

Ms. Coll. Speirs (J. Murray), 1909-2001
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Ms. Speirs (J. Murray)
Coll. Papers
387

Collection of daily bird journals 1923-2000, daily bird records 1922-1949, first and last sightings records 1922-1990, and research records on the American Robin and the Lincoln Sparrow 1930s-1940s (Murray and Doris Huestis Speirs wrote the account in Bent's life histories series).

Extent: 20 boxes (3.5 metres)

Gift of Rosemary Speirs/Estate of J. Murray Speirs

Biographical Sketch

Dr. John Murray Speirs was born in Toronto, Ontario, the child of Jennie McClure and Robert Miller Speirs. His lifelong fascination with birds first began with the sighting of a ruby-crowned kinglet in his garden at the age of 6. He kept detailed daily bird sighting notebooks from the age of 15 until his death in 2001. As a youth he attended the University of Toronto Schools, completed his BA in Mathematics and Physics in 1931, his MA in 1938 at the University of Toronto, and his doctorate in ichthyology in 1946 at the University of Illinois. During World War II, he worked as a meteorologist with the Royal Canadian Air Force. In 1939 he married artist and birder Doris Huestis, who painted with the Group of Seven (see Ms. Coll. 319, Doris Huestis Mills Speirs Collection). Dr. Speirs researched the effects of DDT on Ontario lands and forests and worked on the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. For forty years he taught in the Department of Zoology at the University of Toronto and built up the research library in that department. He was a founder of the Ontario Federation of Naturalists, Toronto Ornithological Club, Toronto Field Naturalists and the Pickering Naturalists. He helped purchase Thickson's Woods in Whitby and gave seven of his own acres to the Altona Forest to be used as a bird habitat and conservation area. Within this forest a protected ecological reserve has been set aside and named in honour of Murray and Doris Speirs. He published hundreds of articles, and was editor of many books and journals, including 12 volumes of *The Illustrated Natural History of Canada*; 6 volumes of *Birds of Ontario County* and co-authored *A Naturalist's Guide to Ontario*. The first E.M. Walker Award in Biodiversity was recently presented by Dr. J. Murray Speirs. The endowment which made possible this award was a gift from his niece, Dr. Rosemary Speirs. Murray Speirs worked as an assistant to Professor Walker. At age 91 he was named a Distinguished Ornithologist by the Ontario Field Ornithologists; was given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the City of Pickering; and on April 27, 2000 he was appointed to the Order of Canada at a ceremony at his home in Pickering for his contributions as a conservationist. Dr. Speirs was said to have a perfect ear for birdcalls, and could accurately imitate the call of any bird. He died in his sleep at the age of 92.

- Box 1** Daily Bird Records, V. I-III, 1922-1946
- folders 1-3 "Nature Notes and Stories"
Vol. I, 1922.
typescript, 54 pages
- folder 4 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I, 1922-1924.
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 5 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I 1925-1926
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 6 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I 1926-1928
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 7 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I 1928-1929
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 8 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I 1929-1930
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 9 "Bird Charts"
Vol. I 1930
typescript and ink charts, with holograph notes, 12 pages
- folder 10 "Sketches and Paintings"
Vol. I 1922-1930
typescript title page, (1 page)
ink drawings of hawks with typescript, (1 page)
print bird illustrations, 20 pages
- folder 11 "Leaves"
Vol. I 1922-1930
ink drawings
11 pages
- folders 12-20 Vol. I 1922-1930
Leaves
Photographs, black and white
9 photo album pages
(30 photographs)

Box 1

- folder 21 Vol. I 1922-1930
pencil sketches with holograph notes
2 pages
- folder 22 Vol. I 1922-1930
"Map of Central Canada"
- folders 23-41 "Bird Charts"
1931-1946
- folder 23 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1931
- folder 24 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1932
- folder 25 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1932-1933
- folder 26 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1933-1934
- folder 27 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1934

