Guide to the James Newman Clark Collection, 1867-1972

Overview of the Collection

Repository: Special Collections & Archives
McIntyre Library
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
P.O. Box 4004
105 Garfield Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54702 – 4004
(715) 836-2739
http://www.uwec.edu/Library/archives/info.htm

Reference Code: USGZE UHC249

Collection Number: University Historical Collection 249

Accession Number: 94-96 / 06-87

Creators: Clark, James Newman

Title: James Newman Clark Collection

Dates: 1867-1972 (bulk 1867-1928)

Quantity: 2 linear feet (2 record cartons)

Location of Collection: A10/1e

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Summary: Personal and business papers of James Newman Clark, a farmer, taxidermist, and ornithologist in Meridean, Wisconsin. Also files relating to the donation and display of Clark’s collection at University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

Biographical Note

James Newman Clark was born in 1842 and emigrated from New York to Wisconsin with his parents in 1849. In 1868, he bought a farm on the Chippewa River near Meridean / Meridian, Wisconsin. Clark’s varied economic ventures -- included fur trapping, harvesting maple syrup and honey, and growing ginseng,
and goldenseal – made him a prosperous farmer. In 1886 he married Jennie Norrish, and together they raised a family of six children.

His diaries indicate that he was an interested bird watcher by the early 1880s. In the late 1880s, he began assembling taxidermy supplies and mounting birds both for himself and for collectors. Although he received no formal training in taxidermy, his mounts were considered to be exceptional and collectors were willing to pay well for them. His interest in ornithology is reflected both in his careful records about the specimens he collected and in his communications with ornithologists concerning correct identification of specimens. The seminal publication *Birds of Wisconsin* relied heavily on Clark’s notes, and Clark’s home served as an informal ornithological museum. After Clark’s death in 1928, his ornithology collection was donated to the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire in 1959. At UW – Eau Claire, Biology Professor David Crowe studied Clark’s work and curated the Clark specimen collection. The collection is currently on display in L.E. Phillips Hall Science Hall on the UW-Eau Claire campus.

### Content Description

The collection consists largely of the surviving personal papers of James Newman Clark, which include diaries, correspondence, account books, photographs, and miscellaneous publications. The collection also includes materials pertaining to the administration of Clark’s specimen collection at UW – Eau Claire and a faculty member’s research on Clark.

### Administrative Information

#### Acquisition Information:

Donated to McIntyre Library Special Collections & Archives, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire by David Crowe in 1993 and 2004.

#### Access Restrictions:

Collection is open to the public.

#### Use Restrictions:

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. Copyright not owned by the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

#### Preferred Citation:

Processing Note:  
Processed by Colleen McFarland in April 2006

Arrangement:  
By series

Subjects

Personal Names:  
  Clark, James Newman, 1842-1928 -- Diaries  
  Clark, James Newman, 1842-1928 – Correspondence  
  Crowe, David (David B.)

Subject Terms:  
  Birds -- Wisconsin  
  Ornithologists -- Wisconsin -- Dunn County  
  Ornithology -- Wisconsin -- History  
  Farmers -- Wisconsin -- Dunn County

Geographical Terms:  
  Chippewa River Valley (Wis.)

Detailed List of Contents

Series 1: Diaries  
This series consists of handwritten diaries kept by James Newman Clark, documenting continuously nearly all of his adult life. Clark’s entries tend to be brief, describing daily activities, the weather, and some business transactions.  
Dates: 1867-1925  
Extent:  1 linear foot (1 records carton)

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Series 2: Correspondence  
This series contains incoming correspondence primarily regarding the identification and sale of ornithological and other biological specimens.  
Dates: 1889-1929  
Extent:  0.5 linear feet (9 folders)
### Series 3: Account Books and Collecting Notes

Various notebooks and ledgers comprise this series. Two account books document financial transactions by individual and organization, while the farm account book provides financial information by crop produced. The remaining notes relate to Clark’s ornithological work and include records of his taxidermy collection.

- **Dates**: 1890-1928
- **Extent**: 0.25 linear feet (4 folders)

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### Series 4: Miscellaneous

Photographs, information on the display of Clark’s collection at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, David Crowe’s research file on Clark, miscellaneous publications, and newspaper clippings are housed in this series.

- **Dates**: 1897-1925
- **Extent**: 0.25 linear feet (6 folders)

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<td>Box/Folder 2/20</td>
<td>Photographs of birds in display cases</td>
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