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MUDGE (JOHN GEORGE) PAPERS

A collection of seven diaries detailing the life of John George Mudge (b. 1872) covering the years 1897, 1898, 1901, 1904, 1906 and 1908. When the diaries open Mudge is living in Ireland where he owns a creamery at Ballygrenane, near Listowell. By 1904 he has moved to Devon and by 1906 he is working at Oxford House in East London. In the summer of 1907 he journeys to Canada, visiting Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver, returning to England in the spring of 1908. The latter years of the diaries are illustrated with numerous photographs, postcards and ephemera.

Extent: 7 cloth volumes in 3 boxes (.5 metres).

Accession number 94.008

Each diary is written in Lett's large Office Diary (no. 3). Each volume opens with approximately sixty pages of advertisements and information (calendars, international banking rates, etc.) then several lined pages followed by the diary proper, with a complete week in facing pages. The volumes end with month-at-a-glance style accounting pages.

Box 1

1897 Opening and closing pages:

The signature of John G. Mudge appears on the fly leaf of this volume. There is a brief record of hunting and gardening yields in the last section of the volume.

Diary:

The diary opens with Mudge home in England for the holidays and his return to Ireland. day-to-day details, such as weather, business events, social and sporting engagements fill the diary. Mudge is concerned about his creamery, but seems to spend more time on the social activities of his circle of friends in Listowel and Woodford. He also gives detailed catalogues of sporting activities, such as tennis, hockey, golf, shooting and fishing.

Happenings of Note:

April: Dublin vacation.
June 22: Jubilee celebrations.
Aug. 31: A brief notice of the Duke and Duchess of York's pass through Listowell
Dec. trip to England and Edinburgh.

1898 Opening and closing pages:

The front fly leaf has been used for calculations of payments made in March and April. The back fly leaf has also been used to calculate payments, apparently of wages.

The first page of the diary proper has been used as a scribble pad. There are practice signatures of Katherine G. Mudge, Arthur T. Mudge, John G. Mudge and the first entry has been re-written by in inexperience hand. There is also a note: "Dear Jack, I know how much you love Kitty." The final section has been used for gardening notes.

Diary:

The diary opens with Mudge visiting his brother Harry in Edinburgh and his return to Ireland in January. The style of the diary is similar to the previous year with catalogues of social events, hunting and fishing activities and casual visits. The diary ends without notice on November 20.

1898 Happening of note include:

- Jan. 2: a "grand smash-up on the east Coast Line (1 killed, 6 injured)".
Feb. 11-21: Arrest and acquittal of friend Phillip for running over a child while riding (Mudge and others fined in same incident).
April 22-23: a brief civil lawsuit brought against Mudge for diverting a well.

1901 Opening and closing pages:

There are several newspaper clipping pasted to the opening pages of the diary. These are regarding the Nooitgedacht disaster, where Mudge's brother died. There are several newspaper clipping dealing with the Queen's death pasted in the notes section.

Diary:

The diary opening in Sydney, England. Mudge is visiting his family after the death of his brother Harry in the Boer War (Dec. 13, 1900). The diary is written in the same style as above, detailing social, business and sporting activities as well as regular notices of fairs and markets.

Happenings of note include:

- Jan. 21-24: the death of Queen Victoria and the proclamation of Edward VII.
Feb. 1-2: funeral of the Queen: "Queen's funeral, most melancholy day I ever spent, we all except mother went to memorial service at 12 o'clock. After lunch I tried to arch, but what with bells tolling &c, could not get away from a Good Friday feeling."
Feb. 19: Mudge sells his creamery.
Nov. 12: a sever storm causes flooding and shipwrecks.

1904 Opening and closing pages:

Three photos are pasted to the fly leaf.

A note on the first page following advertisements ("Buzz born 7th June, 1904") probably refers to Kitty's dog, mentioned Aug. 12.

The note pages contain 12 photos and 6 post cards. Three of these photos appear to be of Mudge and his sisters (cf. photo Nov. 11) while three others, and two of the post cards, appear to be of a theatrical performance of Feb. 13 (cf. Feb. 15 & 22).

A notice of archery scores (from The Field, July 30, 1904) is also pasted among the notes section (cf. July 28).

1904 Diary:

The diary takes place around Sydney House, Plympton, where Mudge has returned. Day-to-day events dominate, such as weather, social events and sporting events, especially archery and tennis.

Happenings of note include:

- Feb. 13: the performance of an unnamed play by Mudge's family and friends (there are notices of rehearsals and stage construction throughout Jan. and Feb.).
- Oct. 26: Mudge witnesses the unveiling of the 'In Jo[s]hua Reynolds' memorial (?) at St. Maurice.

