Finding Aid for

JOHN BURROUGHS PAPERS, 1854-1921

Accession 93.205

Finding Aid Republished: July 2016
OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 93.205

TITLE: John Burroughs Papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1854-1921

QUANTITY: 3.6 cubic ft. (10 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The papers are in English.

ABSTRACT: Primarily writings by and photographs of naturalist and philosopher John Burroughs and his family and friends.
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The papers are open for research

COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the papers may still be held by their respective creator(s).


ALTERNATE FORMS: Selected material from the collection has been digitized and is available online at: https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/search-results#advancedSearch=1&tab=artifact-results&s.0.in=collectionTitle&s.0.for=John%20Burroughs%20Papers

RELATED MATERIAL: Within the collections of The Henry Ford:
- Clara Barrus Papers, Accession 65.131.3
- Various accessions documenting the Vagabonds camping trips
- Correspondence with Henry Ford found in Accession 1
- Rare book, In Nature’s Laborator; preliminary version of A Fivesome O’er Nature’s Course, Accession 2013.18.1

PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 93.205, John Burroughs Papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Papers processed by Benson Ford Research Center staff, May 2013. Additional material incorporated in 2014.


Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Burroughs was born on April 3, 1837 on his family's farm in Roxbury, New York. As a child he spent much of his time reading, writing, and working on the farm. He attended the Hedding Literary Institute and the Cooperstown Seminary before leaving home to become a teacher. Burroughs began keeping journals in 1854 when he was seventeen. His first published essay was “Fragments from the Table of an Intellectual Epicure” in 1860 and his first significant published piece was “Expression” in the Atlantic Monthly that same year.

Burroughs married Ursula North in 1857. Soon after, the couple moved to Washington, D.C. where Burroughs worked for the U.S. Treasury. In 1871 he took a position as a bank examiner in New York and built his home Riverby on a vineyard in West Park. In 1881 he constructed his Bark Study just off the main house, a retreat where he added to his growing body of essays and other work. By 1885 he gave up his bank position to write and enjoy his environment. Later, Burroughs would divide his time between Slabsides, his summer retreat at West Park and Woodchuck Lodge in Roxbury. Burroughs essays ranged from studies of birds and nature to religion and literature and his work was enjoyed by scholars and laypeople alike. Publishing widely, Burroughs became well known and received numerous awards and honorary degrees. He and his wife had one adopted son, Julius.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers are comprised of four series. The Education Related Material series, 1854-1901 (0.2 cubic ft.) contains a teaching certificate, two school catalogs, a letter of recommendation, and a set of thank you letters. The letters were sent from a class of children for whom Burroughs had led a nature walk. The Writings series, 1856-1907 and undated (0.2 cubic ft.) holds several handwritten manuscripts, a poem, an account book, and three periodicals that have articles written by Burroughs. There is also a unique wildflower album with a bark cover created by Burroughs in 1898. Burroughs creativity is also documented in two volumes of artwork, design layout, proofs and type repros for the limited edition book, In Nature’s Laboratory, which records the camping trip in 1916 of Burroughs, Edison, and Firestone. The Photographs series, 1882-1921 and undated (2.0 cubic ft.) includes a two volume Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition, 1899; an album of cartes de visite portraits of friends and family; a set of thirty-seven glass plate negatives (images taken by Burroughs son, Julius); and a subseries of snapshots and photographs of Burroughs with friends, family, visitors and his homes and travels. A Miscellaneous series, 1896-1909 (0.2 cubic ft.) is comprised of a handprint of John Burroughs and several pages from a scrapbook. Researchers should note that handwritten notes describing some of the material were made by the donor, Elizabeth Burroughs Kelley, granddaughter of John Burroughs.
SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate
Burroughs, John, 1837-1921
Burroughs, Julian, 1897-
Burroughs, Ursula North
Kelly, Elizabeth Burroughs
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1856-1919

Subjects
Naturalists
Authors
Natural history
Philosophy

Genre and Form
Photographs
Photograph albums
Photographic prints
Postcards
Glass negatives
Scrapbooks
CONTAINER LIST

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**Box 1**

**EDUCATION RELATED MATERIAL**
- School Catalogs
  - Hedding Literary Institute, 1854
  - Cooperstown Seminary and Female Collegiate Institute, 1855
- Teaching Certificate, 1860
- Letter of Recommendation (photocopy), 1855
- Letters of Thanks from Children, 1901

