

Harry C. Oberholser Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2022

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78035071>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms013069>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013
Revised 2022 June

Collection Summary

Title: Harry C. Oberholser Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1856-1960

Bulk Dates: 1920-1945

ID No.: MSS35071

Creator: Oberholser, Harry C. (Harry Church), 1870-1963

Extent: 8,400 items

Extent: 25 containers

Extent: 9.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78035071>

Summary: Ornithologist. Chiefly correspondence with ornithologists and other scientists on bird life and bird specimens of the United States and other countries, Oberholser's work with scientific organizations, and publication of his books and articles.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Aldrich, John W. (John Warren), 1906-1995--Correspondence.
Bailey, Florence Merriam, 1863-1948--Correspondence.
Bailey, Vernon, 1864-1942--Correspondence.
Bell, W. B. (William Bonar), 1877-1949--Correspondence.
Bent, Arthur Cleveland, 1866-1954--Correspondence.
Bishop, Louis B.--Correspondence.
Brandt, Herbert, 1884--Correspondence.
Cattell, James McKeen, 1860-1944--Correspondence.
Cottam, Clarence, 1899-1974--Correspondence.
Fisher, A. K. (Albert Kenrick), 1856-1948--Correspondence.
Forbush, Edward Howe, 1858-1929--Correspondence.
Grinnell, Joseph, 1877-1939--Correspondence.
Griscom, Ludlow, 1890-1959--Correspondence.
Henshaw, Henry W. (Henry Wetherbee), 1850-1930--Correspondence.
Jackson, Hartley H. T. (Hartley Harrad Thompson), 1881-1976--Correspondence.
Jones, Lynds, 1865-1951--Correspondence.
Keyes, Charles R. (Charles Reuben), 1871-1951--Correspondence.
Kirm, A. J. (Albert J.)--Correspondence.
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906--Correspondence.
Lincoln, Frederick Charles, 1892-1960--Correspondence.
Merriam, C. Hart (Clinton Hart), 1855-1942--Correspondence.
Nelson, Edward William, 1855-1934--Correspondence.
Nice, Margaret Morse, 1883-1974--Correspondence.
Oberholser, Harry C. (Harry Church), 1870-1963.
Palmer, T. S. (Theodore Sherman), 1868-1955--Correspondence.
Pearson, T. Gilbert (Thomas Gilbert), 1873-1943--Correspondence.
Preble, Edward Alexander, 1871-1957--Correspondence.
Richmond, Charles Wallace, 1868-1932--Correspondence.
Ridgway, Robert, 1850-1929--Correspondence.
Ridgway, Robert, 1850-1929.
Roberts, Thomas S. (Thomas Sadler), 1858-1946--Correspondence.

Sprunt, Alexander, 1898-1973--Correspondence.
Stone, Witmer, 1866-1939--Correspondence.
Taverner, P. A. (Percy Algernon), 1875-1947--Correspondence.
Taylor, Walter P. (Walter Penn), 1888-1972--Correspondence.
Todd, W. E. Clyde (Walter Edmond Clyde), 1874-1969--Correspondence.
Van Tyne, Josselyn, 1902-1957--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Museum of Natural History--Correspondence.
American Ornithologists' Union--Correspondence.
Cleveland Museum of Natural History--Correspondence.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service--Correspondence.
United States National Museum--Correspondence.
United States. Bureau of Biological Survey--Correspondence.
Wilson Ornithological Club--Correspondence.

Subjects

Bird refuges--Illinois.
Birds--United States.
Birds.
Ornithology--Societies, etc.
Ornithology.
Science--Societies, etc.

Places

Bird Haven Sanctuary (Ill.)

Occupations

Ornithologists.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Harry C. Oberholser, ornithologist, were given to the Library of Congress by Oberholser in 1962. Additions were given by the University Archives, University of Illinois Library, in 1969 and 2001.