Box 1

- folder 28 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1934-1935
- folder 29 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph and typescript
20 pages
1935-1936
- folder 30 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1936-1937
- folder 31 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1937
- folder 32 "Bird Charts"
Vol. II 1931-1937
ink and pencil charts with holograph
24 pages
1937-1942 (1938 lacking)
- folders 33-34 "Bird Charts"
Vol. III 1940-1946
ink charts with holograph
40 pages
1940
- folders 35-36 "Bird Charts"
Vol. III 1940-1946
ink charts with holograph
40 pages
1943

Box 1

folders 37-38 "Bird Charts"
Vol. III 1940-1946
ink charts with holograph
40 pages
1944

folders 39-40 "Bird Charts"
Vol. III 1940-1946
ink charts with holograph
40 pages
1945

folder 41 "Bird Charts"
Vol. III 1940-1946
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1946

Box 2 "Bird Charts" 1939-1949
"First and Last Sightings" 1922-1990

folder 1 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 4 1947-May 1949
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1947

folder 2 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 4 1947-1949
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1947-1948

folder 3 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 4 1947-1949
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1948

folder 4 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 4 1947-1949
ink charts with holograph
20 pages
1948-1949

Box 2

- folder 5 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 4 1947-1949
ink charts with holograph
28 pages
1949
- folder 6-13 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 5 1939-1943
charts with holograph
160 pages
1939
- folder 14 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 5 1939-1943
charts with holograph
20 pages
1939-1940
- folders 15-16 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 5 1939-1943
D. Huestis
charts with holograph
40 pages
1940
- folder 17 "Bird Charts"
Vol. 5 1939-1943
charts with holograph
18 pages
1940-1943
- folders 18-21 "First and Last Sightings"
5 holograph notebooks
1922-1990
- folder 22 "Key Dates Birds of the Toronto Region, 1887-1937" by J. Murray
Speirs, April, 1953
chart, photocopy

Box 2

folder 24 Gray, Grattan.
"Why Bird Watchers Watch Roger Tory Peterson"
Maclean's, 75: (1): 18, 56-58
(Jan. 6, 1962)
clipping with typescript cover

Box 3

Robin research
"Robin by States"

folders 1-11 Robin research notes

folder 1 Robin research notes—robin and others
2 typescript copies of TL
typescript with holograph revisions, 8 pages
holograph notes, 3 pages

folder 2 Robin research notes—robin and others
holograph notes and chart
20 pages

folder 3 Robin research notes—robin and others
holograph notes and charts, 16 pages
2 index cards

folder 4 Robin research notes
mimeograph article on robins, 4 pages

folder 5 "Checklist of Papers on the American Robin"
copy with holograph notes, 20 pages

folder 6 Robin research notes
typescript, 6 pages
holograph notes, 20 pages

folder 7 Robin research notes
colour map and sketches, holograph notes
20 pages

folder 8 Robin research notes
holograph notes, 20 pages
1 black and white photograph of a map

Box 3

- folder 9 Robin research notes
holograph notes and sketches, 20 pages
- folder 10 Robin research notes
holograph notes and sketches, 20 pages
- folder 11 Robin research notes
holograph notes and sketches, 20 pages
typescript, 1 page
- folders 12-29 "Robin by States"
- folder 12 "Robin by States"
1 clipping
3 TLS
1 ANS
holograph notes, 15 pages
- folder 13 "Robin by States"
holograph notes and charts, 20 pages
1 ANS
2 clippings
- folder 14 "Robin by States"
holograph notes, 20 pages
- folder 15 "Robin by States"
holograph notes, 17 pages
- folder 16 "Robin by States"
6 black and white photographs
- folder 17 "Robin by States"
5 black and white photographs
- folder 18 "Robin by States"
5 black and white photographs
- folder 19 "Robin by States"
holograph notes, 13 pages
typescript, 5 pages
1 TLS

