

University of Miami Special Collections

Finding Aid - Ralph M. Munroe Family Papers (ASM0015)

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Language of description: English

University of Miami Special Collections
1300 Memorial Drive
Coral Gables
FL
United States
33146
Telephone: (305) 284-3247
Fax: (305) 284-4027
[Email: asc.library@miami.edu](mailto:asc.library@miami.edu)
<https://library.miami.edu/specialcollections/>
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Ralph M. Munroe Family Papers

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Miami Special Collections
Title:	Ralph M. Munroe Family Papers
ID:	ASM0015
Date:	1882-1995 (date of creation)
Physical description:	12 linear ft.
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Ralph Middleton "Commodore" Munroe, avid yachtsman, successful businessman, and celebrated patriarch of the Munroe family, made Coconut Grove his home in the late 1800s. Munroe and his family moved to South Florida from Staten Island, New York, to provide a more beneficial environment for his wife, Eva Maelia Hewitt, who suffered from tuberculosis. Unfortunately, both his wife and daughter succumbed to illness and died shortly after their move to Miami.

Munroe subsequently split his time between Staten Island and the Grove, often staying at the Peacock family hotel, The Bay View House, later known as the Peacock Inn. Several years before the turn of the century he bought land recognized today as the Barnacle State Historic Park, where he built his permanent home. Munroe also founded the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, and through his continual enjoyment of sailing and boating life, met his second wife, Jessie Wirth. They had two children, Wirth and Patty.

The Commodore's passion for the sea was only matched by his interest in photographing. Munroe's constant recording of the beauty of Miami with his camera provides an invaluable and lasting visual record of the time and place. The Ralph M. Munroe Family Papers consists of letters, diaries, household accounts, journals, and photographs chronicling the activities of one of South Florida's earliest families. Among the holdings are, the typescript of the popular autobiography, *The Commodore's Story*, as well as diaries written by Patty Munroe detailing South Florida "happenings." Photographs offer a look at South Florida scenic sites during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Scope and content

Ralph Middleton Munroe (1851-1933) settled in Florida in 1891, drawn by its lush tropical landscapes and beautiful seashores. An avid yachtsman and photographer, the Commodore traveled the South Florida

coast capturing images of its pristine wilderness and the early inhabitants. Munroe's photographs provide a unique visual record of South Florida history before its rapid urbanization. The Ralph M. Munroe Family Papers contain a rich assortment of photographs, albums, postcards, correspondence, clippings and manuscripts that document the frontier life in Coconut Grove.

Notes

Title notes

Related material

Dewolf, Katherine Herreshoff. The Story of the America's Cup. North Plymouth: Plymouth Cordage Company, 1930.

Fielding, Henry. The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling. New York: William Durell and Co., 1826.

Gilbert, W.S. and Arthur Sullivan (composer). The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu. New York: WM. A Pond & Co., 1885

Hawkesworth, John. A New Voyage Round the World, In the Years 1768, 1769, 1770 and 1771. New York: James Rivington, 1774.

Markward, Rose. Dainty Desserts for Dainty People. Knox Gelatine.

Parrish, Allan Reid (compiled). Official Directory of Miami Florida, and Nearby Towns in Dade County. Miami: Allan R. Parrish, 1903.

Street, Oliver Day. Symbolism of the Three Degrees. Washington D.C.: Masonic Service Association of the United States, 1922.

Ward, C.H. (compiled). The Lure of the Southland: Miami and Miami Beach Florida. N.p.: C.H. Ward, 1915

Wiebe, Edward. Quarter Century Edition of the Paradise of Childhood. A Practical Guide to Kindergartners. Springfield: Milton Bradley Company, 1901.

Yandell, W.F. The Story of the Telephone in Miami.

Cooking Club Magazine. 9.3 (March, 1907).

McMonagle & Rogers Cooking Recipes. Middletown: McMonagle & Rogers.

Non-Secret Medicines.

Rural Recreation Parks in Dade County, Florida.

Shall We Go To Florida? New York: The Review of Reviews Corporation, 1925.

Stillmore Secrets. Milwaukee: Pabst Brewing Co.

Views of Miami Beach. Miami: Miami Mortgage & Guaranty Co., 1927?

Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture: 1901. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902.