Processing History

The papers of Harry C. Oberholser were arranged and described in 1979 by Thelma Queen and others. The finding aid was revised in 2013. An addition was processed and the finding aid revised in 2022 by Pang H. Xiong.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Harry C. Oberholser in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Harry C. Oberholser are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Harry C. Oberholser Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1870, June 25	Born, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1888	B.A., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
1895-1941	Ornithologist, 1895-1914; assistant biologist, 1915-1923; biologist, 1924-1928; and senior biologist, 1928-1941; United States Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.
1904-1910	Professor of zoology, Biltmore Forest School, N.C.
1914	M.S., George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Married Mary Forrest Smith Professor of ornithology, Pennsylvania Summer School for Teachers
1916	Ph.D., George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
1919-1939	Lecturer, American School of Wildlife Protection, McGregor, Iowa
1920-1935	Professor of zoology, American University Graduate School, Washington, D.C.
1925-1927	President, Biological Society of Washington, D.C.
1931	Published with S. Prentiss Baldwin and Leonard G. Worley <i>Measurements of Birds</i> . Cleveland, Ohio
1938	Published <i>The Bird Life of Louisiana</i> . New Orleans: [T. J. Moran's Sons]
1941-1947	Curator of ornithology, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland, Ohio
1963, Dec. 25	Died, Cleveland, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Harry Church Oberholser (1870-1963) span the years 1856-1960, with the bulk of the material dating from 1920 to 1945. The collection consists primarily of correspondence supplemented by bird counts, membership certificates, printed matter, articles by Oberholser and others, material on African birds, and cards illustrating bird measurements. The papers are in English and organized into four series: [General Correspondence](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [Miscellany](#), and [2022 Addition](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) consists chiefly of letters from ornithologists and other scientists concerning bird life and bird specimens in the United States and other countries, letters concerning Oberholser's work with scientific organizations, and correspondence concerning his books and articles.

Correspondents include John W. Aldrich, American Museum of Natural History, American Ornithologists' Union, Florence Merriam Bailey, Vernon Bailey, W. B. Bell, Arthur Cleveland Bent, Louis B. Bishop, Herbert Brandt, James McKeen Cattell, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Clarence Cottam, A. K. Fisher, Edward Howe Forbush, Joseph Grinnell, Ludlow Griscom, Henry W. Henshaw, Hartley H. T. Jackson, Lynds Jones, Charles R. Keyes, A. J. Kirn, S. P. Langley, Frederick Charles Lincoln, C. Hart Merriam, Edward William Nelson, Margaret Morse Nice, T. S. Palmer, T. Gilbert Pearson, Edward Alexander Preble, Charles Wallace Richmond, Robert Ridgway, Thomas S. Roberts, Alexander Sprunt, Witmer Stone, P. A. Taverner, Walter P. Taylor, W. E. Clyde Todd, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Bureau of Biological Survey, United States National Museum, Josselyn Van Tyne, and Wilson Ornithological Club.