**WRITINGS**
- “An October Day,” undated
- “On Instinct,” 1906-1907
- “The Snowdrops,” 1857?
- “Thoughts Suggested by Hearing Tyndall Lecture on Light,” 1870?
- “Work and Wait,” 1856
- Account notebooks, 1895, 1897-1898
- Periodicals with articles by Burroughs
  - “In May,” Country Life, May 1905
  - “October Days,” Country Calendar October 1905
  - “Love and War Among the Bluebirds,” Country Life, May 1906

**Box 2**

*In Nature’s Laboratory* Design Layout (2 versions), circa 1916 (Note: Final original in rare book papers)

**Box 3**

Wildflower Album with Bark Cover, 1898

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Photograph Albums**

*A Souvenir of the Harriman Alaska Expedition May-August 1899*

**Box 4**

Volume 1, *New York to Cook Inlet*

**Box 5**

Volume 2, *Cook Inlet to Bering Strait and the Return Voyage*
Box 6

Cartes de Visite album of friends and family (includes Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Thomas Carlyle, Walt Whitman, Matthew Arnold, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Julian Burroughs, Ursula North Burroughs)

Box 7

**Glass Plate Negatives**

- 93.205.70, Burroughs with rabbit nest (matches photoprint 93.205.35)
- 93.205.71, Burroughs maple sugaring
- 93.205.72, Burroughs at Slabsides
- 93.205.73, Swamp Black Creek
- 93.205.74, Riverby
- 93.205.75, Edith Trowbridge at piano
- 93.205.76, Burroughs with President and Mrs. Roosevelt on porch
- 93.205.77, Burroughs sawing wood at Riverby
- 93.205.78, Burroughs by fireplace
- 93.205.79, Burroughs putting up bluebird houses (matches photoprint 93.205.34)
- 93.205.80, Burroughs sawing hay chaff for birds
- 93.205.81, Burroughs and first drink of sap
- 93.205.82, Burroughs beyond Shataca Bridge
- 93.205.83, Burroughs with bust
- 93.205.84, Black Pond
- 93.205.85, Jamaica
- 93.205.86, Burroughs lighting fire
- 93.205.87, Jamaica
- 93.205.88, Burroughs, Ursula and Elizabeth
- 93.205.89, Burroughs portrait
- 93.205.90, Ursula North Burroughs
- 93.205.91, Burroughs leaning on a tree
- 93.205.97, Burroughs and others on boat
- 93.205.98, Nets on cherry trees
- 93.205.99, Julian Burroughs, Ursula, and Elizabeth
- 93.205.100, Burroughs and others on boat
- 93.205.101, Burroughs picking flowers
- 93.205.102, Burroughs resting by a tree
- 93.205.103, Making sugar or soap
- 93.205.105, Burroughs looking at leaves
- 93.205.106, Burroughs portrait
- 93.205.108, Burroughs by the fire
- 93.205.109, Mouth of Oxford cave
- 93.205.110, Burroughs at Slabsides
- 93.205.111, Burroughs portrait
- 93.205.112, Burroughs with house in background
- 93.205.113, John Burroughs by a tree
Box 8

**Photographic prints**
Activities, 1910-1915
Breath of Life and Henry Ford, 1915 and undated
California, 1911 and undated
Camping, 1883
Elizabeth Burroughs Kelley, 1890?
Family and Houses
  - 1895-1904
  - 1908-1910
Family at Riverby, undated
Family, 1883 and undated
Friends, 1890-1892
Girl Pioneers of America, 1890s-1904
Henry David Thoreau, undated
Historical Pageant, 1914 and undated
John Muir, undated
Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1882
Riverby Study, 1915
The Giant Stairs, 1918

Box 10

**Photographic prints - 2014 Addendum**
1905
1907-1912
1913-1914
1915-1916
1917-1918
1919
1920-1921
Circa 1910-1920 and undated

**Postcards - 2014 Addendum**
Photographic postcards, 1909-1920

Box 9

**MISCELLANEOUS**
“Impression of the right hand of John Burroughs with his signature and the date, Feb. 8, 1896”
Correspondence, notes, and scrapbook pages, 1909