NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG4479.AM: Grinnell, George Bird, 1849-1938

Papers: 1876-1939
New York City, New York: Naturalist and explorer
Size: 0.75 cu.ft.; 2 boxes

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Bird Grinnell was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 20, 1849. The son of George Blake and Helen (Lansing) Grinnell, he was raised and educated in the East. Upon graduation from Yale University, he made the first of his trips West, gathering vertebrate fossils in hostile Indian country. These trips were repeated semi-annually and he became recognized as an authority on the people and the country. He was invited to join Custer's 1874 Black Hills expedition as a naturalist, but was unable to accept a second invitation in 1876, and so missed sharing the fate of the Custer command.

In 1875 he began his fight to save the wildlife of the West, and his report on a survey trip to the Yellowstone region in that year stood as a classic of its kind. Grinnell pursued this cause all of his life, and with Theodore Roosevelt succeed in winning passage of a law making the violation of game laws a punishable crime. He worked to establish conservation clubs, and published voluminously to support preservation of Yellowstone Park and other areas as fish and game preserves. Despite his constant activity with speeches, trips and writing, he found time to complete requirements for his degree of Ph.D., received from Yale in 1880.

His interest in the life and the plight of the Indians was no less than his interest in wildlife. Among his works, including "Two Great Scouts," most are considered to be authoritative sources. His personal acquaintances among frontiersmen, and his years of experience in the West, gave him a wealth of material to draw on. He always made his home in New York, where, in 1902, he married Elizabeth Kirby Curtis. He died in April, 1938.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of two manuscript boxes of material arranged in four series: (1) correspondence, 1915, 1924, 1925, 1927-1929, 1938, 1939; (2) printed matter, 1876-1921; (3) manuscripts, mostly not dated; (4) miscellany. This collection consists largely of letters to Grinnell from persons interested in the history of the West. The letters concern such matters as the preparation and publication of historical books and articles, the location of historical sites, Indians and Indian fighters, and related subjects. The 1938-1939 letters concern the efforts to gather Grinnell material for the Nebraska State Historical Society. Most of his papers went to other institutions, and the bulk of available Grinnell correspondence is located in the Luther North [RG2322] and Clarence Reckmeyer [RG2441] papers of the NSHS.

This material was received from the estate of George Bird Grinnell in 1939.
Note: See the NSHS Library Catalog and the *Nebraska History* index for published materials by and about George Bird Grinnell.

DESCRIPTION

Series 1 - Correspondence, 1915, 1924-1939

Box 1
Folder

1. 1915
2. 1924
3. 1925
4. 1927
5. 1928
6. 1929
7. 1934
8. 1938-1939

Series 2 - Printed Matter

Box 2
Folder

1. Reprints from the *American Anthropologist*:
   "Childbirth Among the Blackfeet," August, 1896
   "Review of "The Ghost-dance Religion," July, 1897
   "Cheyenne Woman Customs," January-March, 1902
   "Notes on Some Cheyenne Songs," April-June, 1903
   "Some Cheyenne Plant Medicines," January-March, 1905
   "Tenure of Land Among the Indians," January-March, 1907
   "Coup and Scalp Among the Plains Indians," April-June, 1910
   "The Great Mysteries of the Cheyenne," October-December, 1910
   "Some Indian Stream Names," April-June, 1910
   "The Cheyenne Medicine Lodge," April-June, 1907
   "A Buffalo Sweatlodge," October-December, 1919

2. Reprints from the *American Journal of Science and Arts*:
   "On a New Crinoid From the Cretaceous Formation of the West," July, 1876
   "Notice of a new genus of Annelids from the Lower Silurian," September, 1877
   "Review of Professor March's Monograph on the Odontornithes or Toothed Birds of North America," April, 1881

3. Reprints from the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*:
   "Some Early Cheyenne Tales," II, October-December, 1908
   "Falling Stars," July-September, 1921
"Pawnee Mythology," n.d.

4. Reprints from *Natural History*:
   "A Chapter of History and Natural History in Old New York," Vol. XX, No. 1, 1920
   "Old-Time Range of Virginia Deer, Moose, and Elk," Vol. XXV, No.2, 1925

5. Reprints from *The Journal of Mammalogy*:
   "As to the Wolverines," August, 1920
   "The Tree-Climbing Wolverine," February, 1921
   "Some Habits of the Wolverine," February, 1926
   "Mountain Sheep," February, 1928
   "Eagles' Prey," February, 1929
   "Pronghorn Antelope," May, 1929

   Reprint from *The Auk*, "Recollections of Audobon Park," July, 1920
   Reprint from *Forest and Stream*, "What We May Learn from the Indian," n.d.

7. Newspaper clippings (3 items), editorials and biography, etc., 1928

Series 3 - Manuscripts

1. "Descriptive Statements of Reservations," Indians, etc. 314 pp. typed, compiled as of June 30, 1911
2. "History of Bent's Fort," two drafts, typed, one of 105 pp. and the other of 95 pp.
3. "Two Great Scouts," 223 pp., typed
5. "Note on Pawnee History," 3 pp., typed, dated July, 1927
6. "Notes on a Map of the Upper Arkansas," three drafts, 5 pp., typed
7. "Notes on Early Outdoor Journals," three manuscripts on Pawnee sacrificial ceremony and Pita le sharu, 3 pp., 2pp., typed, one dated September 2, 1920
8. Pita le sharu, two different manuscripts on Pawnee sacrificial ceremony and Pita le sharu, three pp.
9. Untitled--Frank North, three pp., typed
10. Red Cloud material

Series 4 - Miscellany

1. Roster of Pawnee Scouts, pencil note indicates this is the roster of General Connor's 1865 expedition, 4 pp. with English translations
2. Notes
3. "List of prints of photographs made by J.B. Farnham"
   "List of possible purchasers of *Two Great Scouts*"

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Revised TMM 04-13-2010
Subject headings:

Cheyenne Indians -- Culture
Explorers
Grinnell, George Bird, 1849-1938
Indians of North America -- Legends
Indians of North America -- Religion and mythology
North, Luther Hedden, 1846-1936
Pawnee Indians -- Mythology
Reckmeyer, Clarence
Scientists -- Naturalists, ethnologists, archeologists
Wildlife -- Conservation