The [2022 Addition](#) includes notebooks containing Oberholser's ornithological observations, particularly in the Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, and Red Bank, New Jersey, areas from 1886 to 1888.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [General Correspondence, 1883-1960](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1926-1936](#)
- [Miscellany, 1889-1958](#)
- [2022 Addition, 1856-1899](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-22	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1883-1960</u></p> <p>Chiefly letters from ornithologists and other scientists concerning bird life and bird specimens in the United States and other countries, letters concerning Oberholser's work with scientific organizations, and correspondence concerning his books and articles.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.</p>
BOX 22-23	<p><u>Special Correspondence, 1926-1936</u></p> <p>Letters concerning a memorial fund for Robert Ridgway with documents relating to the Ridgway Bird Haven Association and Ridgway Bird Haven Memorial, and letters from students from James Monroe School, Clarendon, Va.</p> <p>Arranged by topic.</p>
BOX 23-24	<p><u>Miscellany, 1889-1958</u></p> <p>Articles, subject files relating to birds, photographs, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.</p> <p>Arranged by type of material or topic.</p>
BOX 25	<p><u>2022 Addition, 1856-1899</u></p> <p>Journal, list, notebooks, and puzzle book.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-22	General Correspondence, 1883-1960 Chiefly letters from ornithologists and other scientists concerning bird life and bird specimens in the United States and other countries, letters concerning Oberholser's work with scientific organizations, and correspondence concerning his books and articles. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 1	"Aa-Ay" miscellaneous (11 folders)
BOX 2	"Bac-Bal" miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 2	Baldwin, S. Prentiss (4 folders)
BOX 2	"Ban" miscellaneous
BOX 3	"Bar-Ben" miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 3	Benjamin, Morris
BOX 3	Bennett, George
BOX 3	Bent, A. Cleveland
BOX 3	"Bes-Bez" miscellaneous
BOX 4	"Bh-Bis" miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 4	Bishop, Louis B. (3 folders)
BOX 4	"Bix-Bran" miscellaneous (4 folders)
BOX 5	Brandt, Herbert (3 folders)
BOX 5	"Bras-By" miscellaneous (9 folders)
BOX 6	"Ca" miscellaneous
BOX 6	Cattell, James McKeen
BOX 6	"Cha" miscellaneous
BOX 6	Chapin, James P.
BOX 6	Chapman, Frank M.
BOX 6	"Che-Chi" miscellaneous
BOX 6	Christy, Bayard H.
BOX 6	"Chr-Cor" miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 7	"Cos-Dy" miscellaneous (13 folders)
BOX 8	"Ea-Fu" miscellaneous (12 folders)
BOX 9	"Gab-Gal" miscellaneous

General Correspondence, 1883-1960

Container	Contents
BOX 9	Galley, John E.
BOX 9	"Gam-Gan" miscellaneous
BOX 9	Ganier, Albert F.
BOX 9	"Gar-Gas" miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 9	Gault, Benjamin T.
BOX 9	"Gay-Go" miscellaneous (5 folders)
BOX 9	Godfrey, W. Earl
BOX 9	Good, Albert I.
BOX 10	"Gra-Gre" miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 10	Greely, A. W.
BOX 10	Gregory, Stephen S.
BOX 10	"Gri" miscellaneous
BOX 10	Grinnell, Joseph
BOX 10	Griscom, Ludlow
BOX 10	"Gro" miscellaneous
BOX 10	Gross, Alfred O.
BOX 10	"Gu-Har" miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 11	"Has-How" miscellaneous (10 folders)
BOX 11	Howell, Arthur H.
BOX 11	"Hoy-Hy" miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 12	"I" miscellaneous
BOX 12	"Ja" miscellaneous
BOX 12	Jackson, Hartley H.
BOX 12	"Je-Jo" miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 12	Jones, Lynds
BOX 12	"Ju-Ke" miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 12	Kemsies, Emerson
BOX 12	Kennard, Frederic H.
BOX 12	Kermode, F.
BOX 12	Keyes, Charles R.
BOX 12	"Ki" miscellaneous
BOX 12	Kim, Albert J.
BOX 12	"Kl-Ky" miscellaneous (5 folders)
BOX 13	"Lab-Lang" miscellaneous
BOX 13	Langley, S. P.
BOX 13	"Lang-Lee" miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 13	Leche, R. W.