Everglades Digital Library : Everglades Biographies, Ralph Middleton Munroe

Information about related materials is available at <http://everglades.fiu.edu/reclaim/bios/munroe.htm>

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Description identifier:** ArchonInternalCollectionID:572

Access points

- Barnacle (Miami, Fla.)
- Biscayne Bay Yacht Club
- Munroe, Ralph, 1851-1933 (subject)
- Munroe, Ralph, 1851-1933 -- Family (subject)
- Account books (documentary form)
- Brochures (documentary form)
- Clippings (documentary form)
- Diaries (documentary form)
- Letters (documentary form)
- Photograph albums (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Typescripts (documentary form)
- Coconut Grove (Miami, Fla.) -- History (place)
- Florida -- History -- 20th century (place)
- Miami-Dade County (Fla.) -- History (place)

Series descriptions

Series id6690: Photographs and Albums

Scope and content:

Series I depicts 19th century "views" of Southern Florida and Staten Island. The photographs are visual documents of South Florida flora and fauna, native Seminole Indians, Bahamian settlers as well as the early European residents of Coconut Grove. Images of the first pioneering families such as the Peacocks, Frows, Carneys and Sanders are featured in these early traces of Florida history. The Munroe family homestead, the Barnacle, now an historic state park, is extensively featured in boxes 1 and 2. Finally, the photographs also depict the many yachts designed by Ralph Munroe, the founder of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club. (Arranged according to Mr. Munroe's groupings and titles).

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id6697	File - Barnacle and Grounds			1
id6698	File - Barnacle and Surroundings			2
id6699	File - Views of Bimini, Cat Key and Key West			3

id6700	File - Miami, Arch Creek, New River, Snapper Creek and Royal Palm Park	4
id6701	File - Wabun Bound South and Other Views along the route	5
id6702	File - Views among the Keys	6
id6703	File - Intimate Boats	7
id6704	File - Boats	8
id6705	File - Views in Brown's Shipyard	9
id6706	File - N.Y.Y.C. and Other Boats	10
id6707	File - Wrecks	11
id6708	File - Lighthouses	12
id6709	File - Groups West Point	13
id6710	File - Portraits	14
id6711	File - Breezy Knoll and Other Views of Staten Island	15
id6712	File - Views of Old New York and Others around Newark, NJ	16
id6713	File - Seminole Indians	17
id6714	File - Photographs (various)	18
id6715	File - Photographs (various)	19
id6716	File - Photographs (duplicates)	20
id6717	File - Photographs (various)	21
id6718	File - Photographs (various)	22
id6719	File - Album: "Views at Miami and Vicinity, Biscayne Bay, Dade County, South Eastern Florida"	23
id6720	File - Album: "The Second Invasion of Florida"	February 1908 24
id6721	File - Album	1914 25
id6722	File - Oversized Photo Album	26
id6723	File - Oversized Photo Album: "Views at Miami and Vicinity, Biscayne Bay, Dade County, South Eastern Florida"	Winter 1884-1885 27
id6724	File - Glass Plate Negatives	28

Series id6691: Munroe and Wirth Family Correspondence

Date: 1873-1973 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

In 1894, Ralph Munroe met his second wife Miss Jessie Wirth during a sailing trip with his friends Mr. and Mrs. Benton (Jessie Wirth was Mrs. Benton's younger sister). Ralph Munroe and Jessie Wirth were married in July 1895. The couple had two children, Patty born in 1900 and Wirth in 1902. Series II documents the correspondence of the Munroe and Wirth Families (Arranged Chronologically).

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
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id6732	File - Munroe Family : Correspondence	1873-1926	29
id6733	File - Munroe Family : Correspondence	1927-1990	30
id6734	File - Munroe Family : Financial Records	1910-1938	31
id6735	File - Wirth Munroe : Correspondence & Financial Records	1842-1973	32
id6736	File - Wirth Family : Correspondence	1852-1919	33
id6737	File - Wirth Family : Correspondence	1864-1916	34

Series id6692: Diaries, Calendars and Logs

Date: 1841-1909 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The diaries, calendars and logs record the individual perspectives of members of the Munroe family during their travels and as they settle in the local Staten Island and Coconut Grove communities. For instance, Ellen Middleton and Thomas Munroe (Ralph M. Munroe's parents) were married on July 4, 1839 in London. According to Ralph M. Munroe, his mother's diaries describe the travels and adventures of the couple between America and London during his father's various business activities. The series also includes the diaries of Jessie Wirth Munroe, the Commodores' second wife as well as the notebooks of Mary Poore Munroe (married to Wirth Munroe, Jessie and Ralph Munroe's son).

