
Milton S. Ray papers

1889-1946

Descriptive Summary

Title: Milton S. Ray papers

Dates: 1889-1946

Collection Number: MVZA.MSS.0140

Creator/Collector: Ray, Milton S. (Milton Smith), 1881-1946

Extent: 2.0 cubic feet

Repository: UC Berkeley. Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

Abstract: The Milton S. Ray papers collection consists primarily of field books and specimen records of ornithological field work and collecting done throughout the Western United States, as well as other areas of North America, between the years 1889 and 1946. The collection also contains correspondence, historical notes, invoices, and price lists from Milton S. Ray's extensive ornithological and oological work.

Language of Material: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Milton S. Ray papers. UC Berkeley. Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

Biography/Administrative History

Milton Smith Ray, born 1881 in San Francisco, is best remembered for his role as an engineer and local industrialist whose family company, the Ray Oil Burner Company, played a major role in the evolution of steamship engines through their oil burner/piston pump. The company had enormous success and Ray lived comfortably until his death in a mansion built by Henry Clay Smith at 2901 Broadway in San Francisco. The house sits on a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay on a lot Ray purchased in 1925 from future president, and at the time his fellow student, Herbert Hoover. His affluent life as an industrialist enabled Ray to pursue his other passions as well: history, poetry, oology, and ornithology. Milton S. Ray was an avid and incredibly dedicated ornithologist who went on yearly field trips around the world and all over California collecting eggs, nests, and specimens and documenting his observations. He pursued this passion in a diligent manner from 1892, at age 11, until his death in 1946. When Ray passed away in 1946, his extensive egg collection was donated to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The Museum currently houses 2833 of his collected specimens. He published often in the field of ornithology and also had several volumes of poetry published surrounding his experiences in nature, which he dedicated to his children. An example of his passion for history can be seen in the book *San Francisco Since 1872*, published the year of his death in 1946. The book, which Ray co-wrote with Oscar Lewis, is a visual history of the city over seven decades, with the content coming from the photographs and poems in Ray's personal collection. References: "Anecdotal History of the Property and Architect: Holbrook and Gladys Mitchell remembrances of 2901 Broadway June/July 2006 together with historical references." 2901 Broadway. Dona Crowder and Peggy Economos, n. d. Web. 16 August 2013. <http://www.2901broadway.com/assets/img/History.pdf>; Martinfield, Sean. "2007 San Francisco Decorator Showcase - Featuring Broadway Mansion Atop Pacific Heights." *San Francisco Sentinel*. SanFranciscoSentinel.com, 13 May 2007. Web. 16 August 2013. <http://www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/?p=2030>.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Milton S. Ray papers collection consists primarily of field books and specimen records of ornithological field work and collecting done throughout the Western United States, as well as other areas of North America, between the years 1889 and 1946. Beginning in 1914, there are consistently three field books per year, each year, until 1946 when Ray passed away. The three books contain collecting records, species accounts catalogues, journals, and miscellaneous notes. The most common localities that the collection refers to are the local San Francisco Bay counties, the California Coastal Counties, and the areas surround Lake Tahoe, California. Other localities range from Arizona, to Canada, to Europe. The Milton S. Ray papers collection also contains correspondence, historical notes, invoices, and price lists from Milton S. Ray's extensive ornithological and oological work across the first half of the 20th century.

Indexing Terms

Birds--California--Identification

University of California (1868-1952). Museum of Vertebrate Zoology

[Milton S. Ray papers, Box List](#)
