



COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection number: [Temporary Loan]

Collection title: Carl Burr Diaries

Dates: 1908-1961

Size: 28 Bound Diaries (1 box, 1.5 cu. ft.)

Creator/Collector: Carl Burr (1884-1961)

Acquisition info.: Loan of Gerry Bennett, 2015.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Material was loaned to the Society by Gerry Bennett in 2015.

Language(s): Collection materials are in English.

Repository: Hingham Historical Society Archives, Hingham, Massachusetts.

Processed by: Robert H. Malme, March to July 2015.

Conservation notes: Not applicable.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access restrictions:

Collection is open for research.

Physical access restrictions:

None.

Technical access restrictions:

None.

Publication rights:

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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Preferred citation:

[item identification], The Carl Burr Diaries Collection, 2015.##.##, Hingham Historical Society, Hingham, Massachusetts.

Related collections:

None

Separated material:

None

Published descriptions:

Not applicable

Location of originals:

Not applicable

Location of copies:

Not applicable

Publication note:

Not applicable

Subject headings:

Hingham (Mass.)
Hingham (Mass.)--History.
Hingham Historical Society
Burr, Carl, 1884-1961

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Carl Burr was born on June 13, 1884, the eleventh child of Elisha Burr (1839-1909), sixth generation Hingham resident, and Mary Pratt Burr (1842-1940) of Cohasset, who were married on February 26, 1860. Carl Burr was a lifelong resident in Hingham who resided at the family homestead at 61 Leavitt Street, across from Agricultural Hall, this was the second Burr family house at this location, the 'new' house having been built in 1789, his mother occupying the other half of the home, expanded in size after his marriage. He married Esther (Essie) M. Snyder (1889-1975) of Cohasset on June 15, 1910 and they raised two children, Alston P. Burr (1910-1979), who later lived next door at 67 Leavitt Street and was Superintendent of the Hingham Tree and Parks Department from 1940 to 1947, and Constance (Connie) (1915-1989) who married Adrian B. Talbot (1896-1974) in 1939 and raised five children in Darien, Connecticut. His first job was as a machinist at the Hingham Knitting Company, in 1911 he started working for South Shore clients of the Rich and Marble Co. taking on plumbing and pipe-fitting installation and repair jobs, referring to himself as a plumber, pipe-fitter, or steamfitter over the years in the Hingham Street Listings. He also served as an on-call member of the Hingham Fire Department until 1924. From the 1920s until 1950, he served as a maintenance superintendent at several buildings in Boston, including those of the Thorndike Estate at 200 Dartmouth Street in Boston and on Highland Avenue in Needham Heights until 1944 and then at the Bryant and Stratton School at 334 Boylston Street in Boston, spending mornings, or entire days, working there and commuting back and forth by train. After he retired in 1950, he served as custodian for Agricultural Hall and groundskeeper at the Hingham Center Cemetery until his death.

In his off-hours, he was an avid outdoorsman, a hunter of ducks, game birds, and wildlife, and fisherman of local rivers and ponds, early on mostly in Hingham and later increasingly elsewhere, often accompanied by hunting dogs, which, by the 1920's, he was breeding in his own kennels on his property, and often entering into local dog shows. He was an active participant in Hingham civic life as a young man, attending Annual, and Special, Town Meetings, serving as a poll worker on election days, and attending events by local, mostly Republican, politicians. He attended events at the First Parish (Old Ship) Church and was a member of the Wompatuck Club, the Lincoln (Hunting) Club, a founding member of the Hingham Sportsmen's Club, and also a member of the Plymouth County League of Sportsmen's Clubs, and the Scituate Rod and Gun Club. Evenings were often spent on hunting and fishing related activities in his shop (garage) or that of his brother, Russ Burr. He also frequently attended local sporting contests, mostly baseball and football games, many of which took place at the nearby Fairgrounds behind Agricultural Hall into the 1910s. He passed away suddenly on Sunday, May 28, 1961. He was 76 years old. His burial was in the Hingham Center Cemetery. His wife Essie lived for 14 more years, passing away in 1975.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This loaned collection contains 28 of 31 diary books written by Carl Burr (1884-1961) between 1908 and 1961 loaned to the Historical Society by Gerry Bennett. The diaries have daily entries that typically start with the weather that day and go on to describe his work, recreational, and evening activities. Work activities evolved over the years, in his early years, manufacturing work

at the Hingham Knitting Co., then, from the 1910s to early 1920s, taking on many types of plumbing and heating installation, repair and maintenance jobs on the South Shore for homeowner and business clients of first Rich and Marble, and other businesses. By the 1920s to 1944, he was working at the Boston properties of the Thorndike Estate, then as a maintenance superintendent at the Bryant and Stratton School until 1950. He also served part-time on the Hingham Fire Department, largely for Engine Co. 2, until May 1924. Recreational activities described include duck and bird hunting at the Home Meadows, Triphammer Pond, Accord Pond and other Hingham locations and at camps on the South River in Marshfield, in Orleans on Cape Cod, and Henniker, NH. Other activities included ocean clam digging after winter storms at Nantasket Beach, visiting Paragon Park, attending lectures, concerts, and, or movies at Loring Hall, going to baseball and football games, both in Hingham, across the street from his house in the Fairgrounds behind Agricultural Hall, and in Boston, and attending professional baseball games at Braves Field. He was a founding member of the Hingham Sportsmen's Club, attending their monthly meetings at G.A.R. Hall and frequently traveling to other Sportsmen's Club meetings around the South Shore. His avid indoor activity was card playing, especially the game *ombré*, which he participated in seasonal competitions each winter with his son Allston and Hingham Centre neighbors. The games would take place at his shop, the shop of Russell Burr, or, later, at his son Allston's. Starting in the late 1920s other recreational activities included listening to sporting events on the radio, mostly wrestling matches and Boston Braves and Red Sox baseball games, which evolved in his later years, starting in the late 1940s, watching those activities on television.

