



ARCHIVES – FINDING AID

Collection Title: Charles B. Cory Papers

Creator: Cory, Charles Barney (1857-1921)

Dates: 1874-1957, bulk 1880-1921

Extent: 2.17 Linear Feet (2 manuscript boxes, one flat storage box)

Level of Description: Folder Level

Repository: Natural History Collections and Archives, Chicago Academy of Sciences /Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Access Conditions: Open for research.

Ownership and Literary Rights: The Charles B. Cory Papers are the physical property of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Access is provided to materials in the collection for non-commercial educational and research purposes. Copyright may belong to the authors or their legal heirs or assigns. For permission to publish or reproduce any materials from this collection, contact the CAS/PNNM Collections Department.

Citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item], [folder], [box], Charles B. Cory Papers, Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Acquisition Information: Received from Carroll H. Sudler, Jr., September 8, 1953, with a collection of scientific books donated to the library. See Accession file #5335, in Collection Manager's office for original list of donated materials.

Processor and Date: Glenn Oba and King, Amber K., July 2010; Alexandra Katich, November 2019

Processing Note: An attempt at processing these materials had been previously made. This was maintained wherever possible in the current arrangement.

Materials are arranged alphabetically by surname and then chronologically within each folder. Items found in miscellaneous folders are arranged chronologically. Many of the materials in this collection are not in English. Other languages are: French, Italian, Creole (Haiti), and German. The majority of these

materials are found in Series 1: Personal and in Series 2: Correspondence, Sub-series 1: People, under the subset International.

Biographical Sketch: Charles B. Cory (1857-1921) was an amateur ornithologist and one of the founders of the American Ornithological Union (AOU). Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Cory enjoyed a degree of financial freedom as his father had amassed a sizeable fortune from his business interests. This enabled Cory to spend the majority of his life traveling, studying, and collecting birds without having to worry about steady employment. In addition to his scientific pursuits, Cory was athletic and particularly enjoyed the game of golf. He married Harriet W. Peterson in 1883, the same year of the founding of the AOU. She went with Cory on many of his collecting and shooting trips. Together they had two children, but only one child, Charles Barney Cory, Jr., survived to adulthood. Cory, Jr. was employed by the Chicago Academy of Sciences as a public relations consultant from the 1930s to the 1950s.

He began his study skin collection in 1874 on a trip to Maine. The breadth of his collection continued to grow as he expanded his travels to areas of Europe and to Egypt in 1875, while on a European tour with his mother. From here his travels took him to the New Magdalen Islands and the Bahamas and from there to Haiti. He later traveled to Cuba, Mexico, and Canada. With all of these trips he published his findings and his reputation in the ornithological field increased. Domestically he traveled to Montana, the Dakotas, the southeastern United States, and particularly to Florida. It was in Florida that he spent some time almost every summer beginning in 1885.

By 1892, his collection numbered 19,000 and occupied three rooms of his family home in Boston. The materials were moved from the house when he sold the family home and were originally housed at the Boston Society, but in 1893 the entire collection was given to the Field Museum to form the base of their developing Ornithology collection. Here he functioned as an unofficial, absentee curator for the collection, with other staff actually undertaking its regular care. However, in 1906, Cory lost his entire fortune and moved his family to a small house in Chicago where he was granted a salaried position as Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum. He held this position until his death in 1921, but no longer traveled and collected as he had in the past.

It was as the Curator of Zoology, that Cory published many of his most notable volumes through the museum: *The Birds of Illinois and Wisconsin* (1909), *The Mammals of Illinois and Wisconsin* (1912), and two of the final fifteen volume set, *Catalogue of Birds of the Americas* (1918, 1919). Cory was also working on volumes three and four for the series, but he suffered an illness that left him partially paralyzed in 1920. The third and fourth volumes of *Birds of America* were sent to the printer and almost complete, respectively, before he died in 1921. A colleague and his successor to his position at the Field Museum, Carl Hellmayr, completed those two volumes and continued the series that Cory had started.

Osgood, Wilfred H. 1992. "In Memoriam: Charles Barney Cory. Born January 31, 1857—Died July 31, 1921." *The Auk: A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology* 39, no. 2 (April): 151-166.

Scope and Content: The bulk of the materials consist of letters between Cory and numerous correspondents. Most are related to his work in the field, his publications, or his work with the Field Museum.

Series Description:

Series 1: Personal (1880-1954)

This series contains notices relating to Cory's memberships in various organizations, with the majority related to his ornithological pursuits, both domestic and international. It also includes a notice of his memorial service. In addition are a few receipts from some of his international travel.

