
Summary of Contents:	<p>Fonds consists of a travel journal kept by Vice-Admiral George Henry Seymour when he accompanied Edward VII, Prince of Wales (later King of England) for a tour of the Province of Canada, including a visit to Niagara Falls. Also contains two letters written by Seymour to his family during the tour, and copies of a letter inquiring about an incident in which a vessel had hit ground at the entrance to the Saguenay River. Also included are two certificates of appointment to Seymour from the Admiralty relating to HMS Hero and a large map showing the British Provinces of North America in 1860.</p> <p>1.1 Travel journal, 1855-1860. The first 8 pages of the journal contain entries from the HMS Pembroke in the Gulf of Finland in 1855. The remaining entries are “the dates & c of sailing and arrival of HMS Hero during HRH the Prince of Wales’ visit to Canada in 1860.” Entries are dated from July 9 to November 6, 1860. The journey begins from Plymouth Sound, with subsequent entries at Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Belleville, Toronto, Niagara, Halifax, and Portland. Highlights of the tour include encounters with Governors Sir Alexander Bannerman (Newfoundland) and George Dundas (Prince Edward Island), the Governor General [Sir Edmund Walker Head], Sir George Simpson (Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson’s Bay Company), Charles Blondin,(tightrope walker), and First Nations tribes.</p> <p>The visit to Niagara occurred from September 14 to 18. Seymour writes on September 14 that “...we found carriages and drove to Niagara where the Prince lodged at a pretty house adjoining the Hotel and his suite in the cottages belonging to the Clifton House Hotel. After dinner the Falls were lighted up with great success by Mr. Blackwell (the Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway) who placed large quantities of blue lights & afterwards red lights from Table Rock to the edge of the lower water and along the path that leads down to the Ferry from the Clifton House. Its effect was very good.”</p> <p>The September 15 entry describes going under Niagara Falls and the feats of tightrope walker Blondin, who crossed over Niagara Falls on a high wire. He writes that “The Prince went under the falls, I waited above having committed that folly on a previous occasion. Rode to Mr. Street’s to see the rapids above the falls & the islands formed by the rapids...then rode to a place a little below the Suspension Bridge where Mr. Blondin (a Frenchman) performed his wonderful feat of crossing over the river...first alone, then with a man on his back and then on stilts (about 2 ½ feet long). This was his first attempt at crossing on stilts. He is a well built rather small man but shows great strength. His balancing pole was 45 feet long and weighed 45 lbs., no</p>		

inconsiderable weight of itself...from there we went to the foot of the falls in a small steamer 'The Maid of the Mist'. This does not pay at all."

The September 17 entry describes a tour around Goat Island and Lundy's Lane. He writes that we "drove over the bridge round to Goat Island, met HRH there & went to the different sites for viewing the Falls...afterwards took a long ride with almost all the party about Lundy's Lane..."

- 1.2** Letter written by George Henry Seymour to his father, 1860. The letter is dated at Halifax, August 4, 1860 and describes the Prince's warm welcome in Newfoundland. He goes on to comment on the possibility of hostilities, writing that "we went to have a look...at what they were doing at St. Pierre and Miquelon where it is said they are erecting batteries contrary to treaty but they were not to be seen from outside...there is little doubt that the fortifications there are in existence and I believe they justify the measure by saying that they were erected just at the end of the Russian War when hostilities were expected between England and the U. States and that they had no other means of protecting themselves against the Privateers that would have been fitted out in the States if War had then been declared." He continues with descriptions of the Volunteer Corps, the death of Sir Brenton Halliburton (Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia) only days earlier, and the upcoming itinerary.
- 1.3** Letters regarding the HMS Hero. Three copies of letters dated August 20, 1860, August 28, 1860 and August 30, 1860, concerning the grounding of the HMS Hero at the mouth of the Saguenay River a few days earlier, due to a buoy being improperly positioned. The letters are written by E.B. Lindsay, I. Smith and Alex Milne. The Hero was repaired by the Captains of the Valorous, Ariadne, and Nile.
- 1.4** Letter written by George Henry Seymour, 1860. The letter is dated at Niagara, September 16, 1860. He writes that "...when we got here, the D. of Newcastle received a proposal from Mr. Blondin to wheel the Prince over the falls on his tightrope in a wheelbarrow and in case of letting him fall 'to return the money'. I have very little doubt that he could do what he proposed as he went across just below the suspension bridge, played all sorts of tightrope feats in the centre then took a man on his back roped over with him and returned on stilts. It was a most wonderful performance. I strongly advised HRH not to wait and see him do anything that he had not done before and the feat of the stilts was a first attempt but he was so anxious to remain that he carried his point against our prudent remonstrances and it all came off right—but if any mischance had occurred he would have blamed himself for having given encouragement by his presence."
- 1.5** Certificates of appointment, 1859-1860. Two certificates of appointment issued by the Admiralty to Seymour, both relating to HMS Hero. The first certificate appoints Seymour Captain on April 29, 1859. The second certificate appoints him as Commodore on July 7, 1860, two days before the

	<p>departure for Canada with the Prince of Wales.</p> <p>1.6 Map of the British Provinces of North America in 1860. A large, folding, linen backed map of Canada with part of New Brunswick & Nova Scotia, showing the Line of Grand Trunk Railway and its connections, by Keith Johnston. The map is published by W & A.K. Johnston, Edinburgh, Geographers to the Queen.</p>		
<p>Physical Description / Condition:</p>	<p>1 travel journal 5 letters 2 certificates 1 map</p>		
<p>Other Notes:</p>	<p>George Henry Seymour (1818-1869) was a Royal Navy Officer who became a Third Naval Lord. He descends from a distinguished line of Royal Navy Admirals, including his grandfather Lord Hugh Seymour, his father Sir George Francis Seymour and his father-in-law Sir George Cranfield Berkeley. Seymour joined the Royal Navy in 1831 and was promoted to Captain in 1844. He commanded the HMS Pembroke during the Crimean War, and also commanded the HMS Victory, HMS Hero, and HMY Victoria and Albert. In 1863 he was promoted to Rear Admiral, and served as a Third Naval Lord between 1866 and 1868. From 1865 to 1869, he served as a Conservative Member of Parliament for Antrim.</p> <p>Related Material: RG 558, The Prince's Visit to St. Catharines Broadside, 1860, Brock University Archives.</p>		
<p>Location:</p>	<p>Brock University Archives</p>		
<p>Source Information:</p>	<p>Purchased from Voyager Press in 2018.</p>		
<p>Described by:</p>	<p>Chantal Cameron</p>	<p>Date:</p>	<p>August 2018</p>