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id6739	File - Diaries of Ellen Munroe	1841-1879		35
id6740	File - Diaries of Ellen Munroe	1880-1888		36
id6741	File - Diaries of Mary Munroe	1856-1889		37
id6742	File - Diaries of Mary Munroe	1890-1908		38
id6743	File - Diaries of Uncle Alfred Munroe and Wirth Munroe	1856-1917		39
id6744	File - Diaries and Log Book of Jessie Wirth	1894, 1901, 1909		40
id6745	File - Log Book of Alfred Munroe	1875		41
id6746	File - Calendars of Mary Poore Munroe	1962-1972		42
id6747	File - Mary Poore Munroe : Notebooks	1910, 1926-1949, 1983, 1990-1995		43

Series id6693: Camp Biscayne

Scope and content:

The Bay View House, later known as the Peacock Inn, was the earliest hotel in the Bay area as of 1882. The inn was owned by English settlers, Charles and Isabella Peacock who maintained it until 1902. Ralph Munroe was a frequent winter visitor and friend of the family. The Peacock Inn became a gathering place for a faithful group of Northern visitors. The Commodore opened Camp Biscayne after the inn closed (due to Mr. & Mrs. Peacocks ill health) to provide new accommodations for those

who still wished to vacation to South Florida. The series includes photographs of the various cottages as well as the native plants and trees of hammocks. The promotional materials include flyers and brochures describing the Biscayne Bay area, the favorable climate and the its suitability for boating and fishing.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id6748	File - Camp Biscayne : Photographs and Correspondence	1898, 1901-1934		44
id6749	File - Camp Biscayne : Promotional Materials			45
id6750	File - Camp Biscayne : Financial Records	1912-1926, 1969		46
id6751	File - Camp Biscayne : Financial Records	1909, 1914, 1918, 1922		47

Series id6694: Works

Scope and content:

Series 5 includes typescripts of Ralph Munroe's memoir, The Commodore's Story, which he co-authored with his friend Vincent Gilpin. The book was published in 1930.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id6752	File - "The Commodore's Story", Part I (Typescript)			48
id6753	File - "The Commodore's Story", Part II (Typescript)			49
id6754	File - Various Works			50

Series id6695: Clippings and Scrapbook

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id6755	File - The Barnacle (oversize)	1963-1991		51

id7166	File - Coconut Grove (oversize)	1917, 1960-1966, 1971, 1987-1989, 1994	52
id7176	File - Islandia, Miami growth and construction (oversize)	1920, 1925, 1928, 1944, 1953, 1957-1959, 1960-1967	53
id7311	File - Islandia, Miami growth and construction	1934, 1939, 1956, 1958-1967	54
id7312	File - Islandia, Miami growth and construction (scrapbook)	1957-1963, 1966, 1969	55
id7304	File - Local newspaper clippings (oversize)	1896, 1911, 1918, 1923, 1926	56
id7305	File - Local newspaper clippings (oversize)	1952, 1960, 1964, 1966-1967	57
id7307	File - Miami newspaper clippings (oversize)	1909, 1925-1926, 1933	58
id7308	File - National newspaper clippings (oversize)	1896-1898, 1908-1909, 1911, 1915, 1920, 1924, 1933, 1990	59
id7309	File - Munroe family clippings (oversize)	1909, 1911, 1917, 1961	60
id7310	File - Seminole Indians (oversize)	1934	61
id7352	File - Photocopies		62

Series id6696: Topical Files

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id7372	File - Barnacle : Financial Records	1940-1953, 1959-1967		63
id7373	File - Biscayne Bay	1896-1926		64
id7374	File - Biscayne Bay	1926-1969		65
id7377	File - Biscayne Bay : Maps			66
id7375	File - Coconut Grove	1913-1988		67
id7376	File - Coconut Grove Audubon Society : Minutes	1917-1923		68
id31264	File - Dinner Key	1939-1951		69
id7378	File - Florida Keys and Islandia	1925-1992		70
id7391	File - Pansy Periodicals, 1890	1890		71

id7392	File - Topical File (various)	1869-1988	72	
Series id7394: Maps & Plans				
<u>Date</u> : 1861-1954 (date of creation)				
<u>Publication status</u> :				
Published				
File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id7396	File - Munroe Family Papers : Maps	1861-1954		5 7
Series id93819: Exhibition Reproductions				
<u>Publication status</u> :				
Published				
File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id93820	File - Exhibition reproductions			73
id93821	File - Exhibition reproductions			74
id93822	File - Exhibition reproductions			75
id93823	File - Exhibition reproductions			76
id93824	File - Exhibition reproductions			77
id93825	File - Exhibition reproductions			78
id93826	File - Exhibition reproductions			79