Box 2

1906 Opening and closing pages:

The notes section of the volume has several pieces of ephemera pasted in, including:

- photographs of scenes in Egypt (sphinx and pyramid).
- 7 photographs of domestic and camping scenes.
- holograph poem by G.G.H.T..
- telegraph receipt dated March 26, 1906.
- 6 greeting cards (Christmas and New Year).

The accounts section at the end of the volume also has five greeting cards and two photos pasted in.

Diary:

The diary opens with Mudge working at Oxford House, a residential club for working men in the East End of London. The diary details his time as secretary to the Head of the club and several short vacations with family and friends. It is written in the style of previous volumes, detailing work and social events. The diary is continued to Jan. 8, 1907.

Happenings of note include:

- March 28: the return of Mudge's parents from a trip to Egypt.
- June 14-20: the departure of Mudge's friend, Bill Ruddock, for Canada. Ruddock remains in correspondence with Mudge and there are numerous references to his progress.
- June 18-24 several photos included.
- Sept. 5-6: Mudge begins to make inquiries about emigrating to Canada.
- Jan. 2, 1907 several photos included.

1907 Opening and closing pages:

The notes section of the volume is filled with ephemera. Included are:

- wedding notices.
- invitations to club dinners (and menus).
- several post cards of family and scenery (some from Tich [Murphy]).
- numerous photos of Oxford House residences, sporting activities and camping expeditions (with a post card of the Oxford House football teams in which Mudge appears).
- a collection of archery notices with 2 photos of Mudge's sister with bow.
- a collection of documents relating to Mudge's trip to Canada (immigration card, ticket receipts, telegrams, and a passenger list from the Empress of Ireland, dated Friday July 26th, 1907, in which Mudge appears).

Many of the photos are labeled on the back.

The final section of the volume is also filled with photographs. These appear to be of Canada and include city and rural shots (presumably the ranch where Mudge stays through the autumn).

Diary:

The diary begins on Jan. 9th. It opens with Mudge continuing his employment at Oxford House and details about club activities.

On May 21 he checks his tickets to Canada and writes often of his upcoming trip (see, for example, June 2).

Happenings of note include:

- July 26: he sails out of Liverpool on the Empress of Ireland.
- Aug. 1: arrival in Montreal.
- Aug. 6: arrival in Ottawa.
- Aug. 8: departure for Winnipeg. "In train all day, practically the same scenery the whole way, trees, trees, rocks, lakes..."
- Aug. 14: arrival in Calgary. He spends the harvest season with a friend, Ingpen, and the diary details daily life on Ingpen's ranch.
- Nov. 26: arrival in Victoria, B.C. The diary details Mudge's attempt to settle down and his meetings with various figures, such as Capt. Walbran and Senator MacDonald.

Box 3

1908 Opening and closing pages:

This volume is filled with ephemera and photographs. The advertisement pages are covered with photos of friends and family in England as well as camp events of Oxford House (approx. 150 in total).

The notes section of the volume has 40 photos of Mudge Island (?).

The final notes section of the volume is filled with ephemera including archery notices.

post cards of Canadian scenery (Banff, Niagara Falls).

Church service notices.

a flyer outlining the platform of the Socialist Party of Canada.

a holograph letter from G. Bradford.

several greeting cards.

notices of Oxford House events (annual dinner and a boxing display).

photos of Oxford House activities.

a holograph letter from A. Quelch.

3 post cards from Ancient House, Ipswich.

photos of family and friends.

rule books for the Oxford House Swimming Club, Cycling Club and a programme of Athletic Sports.

Diary:

The diary opens with Mudge in British Columbia and chronicles his return to England and employment at Oxford House. The diary ends without notice.

Happenings of note include:

- Jan. 1: departure from Vancouver for Mudge Island. The diary details Mudge's stay on the island with its owner Thatcher and several socialist neighbours, Springett and Tordiff. Much of Jan. and Feb. are spent in Victoria where Mudge occupies himself by watching parliamentary debates. He also inspects several islands.
- April 1: departs Vancouver Island for Vancouver.
- April 6: beginning of train journey east, via the United States.
- April 26: visit to Buffalo and Niagara.
- April 29: sails from New York on the Majestic.
- May 6: arrival in Plymouth and residence with family. The diary details social and family activities.
- June 16: return to Oxford House as secretary. The rest of the diary is written in the style of the earlier volumes: details about weather, club activities (including a camping outing from July 27 - Aug. 5, photos of which are pasted to the opening pages), and social and sporting events.