

Burroughs, John papers

John Burroughs papers

October 1896

Title Statement

Burroughs, John papersJohn Burroughs papers MSS 6179

Author: Eric Willersdorf, Student Accessioning Assistant

Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
P.O. Box 400110
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4110
URL: <https://small.library.virginia.edu/>

10 October 2025

This record is made available under an Universal 1.0 Public Domain Dedication Creative Commons license.

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-04-10 11:02:07 +0000.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 6179

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1834

Unit Date

October 1896

Mixed Materials

001 (Volume)

Language

English

Creator

Burroughs, John, 1837-1921

Extent

0.0405 Cubic Feet 1 volume in custom housing 10 X 7 X 1 inches

Condition Description

good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Brick Row Book Shop by the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 16 October 2019.

Preferred Citation

MSS 6179, John Burroughs papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical

John Burroughs (April 3, 1837 – March 29, 1921) was an American naturalist and essayist whose literary contributions helped shape public appreciation for the natural world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born in Roxbury, New York, in the Catskill Mountains, Burroughs developed an early affinity for the rural landscapes that would later become central to his writings. Though his formal education was limited, he pursued teaching and clerical work before establishing himself as a writer and public intellectual.

Burroughs published his first major collection of nature essays, *Wake-Robin*, in 1871, initiating a career that spanned more than five decades and produced over twenty volumes. His work is distinguished by its lyrical prose, observational precision, and philosophical engagement with the natural environment. While often associated with the transcendentalist tradition, Burroughs maintained a distinctive voice that emphasized direct experience and accessible reflection over abstraction. His essays explored themes such as bird life, seasonal change, and the moral dimensions of nature, contributing to a growing national interest in conservation and environmental stewardship.

Throughout his life, Burroughs maintained relationships with several influential figures, including Walt Whitman, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Ford, and John Muir. He traveled extensively and was frequently accompanied by these individuals on excursions that blended scientific inquiry with public advocacy. His residences, particularly his Hudson Valley home and his retreat known as Slabsides, became centers for literary and environmental discourse.

Burroughs's legacy is preserved through the continued publication of his essays and the work of the John Burroughs Association, which promotes excellence in nature writing. His contributions to American letters and the conservation movement remain foundational, offering insight into the cultural and ecological values of his era.

Content Description

This collection contains the original handwritten manuscript of John Burroughs' essay "The Poet and the Modern." The collection is nine pages with numerous revision and corrections in Burroughs' hand and annotations in an unidentified editorial hand. It is bound by Grabau Binder in dark green morocco with gilt designs. Original pictorial title page signed "C.G. Mankell -- 06" and three mounted photographs, one of Burroughs and the other two of scenes at Burroughs' Roxbury, New York, home. The mounted manuscript is followed by four pages of the printed version, mounted on additional leaves, as it was published in the *Atlantic* monthly.

Related Materials

The records/guides for this collection's original acquisition and other previous additions can be found in VIRGO, the Library's online catalog, as well as (in many cases) on the Archival Resources of the Virginias (ARVAS) website.

For best results, search using the collection's Identifier/Call Number: MSS 6179; as well as MSS 38-735 Papers of John Burroughs, University of Virginia

Keywords

authors