



Finding Aid for

**JOHN BURROUGHS PAPERS, 1854-1921**

**Accession 93.205**

Finding Aid Republished: July 2016



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## OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center  
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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).
- ACQUISITION: Acquired, 1993. Additional material incorporated in 2014.
- 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.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Finding aid written by Kathy Steiner, May 2013, and published in July 2013. Finding aid revised by Brian Wilson to include 2014 addendum, and republished, July 2016.  
  
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

**Box no.**                      **Description**

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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