General Correspondence, 1883-1960

Container	Contents
BOX 13	“Leg-Li” miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 13	Lincoln, Frederick C.
BOX 13	“Ll-Lo” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 13	Long, Earl K.
BOX 13	Low, Seth H.
BOX 13	Lowry, George H.
BOX 13	“Lu-McS” miscellaneous (9 folders)
BOX 14	“Mae-Mey” miscellaneous (4 folders)
BOX 14	Metcalf, Isaac Stevens
BOX 14	“Mic-My” miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 15	“Na-Ne” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 15	Nelson, E. W.
BOX 15	“Ni” miscellaneous
BOX 15	Nice, Margaret M.
BOX 15	“No-Pal” miscellaneous (4 folders)
BOX 15	Palmer, T. S.
BOX 15	“Pam-Pet” miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 16	“Ph-Ras” miscellaneous (8 folders)
BOX 16	Rathbun, S. F.
BOX 16	“Rav-Rey” miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 16	Reid, Bessie M.
BOX 16	“Rh” miscellaneous
BOX 17	“Ric” miscellaneous
BOX 17	Richmond, Charles W.
BOX 17	“Rid” miscellaneous
BOX 17	Ridgway, Robert
BOX 17	“Ril-Rob” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 17	Roberts, Thomas S.
BOX 17	“Roc-Row” miscellaneous
BOX 17	Roosevelt, Theodore, Jr.
BOX 17	“Ru-Shy” miscellaneous (13 folders)
BOX 18	“Si-Sp” miscellaneous (5 folders)
BOX 18	Sprunt, Alexander

General Correspondence, 1883-1960

Container	Contents
BOX 18	“St-Stu” miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 18	Stone, Witmer
BOX 18	Strong, R. M.
BOX 19	“Su-Sz” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 19	Swenk, Myron H.
BOX 19	“Ta” miscellaneous
BOX 19	Taverner, P. A.
BOX 19	Taylor, Walter P.
BOX 19	“Te-Th” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 19	Thayer, John E.
BOX 19	Thomas, Charles C.
BOX 20	Thompson, E. J.
BOX 20	“Ti-To” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 20	Todd, W. E. Clyde
BOX 20	“Tr-Wet” miscellaneous (14 folders)
BOX 21	Whitaker, L. M.
BOX 21	“Wic-Wil” miscellaneous (2 folders)
BOX 21	Williams, Arthur B.
BOX 21	Williams, George C.
BOX 21	“Win-Z” miscellaneous (5 folders)
BOX 21	Unidentified
BOX 22-23	Special Correspondence, 1926-1936 Letters concerning a memorial fund for Robert Ridgway with documents relating to the Ridgway Bird Haven Association and Ridgway Bird Haven Memorial, and letters from students from James Monroe School, Clarendon, Va. Arranged by topic.
BOX 22	Ridgway Memorial, letters concerning a memorial fund for Robert Ridgway, 1926-1930
BOX 22	“A-C” miscellaneous (3 folders)
BOX 22	Coffin, Percival Brook
BOX 22	Cox, Mrs. T. J., and Mrs. Arthur Crosby
BOX 22	“D-M” miscellaneous (7 folders)
BOX 23	“N-Z” miscellaneous (6 folders)
BOX 23	Ridgway Association documents concerning Ridgway Bird Haven Association and Ridgway Bird Haven Memorial, 1929

Special Correspondence, 1926-1936

Container	Contents
BOX 23	James Monroe School, Clarendon, Va., letters from school children, 1936
BOX 23-24	Miscellany, 1889-1958 Articles, subject files relating to birds, photographs, printed matter, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material or topic.
BOX 23	Articles, 1938, undated
BOX 23	Subject file
BOX 23	Biological stains, 1941-1943
BOX 24	African birds, descriptive material on, 1922, undated (6 folders)
BOX 24	Bird anatomy measurement, diagrammatic cards on (loose cards), undated
BOX 24	General miscellany, 1893-1945 (4 folders)
BOX 24	Photographs, 1889-1943, undated
BOX 24	Printed matter, 1897-1958
BOX 25	2022 Addition, 1856-1899 Journal, list, notebooks, and puzzle book. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 25	Journal, 1856
BOX 25	List of birds of Hertfordshire, England, by Alan F. Crossman, 1899
BOX 25	Notebooks, ornithological notes, 1886-1888
BOX 25	Puzzle book, undated