Series 2: Correspondence (1874-1957, undated)

This series contains two sub-series, People and Organizations. The People sub-series contains correspondence relating to Cory's work in the field of Ornithology, including his time as Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum. Most of the letters are requests for information regarding the identification of specimens, collecting efforts, or general correspondence between colleagues. There are letters from many collectors and scientists in the field that also relate to specimens in the Chicago Academy of Sciences collection, namely: George K. Cherrie, Ruthven Deane, Benjamin T. Gault, and Robert Ridgway. Within this sub-series, correspondence from international locations has been separated from domestic locations. The sub-series: Organizations, includes letters from various correspondents but all related to the Smithsonian Institution.

Series 3: Publications (undated)

This series contains a hand done mock up of Cory's *The Birds of Eastern North America, Part 1* (1899), titled, "Part I: List of Birds of E.N.A." It is a key to bird species, part one made up of water birds, and is composed of cut out images of birds combined with cut-out taxonomy and supplemental handwritten information.

Container List:

Box 1

Series 1: Personal (1880-1954)

1	Memorial Service Invitation	1954
2	Memberships – International	1880, 1889, 1921
3	Memberships – United States	1878, 1880, 1883-1884, 1887-1888
4	Receipts	1874-1876

Series 2: Correspondence (1874-1938, undated)

Sub-series 1: People (1874-1938, undated)

5	Miscellaneous	1876, 1880, 1883-1884, 1888-1889, 1901, 1907, 1909-1913, 1915-1916, 1919-1921, undated
6	J.A. Allen	1881, 1884, 1894, 1900, 1911-1912
7	B.H. Bailey	1911, 1913, 1915-1916, undated
8	Outram Bangs	1916, 1918-1921
9	Thomas M. Brewer	1880, undated

10	W. Brewster	1880, 1899, 1909, 1912, 1914
11	Frank M. Chapman	1899, 1912, 1915- 1917, 1920-1921, undated
12	Elliott Coues	1883, 1894-1895
13	R. Deane	1912
14	D.G. Elliot	1880, 1888, 1912
15	John Ferry	1908
16	S.A. Forbes	1906, 1911
17	B.T. Gault	1908-1909, 1912, 1919
18	I.G. Gentry	1880-1881
19	G. Brown Goode	1887, 1889
20	H.W. Henshaw	1887, 1907, 1911, 1913
21	S. Henshaw	1878, 1890, 1900, undated
22	N. Hollister	1909, undated
23	Arthur H. Howell	1912, 1921
24	Alpheus Hyatt	1887-1889
25	Geo. N. Lawrence	1879, 1884-1885, 1889
26	C.H. Merriam	1899, 1905, 1909- 1910, 1912
27	Geritt S. Miller Jr.	1911-1912, 1915
28	E.W. Nelson	1905, 1910
29	Alfred Newton	1887, 1889
30	H.C. Oberholser	1919-1921
31	Ludlow Oriscom	1921
32	Thomas E. Penard	1918, 1921
33	Charles W. Richmond	1912, 1914, 1920- 1921
34	Robert Ridgway	1881, 1885-1887, 1894, 1900, 1905, 1908-1909, 1911- 1915, 1917-1918, 1920-1921, 1927
35	R. Salvin	1880, 1889-1890
36	P.L. Sclater	1880-1881, 1883- 1885, 1887, 1909
37	R.W. Shufeldt	1881, 1887, 1915
38	Whitmer Stone	1909, 1912, 1921

39	Harry S. Swarth	1909, 1912
40	John Thayer	1909
41	W.E. Clyde Todd	1913, 1920-1921
42	Henry Ward	1880, 1910, 1912
43	J. Zelidon	1888

Box 2

Series 2: Correspondence (1874-1957, undated)

Sub-series 1: People (1874-1938, undated)

1	International - Miscellaneous	1874, 1880-1881, 1884, 1887-1888, 1892, 1902, 1904, 1908-1909, 1911, 1913, 1918-1921, 1923, 1938, undated
2	International - W.B. Aerluz (?)	1874
3	International – Count Hans von Berlepsch	1884, 1887, 1889, 1915, undated
4	International – Adolphe Boucard	1880, 1887
5	International - Richard Bowdler-Sharpe	1880, 1906
6	International - M.A. Carriker Jr.	1912, 1920
7	International - C. Chubb	1918, 1921
8	International - R. Dabbene	1920, undated
9	International – Henry E. Dresser	1875-1876
10	International - F. Dulane Godman	1882, 1889, undated
11	International - John Gundlach	1879-1880, 1882- 1884, 1886-1887, 1889-1890, undated
12	International - C.E. Hellmayr	1920-1921
13	International - I. Rodway	1912, 1914-1915
14	International - E. Simon	1889, 1912, 1916
15	International - John G. Wells	1889

Sub-series 2: Organizations (1880-1912)

13	Smithsonian Institution	1888, 1912
----	-------------------------	------------

Box 3

Series 3: Publications (undated)

Part I: List of Birds of E.N.A.	undated
---------------------------------	---------