

**John Campbell Merriam Papers, 1920-1938**



**Carnegie Institution of Washington  
Administration Archives  
Washington, DC 20005**

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# JOHN CAMPBELL MERRIAM PAPERS, 1920-1938

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## **John Campbell Merriam Papers, 1920-1938**

### **Introduction**

*Abstract:* The correspondence and administrative memoranda of Carnegie Institution of Washington President John Campbell Merriam.

*Extent:* 1.25 linear feet: 4 document boxes

*Acquisition:* It is unknown when these records were transferred to the archives.

*Access Restrictions:* There are no access restrictions to this collection.

*Copyright:* For permission to reproduce or publish, please contact the Archivist at the Carnegie Institution.

*Preferred Citation:* John Campbell Merriam Papers, 1920-1938, Administration, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington D.C.

*Processing:* A folder listing was included in the Archives Finder's Guide in 1990. Processing completed by Christian Kelleher in October 2002.

Separated materials were removed from their original locations for preservation purposes and are housed in a single folder. The folder includes primarily telegrams and other items printed on acidic paper. Preservation photocopies of these items have been placed in their original locations.

### **J.C. Merriam Biographical Sketch**

Paleontologist John Campbell (J.C.) Merriam was president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington from 1921 to 1938. Born October 20, 1869 in Hopkinson, Iowa, Merriam received a bachelor's degree from Lenox College in Iowa, then attended the University of California to study geology and botany. After completing his doctorate in Europe, where he studied with the paleontologist Karl von Zittel in Munich, Merriam returned to the U.S. and joined the faculty of the University of California. He taught and performed research in the fields of vertebrate and invertebrate paleontology, and in 1912 he was appointed chairman of the new Department of Paleontology on the UC Berkeley campus.

Merriam's research at the University of California included studies of shell mounds for fossils and Indian artifacts with the UC Berkeley Department of Anthropology, the John Day fauna in Oregon, the fossil beds of Virgin Valley, Nevada, and extinct faunas of the Mohave desert. He was most famous for his exploration of the La Brea tar pits in southern California where he was responsible for the preservation and description of numerous vertebrate fossils, including the sabre-toothed cat *Smilodon californicus*. In the 1920s after taking on the presidency at CIW, Merriam's original research decreased as his administrative duties expanded. He was a regent of the Smithsonian Institution from 1928, helped to establish a seismological research program in conjunction with the California Institute of Technology, was active in the conservation movement in

California, including a term as president of the Save-the-Redwoods League. John Campbell Merriam died in 1945.

### **Scope and Contents Note**

This collection consists of the administrative papers created by John Merriam during his tenure as President at the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

### **Arrangement**

This collection is arranged in the following series:

Series 1: Correspondence

Series 2: Memorandum

### **Series 1: Correspondence, 1920-1938**

This series is arranged chronologically and includes letters written to and from Merriam who presided over the Institution largely from his home and office in California and various research locations. The most frequent correspondents are CIW Administrative Secretary Walter M. Gilbert and President's Secretaries Clarence Reeder and Samuel Callaway.

### **Series 2: Memoranda, 1921-1938**

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject based on the original order given them by Merriam. Administrative memoranda consist of official notes recording the policy, business, and decision making functions performed by Merriam during his presidency. Materials of special interest include memoranda regarding the establishment and administration of a gorilla study in the Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo) in the 1920s and 1930s as well as several folders of memoranda regarding historical research in the field of archeology.

### **Folder Listing**

	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>
<b>Series 1: Correspondence, 1920-1938</b>		
1920	1	1
1921		2
1922		3-4
1923		5-6
1924		7
1925		8
1926	2	1
1927		2
1928-1929		3
1930		4
1931		5
1932-1933		6
1934-1935		7
1936		8
1937-1938		9

	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>
<b>Series 2: Memoranda, 1921-1938</b>		
General, 1923-1928	2	10
General, 1929-1930		11
General, 1931-1932		12
General, 1933-1934		13
General, 1935-1938, n.d.		14
Administrative and Building, 1924-1938		15
Archeology – Rome, 1923-1931		16
Belgian Congo – Gorilla Study, 1922-1938		17
CIW Policy, 1921-1932	3	1
CIW Policy, 1932-1938		2
Embryology Department, 1925-1938		3
Exhibits, 1927-1938		4
Fiscal Matters, 1921-1938		5
Geophysical Lab, 1923-1938		6
Genetics Department, 1922-1938		7
Guatemala, 1931		8
Historical Research – Archeology, 1922-1938		9-11
<i>Index Medicus</i> , 1925-1926	4	1
Lectures, 1927-1938		2
Marine Biology – Tortuga Lab, 1922-1937		3
Miscellaneous, 1924-1934		4
Mount Wilson Observatory, 1922-1937		5
Nutrition Lab, 1927-1938		6
St. Augustine Restoration, 1936-1938		7
Seismology, 1924-1938		8
<b>Separated Materials</b>	3	9

### **Subjects List**

Topics:	Gorilla—Research Archaeology and history
Occupation:	Paleontologists
Corporate Names:	Carnegie Institution of Washington
Forms:	Correspondence

### **Bibliography**

Merriam, John C. *Published Papers and Addresses of John Campbell Merriam*.  
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Bancroft Library. *Inventory of the John Campbell Merriam Papers, 1904-1934.*  
Berkeley, California: University of California, Berkeley, 1997.