

Wendell P. Roop papers

1079

Finding aid prepared by Katie Odhner.

Last updated on March 03, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

2012

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Roop, Wendell Prescott, b. 1887
Title	Wendell P. Roop papers
Call number	1079
Date [inclusive]	1935-1950
Extent	0.3 linear feet (collection consists of one manuscript box containing 12 folders and one card file box)
General Physical Description note	Fair
Language	English

Cite as:

[Item name]. Box [Box number]. Wendell P. Roop Collection. Penn Museum Archives. Accessed [Date accessed].

Biography/History

Wendell Prescott Roop (b. 1887) was the son of Christian Young Roop. He studied physics at the

University of California, Berkeley. While there he was also a physics instructor and research assistant interested in physics and radiology. Roop served in World War I then participated in military research at the U. S. Experimental Model Basin in Washington, D. C. as a lieutenant commander in the U. S. Navy. He collaborated in the publication of "Physical Measurements; a laboratory manual in general physics for colleges" (1917), "The Effects of Underwater Explosions General Considerations" (1942), "Stress and Strain in Plastic Flow" (1948), "Twelve Inch Flat Plate Tests (Part I) Aspect Ratio Program (Part II)" (1949) and "The Effects of Width and Thickness on Strength, Energy Absorption and Transition Temperature for Internally Notched Flat Steel Plates" (1951). Roop had an avid interest in small watercrafts, particularly kayaks and umiaks of the Arctic. He published "Eskimo Kayaks" (date unknown) and "Watercraft in Amazonia" (1935).

The publication of "Brief History of the Roop Family" (1958) and "Isaac Roop Goes West" (1958) also indicate an interest in family history.

Scope and Contents

The Wendell P. Roop Collection (1935-1950) consists of 0.3 linear feet of letters, notes, articles and photographs related to Wendell Roop's personal interest in Arctic kayaks and umiaks, as well as a survey sent out by Roop in 1937 to curators of various museums. Roop pursued his interest by visiting museums, reading books and corresponding with experts. These activities generated notes on specific kayaks and umiaks, which Roop sorted into a catalog. He wrote several articles relating to the subject. The collection was donated to the Penn Museum at an unknown date. It was transferred from the American Collection to the archives in 1985.

The correspondence series is organized by correspondent. It contains letters to and from museum curators about their collections of arctic kayaks and umiaks. There are two letters concerning the publication of Roop's book "Watercraft in Amazonia" in Spanish. The correspondent with the greatest number of letters is Howard Chapelle, a small boat enthusiast, naval architect and later curator of the Division of Transportation at The National Museum of American History. He and Roop corresponded about Chapelle's article "Arctic Skin Boats" and Roop's comments on it. Other significant correspondents include Frank Speck, Alfred Metraux and Diamond Jenness. Several other letters to Roop can be found in the survey series under survey responses.

The survey series contains two folders, one with the survey sent out by Roop in the summer of 1937, the other with the responses he received. The survey is of "Eskimo kayak with reference to construction and geographic distribution." It includes a chart of six different types of kayaks, and some labelled photographs for reference. The survey response folder contains letters along with photographs and diagrams sent to Roop.

The notes series is arranged into four groups: a folder for notes on the Adney Models collection, one for notes on a conversation with Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith and Mr. [Helge] Larsen, one for 5x8 note cards, and a box for 3x5 note cards. The 3x5 note cards include Roop's catalog. Each card gives the description of a kayak or umiak, listing its provenance, dimensions, the museum it came from, the museum number, how he documented it (e.g. notes, photo'd, sketch) and any special features. These note cards are in no discernable order. The 5x8 note cards have more detailed information on individual vessels. These details are recorded in numbered lists. There is a reference list for them in with the notecards.

The article series has three articles written by Roop in separate folders: "Arctic Skin Boats" (comments on Howard Chapelle's article of the same name), "Eskimo Watercraft" (first draft from 1936) and "A

Round-Bottomed Umiak from Alaska" (a 1949 report on an umiak in the Royal Ontario Museum at Toronto). Relevant letters between Chapelle and Roop, and between Roop and T. F. McIlwraith, keeper of the Department of Ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum, can be found in the correspondence series. The photographs and negatives series has prints and negatives of kayaks and Eskimos with kayaks. One folder contains photographs and negatives from museums, the other contains photographs taken by W. P. Roop himself.

Administrative Information

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Wendell Prescott Roop correspondence, 1907-1928 At the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley Correspondences (mostly between Roop and his father) Identifier: BANC MSS 94/30 c

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Field notes
- Photographs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Alaska

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Roop, Wendell Prescott, b. 1887

SUBJECT(S)

- Archaeological surveying
- Eskimos

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE, 1935-1950.

	Box
Correspondence.	1

SURVEY, 1937.

	Box
Survey of Eskimo Kayak.	1
Survey Responses.	1

NOTES, 1935-1950.

	Box
[Edwin] Tappan Adney Models.	1
K. Birket Smith & [Helge] Larsen.	1
Note cards 3x5 Oversized (removed from Box 2).	1

Note cards 5x8.	1
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Note cards 3x5.	2
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ARTICLES, 1936-1949.

Box

Arctic Skin Boats.	1
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Eskimo Watercraft (1st draft).	1
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A Round-Bottomed Umiak from Alaska.	1
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PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEGATIVES, 1935-1950.

Box

Eskimo (other institutions).	1
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Kayaks (by W. P. Roop).	1
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