Box 3

- folder 20 "Robin by States"
4 ALS
2 TLS
1 TL
typescript, 2 pages
manuscript note, 1 page
- folder 21 "Robin by States"
holograph notes and typescript, 16 pages
- folder 22 "Robin by States" – Amelia Laskey
1 TLS
2 ALS
1 TL
manuscript notes, 1 sheet
1 ANS
1 print article
- folder 23 "Robin by States"
1 TLS (9 pages)
- folder 24 "Robin by States"
2 TLS
holograph notes, 7 pages
- folder 25 "Robin by States"
holograph and typescript notes, 10 pages
holograph and typescript list of robin correspondents by State/Province
- folder 26 "Robin by States"
holograph and typescript notes, 18 pages
- folder 27 "Robin by States"
2 black and white photographs of seagulls
- folder 28 "Robin by States"
typescript, 17 pages
print
- folder 29 "Robin by States"
typescript, 27 pages
holograph note, 1 page

Ms. Coll. 387	Speirs (J. Murray), 1909-2001	11
Box 4	Eaglehead Lake Beausoleil Island Lincoln Sparrow Daily Bird Journals, 1923-1928	
folders 1-7	Eaglehead Lake	
folder 1	Eaglehead Lake typescript and pencil charts, 14 pages 1 TLS 1 map with colour ink added	
folders 2-7	Eaglehead Lake "A Preliminary Report on the Relation of Spraying a Forest With DDT to the Vertebrate Life of the Forest ..." by J. Murray Speirs typescript with holograph notes and holograph charts, 114 pages	
folders 8-11	Beausoleil Island typescript, including holograph notes and charts, 71 pages 1 linen map of Eaglehead Lake, June 11, 1946	
folders 12-23	Lincoln Sparrow research	
folder 12	Lincoln Sparrow 1 colour map (study area) typescript with some holograph notes, 6 pages 4 carbon TL 2 TLS 1 print article 2 TN	
folder 13	Lincoln Sparrow 24 round graphs: "Nest Reader" 1957 shows incubation time of parents on nest	
folder 14	Lincoln Sparrow 1 carbon TL Interim report, 8 page typescript with chart	
folder 15	Lincoln Sparrow 3 ANS 3 TLS 2 carbon TL	

Box 4

- folder 16 Lincoln Sparrow
typescript with pencil sketch, 23 pages
holograph notes, 1 page
- folder 17 Lincoln Sparrow
8 TLS
6 carbon TL
typescript with holograph notes and drawings
- folder 18 Lincoln Sparrow
11 carbon TL
2 ALS
9 TLS
- folders 19-23 Lincoln Sparrow
typescript with holograph notes and maps 102 pages
- folder 24 Doris Huestis
2 field notebooks, holograph, 1956
- folder 25 Daily Bird Journals
1923-1928
holograph

Boxes 5-20 **Daily Bird Journals**
1928-2000
holograph

Box 5 Daily Bird Journals
1928-1937
holograph

Box 6 Daily Bird Journals
1937-1945
holograph

Box 7 Daily Bird Journals
1945-1949
holograph

Box 8 Daily Bird Journals
1949-1953
holograph

- Box 9** Daily Bird Journals
1953-1957
holograph
- Box 10** Daily Bird Journals
1957-1962
holograph
- Box 11** Daily Bird Journals
1962-1965
holograph
- Box 12** Daily Bird Journals
1965-1969
holograph
- Box 13** Daily Bird Journals
1969-1973
holograph
- Box 14** Daily Bird Journals
1973-1979
holograph
- Box 15** Daily Bird Journals
1979-1983
holograph
- Box 16** Daily Bird Journals
1983-1987
holograph
- Box 17** Daily Bird Journals
1988-1990
holograph
- Box 18** Daily Bird Journals
1991-1993
holograph
- Box 19** Daily Bird Journals
1994-1996
holograph
- Box 20** Daily Bird Journals
1997-2000
holograph