While the diary consists mostly of matter-of-fact entries of a personal nature, he did, at times mention historical events, both locally and nationally. Local stories often involved the fires he helped put down as a member of the Hingham Fire Department from 1908 to 1924, along with significant storms and other extreme weather events. Nationally, events described included the sinking of the Titanic in April 1912, the death of President Warren Harding in 1923, his attendance at the visit to Boston by Charles Lindbergh after his trans-Atlantic flight in July 1927, the death of President Roosevelt and the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the election of President Kennedy in 1960. Other individuals prominently mentioned in his diary entries included his mother, Mary Pratt Burr (1842-1940), wife, Esther (Essie) Snyder Burr (1889-1975), son Allston P. Burr (1910-1978), his wife Lois Cushing Burr (1912-1996), his daughter Constance (Connie) Burr Talbot (1915-1989), grandsons David Burr (b. 1944) and Peter Burr (b. 1947), younger brother and noted decoy maker Russell P. Burr (1887-1955), who lived with his wife, Ruth Lane Burr, next door at 57 Leavitt Street, older sister Mary (May) Burr Ripley (1878-1953) and her husband William (Bill) Ripley (1876-1943), who lived two doors down at the corner of Leavitt and Spring Streets, employers Charles Marble (b. 1858) and Alexander Rich (b. 1866), and friends, neighbors and co-workers Eugene Botting, Charles Cushing (1892-1949) and his son, Charlie Cushing, Jr. (1923-2002), Fred Corthell (1871-1961), Walter Farrar (b. 1886), Bill Howard (b. 1876), Burr Leavitt (b. 1893), Steve Leighton, 'Chet' Linscott (b. 1894), James Arthur (J.A.) Ray (1866-1948), Clarence Stephenson (b. 1878), Frank H. 'Stud' Studley (1885-1922), Thorndike 'Whit' Whittemore (1887-1963), a Boston businessman and hunting partner who summered in Hingham in a house close by on East Street, and Bob Goss (b. 1899), a resident of Henniker, NH who owned the grounds Carl Burr spent much of his time hunting at from the late 1930s.

NOTE

The locations for the materials described in this finding aid may be temporary, for current location, ask the archives staff.

List of Carl Burr Diaries

<u>Number</u>	<u>Cover Description</u>	<u>Time Period</u>
1	Missing	(-6/30/1908)
2	Black and Red Hardcover	7/1/1908-6/30/1910
3	Black and Red Hardcover	7/1/1910-8/31/1912
4	Black and Red Hardcover	9/1/1912-11/30/1913
5	Black and Red Hardcover	12/1/1913-8/31/1915
6	'Our Big 5 Composition Book'-Brown	9/1/1915-2/28/1917
7	'Our Big 5 Composition Book'-Brown	3/1/1917-9/30/1918
8	Black and Tan Hardcover	10/1/1918-9/30/1919
9	Black and White Hardcover	10/1/1919-2/28/1920
10	Brown Softcover	3/1/1920-7/31/1920
11	Tan Softcover	8/1/1920-2/28/1921
12	Tan Hardcover	3/1/1921-4/30/1922
13	Tan Hardcover	5/1/1922-4/30/1924
14	Black Hardcover	5/1/1924-5/31/1929
15	Missing	(6/1/1929-12/31/1931)
16	Clipped Notebook Pages	1/1/1932-8/31/1934
17	Clipped Notebook Pages	9/1/1934-5/31/1936
18	Clipped Notebook Pages	6/1/1936-8/31/1937
19	Clipped Notebook Pages	9/1/1937-7/31/1939
20	Missing	(9/1/1939-12/31/1942)
21	Clipped Notebook Pages	1/1/1943-6/30/1945

22	Clipped Notebook Pages	7/1/1945-6/30/1947
23	Clipped Notebook Pages	7/1/1947-4/30/1949
24	Clipped Notebook Pages	5/1/1949-12/31/1950
25	Black Hardcover	1/1/1951-5/31/1952
26	Red 'Bryant and Stratton School' Hardcover	6/1/1952-8/31/1953
27	White 'Clairol' Cover	9/1/1953-5/31/1955
28	Clipped Notebook Pages	6/1/1955-4/30/1956
29	Black 'University' Cover	5/1/1956-12/31/1957
30	Tan Softcover	1/1/1958-12/31/1959
31	Tan Softcover	1/1/1960-5/28/1961

For a detailed listing of contents within a specific diary, consult the summary available at the Hingham Historical Society Archives.