

# Charles Irving Clay Papers

## Title

Charles Irving Clay Papers

## Collection Number

2023.01

## Contact Information

The Library, Special Collections

Cal Poly Humboldt

One Harpst Street

Arcata CA 95521

URL: <https://specialcollections.humboldt.edu/charles-irving-clay-papers>

## Processed by

Hannah Evans and Carly Marino

## Date Collection Processed

2023

## Language

English

## Collection Creator

Charles Irving Clay

# Dates covered by collection

## Letters

1892-1918 (date span)

1904-1910 (bulk dates)

## Photographs

1932-1968

# Size of collection

.5 linear feet

# Abstract

This collection includes material pertaining to Charles Irving Clay's professional and personal life. These letters sent to Clay, and occasionally sent from Clay, provide information on how ornithological research and business was conducted in the early 20th century. Included in the professional correspondence is information related to the purchase of "skins", nests, and other specimens for the study of birds and particularly oology. The correspondence with family and friends offers insight into how communication was conducted in a more casual way about everyday life, familiar connections and some personal gossip. The series of photographs captures people in a wide variety of scenarios, images of cars, buildings from travels around the country, as well as several different bird and nest specimens.

# Access

Open for research by appointment.

# Copyright

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# Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Ray Hillman to the University of Pacific. The University of Pacific donated the material to Cal Poly Humboldt's Special Collections in 2023, as it relates to the C.I. Clay Oological Collection, which is open for research at Humboldt.

## **Biographical Information**

Charles Irving Clay worked in the field of ornithology, more specifically oology (the study of bird eggs, nests and breeding behaviors). He lived in Humboldt County but often worked for organizations that sent him elsewhere in the country to collect specimens.

## **Scope and Content of the Collection**

The collection comprises 14 folders containing 144 letters, 4 postcards and 39 photographs. There are three series:

PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE includes an abundance of letters sent to Charles Irving Clay from 1894-1917. Included are letters requesting specimens, inquiries from organizations requesting C.I. Clay for specific jobs as well as letters informing him of his publications or requests for him to join clubs through memberships.

PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE includes a wide variety correspondence ranging from 1892-1918 with J.A. Clay (C.I. Clay's father), "Frankie" (C.I. Clay's wife) and various additional family members and close friends.

PHOTOGRAPHS range from 1932-1968 and depict some specimens as well as living birds, various people and locations from travel. Many photos have written descriptions on the back.

## **Arrangement of the Collection**

This collection is arranged according to potential research relevance. Beginning with Professional Correspondence, researchers can find letters requesting Clay's specimens; details on prices, types of specimens and locations. They can also find information about Clay's involvement with certain organizations and groups; what was asked of him and what he contributed.

Personal Correspondence begins with J.A. Clay's correspondence about his life, then moves on to correspondence with "Frankie" which provides information about what C.I. Clay's family life was like, and some information about when and where he traveled for work. The rest of correspondence provides insight into C.I. Clay's family history, the people he stayed in contact with, and what life was like in the early 20th century pertaining to work, travel, family, and meeting basic needs.

# Container List

## Box 1

### Series: Professional Correspondence

1. Ornithology Sample Purchase Requests 1904-1917
2. Ornithology Sample Exchange Requests 1894-1910
3. Professional Organization Correspondence 1910
4. W. Leon Dawson Letters 1917-1918
5. Memberships & Publications 1909-1917
6. James P. Babbitt Letters 1909-1910
7. Miscellaneous Correspondence 1904-1917

### Series: Personal Correspondence

8. J.A. Clay Correspondence 1892-1910
9. "Frankie" Correspondence 1910-1917
10. Clarentine Letters 1892-1910
11. "Frances + The Baby" Correspondence 1909-1910
12. Family & Friends Correspondence 1892-1918
13. Post Cards & Empty Envelopes 1906-1916

### Series Photographs

14. Photographs, 1932-1968

## Related Collections

C.I. Clay Oological Collection 1901-1953 (Call Number: HumCo QL684.C2 C53 1953 ([https://csu-humboldt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ICALS\\_HUL/omcour/alma995204613402909](https://csu-humboldt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ICALS_HUL/omcour/alma995204613402909)))

## Subject Headings

Birds -- California -- Humboldt County.

Birds -- Nests -- California -- Humboldt County.

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