

Murray, John, Papers

John Murray Papers

1883-1999



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2008.036

Unit Date

1883-1999

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The John Murray Papers document the participation of John Murray, a Virginia Tech chemistry professor from 1942 to 1971, in Virginia's ornithological community. Collected materials include manuscript articles, scholarly correspondence, and bird watching logs which focus largely on Montgomery County, Virginia.

Creator

Murray, John, 1909-2002

Extent

0.5 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The John Murray Papers were donated to Special Collections in 2000.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the John Murray Papers commenced and was completed in July 2008.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], John Murray Papers, Ms2008-036, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

John Wolcott Murray was born in 1909 to Harris King Murray and Arabella Prime Murray of Flushing, New York. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Colgate University in 1930, Murray received his Ph. D in Chemistry from John Hopkins University in 1933. In 1939, Murray wed Ruth Terborgh. The union produced two children: John Harris Murray and Beulah Mae M. Fincham.

Murray taught chemistry at Virginia Tech from 1942 to 1971 and was promoted to full professor in 1954. In addition to his knowledge of chemistry, Murray was an ardent lover of birds. Murray published many articles and a yearly inventory, "A Checklist of the Birds of Montgomery County, Virginia," in the Journal of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, *The Raven*, while also participating in local Christmas Bird counts. In 1994, Murray furthered his ornithological studies by logging 55 new species of birds during a trip to the Amazon Rain Forest.

Following the loss of his first wife after 51 years of marriage, Murray married Nancy Slocum whom he met at the age of 85. While living at Warm Hearth Community, Murray continued to study nature and was named "Volunteer of the Year" in 1994 for his services in the creation and maintenance of a trail system at the community. John Murray died on August 19, 2002.

Scope and Content

The John Murray Papers document the participation of John Murray, a Virginia Tech chemistry professor, in Virginia's ornithological community. Collected materials include manuscript articles, scholarly correspondence, and bird watching logs. Major correspondents are John J. Murray of Lexington, VA; Charles Handley, Jr., the assistant curator of the Division of Mammals at the Smithsonian Institute; Fred R. Scott, editor of *The Raven*; and faculty from Virginia Tech's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences. Salient topics consist of the yearly Christmas Bird Count sent to the Audubon Society and the publication and alteration of "A Checklist of the Birds of Montgomery County, Virginia." Most provided bird sightings cover the area inside Montgomery County, Virginia, but some included sightings come from more tropical areas. The collection also includes a picture of the founders of the American Ornithologist's Union from 1883, given to John Murray by A. L. Dean.

Keywords

Faculty and staff
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Montgomery County (Va.)
Ornithology

University Archives

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (1872-1896)

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1944-1970)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1970-)

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by subject matter. Items within subject headings appear chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Article Drafts

Unit Date 1944-1975

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Hawk Watching Logs and Instructions

Unit Date 1976-1988

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Montgomery County Bird Records and Sightings

Unit Date 1960-1973

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Montgomery County Bird Records and Sightings

Unit Date 1974-1981

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Christmas Bird Count Background, Planning, and Statistical Information

Unit Date 1958-1999

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Christmas Bird Counts and Follow-Ups

Unit Date 1955-1994

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Correspondence and Data on Research and Publications (especially "A Checklist of the Birds of Montgomery County, Virginia")

Unit Date 1944-1988

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Bird Chart (February through December)

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

"Virginia Bird Notes" and Bird List by Charles (C. O.) Handly, Jr.

Unit Date 1951

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Miscellaneous Materials

Unit Date 1883-1976

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Photograph of the Founders of the American Ornithologists' Union

Unit Date 1883

Portion of Birds Observed in Montgomery County, Virginia By Ellison A. Smyth, Jr.

Unit Date 1912

Photograph of Ralph M. Brown

Unit Date 1955

List of Birds Seen on Florida trip

Unit Date 1976