

Finding Aid for The William Baker Papers, 1908-1988



Record Group Number RG #62/09

University Archives and Special Collections William F. Maag , Jr. Library Youngstown
State University One University Plaza Youngstown, OH 44555 330-941-3487 (Phone)

Descriptive Summary

Title: The William C. Baker Papers, 1908-1988

Creator: William C. Baker

Extent: 4 boxes (5.32 cubic feet)

Abstract: The collection consists of research on the birds of Columbiana County, Ohio by William C. Baker, a retired professor of English and amateur ornithologist. Documents included are: correspondences, maps, bird counts, migration reports, publications and notes.

Administrative Information

Provenance: Donated by Randall Jones, a retired naturalist and son of retired YSU librarian, George Jones. Randall came by these papers through William Baker's cousin after William and Margaret Baker died.

Preferred Citation: Youngstown State University, The William C. Baker Papers, RG #62/09, Archives & Special Collections, William F. Maag, Jr. Library, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio.

Restrictions: None

Processing : Lisa Marie Garofali, September-October 2020

Finding Aid: Written by Lisa Marie Garofali, November 2020

Historical Background

William Calvin Baker was born September 7, 1906 in Youngstown, Ohio. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II. He was a member of the English faculty at Youngstown State University from 1955 until his retirement in 1976. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Mount Union College (Alliance, Ohio) and his Master of Arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He did further post-graduate work at the latter, but never completed a doctoral degree. He was married to Margaret Baker, a secondary school teacher, and they made their home in Salem, Ohio. They had no children.

Professor Baker's passion however, was ornithology, so much so that he became known as "The premier bird student in Columbiana County" (Ohio). He published many papers on local birds for newspapers and presented at conferences. He was a leading member in the Grant M. Cook Bird Club (a now-defunct group of bird enthusiasts from both Columbiana and Mahoning Counties, Ohio) and the local ornithological society in Salem. This hobby took him all over the world. He travel to North and South America, Europe and Asia looking for birds. Interestingly, Baker was legally blind; as a young man, he was observing the sun with a telescope, but the solar filter on the device was defective. His eyesight was damaged to the point where he could no longer drive. Consequencely, he had to rely on his wife a great deal, who acted as his eyes. His hearing, however, became more acute, a sense that was essential to his bird studies. As a result, he could identitfy birds by sound alone.

William Baker died June 22, 1996 after suffering a stroke. His wife, Margaret, maintained possession of the collection until 1998 when she passed away. A cousin came across the files and contacted Randall Jones, a retired naturalist (and son of the late Dr. Goerge H.W. Jones, retired university librarian at YSU) and offered the collection to him. Jones kept the papers for ten years until deciding to donate them to the YSU Archives.¹

Scope and Content

This collection contains information relating to the research on the birds of Columbiana County, Ohio by William C. Baker. It includes dates of 1908-1988 with a majority between 1930-1980s. The collection is madeup of several artificial series. The Club series pertains to various clubs in which Baker was a member with most of the dates between 1950-1970s. The Correspondences series are to friends and other ornithologists. Observation Data series is a large portion of the collection and contains bird counts, lists, maps and other data. Publications series are journal articles, newspaper clippings, and catalogs, some written by Baker but mostly by others. The final series, Writings and Notes, contains most of Bakers unpublished papers and notes for presentations. The most interesting and personal writing is "How it Began with Me," where he discusses his interest in bird watching. Even though he is a retired English professor very little information is given on his teaching at YSU. He kept a few articles written by Karl Dykema, who was the chair of the English department at YSU.

¹ Information obtained when collection was donated to the archives by Randall Jones.

Several of his notes on birding are on the back of YSU related stationary and scrap paper. Some of the Christmas letter correspondences discuss the university accommodating Baker for his failing eye sight and his eventual retirement.

Colophon

The consists of research for a book that Baker was planning to write on the birds of Columbiana County, Ohio. Randall Jones noted, however, that a colleague and protégé of Baker's at the Grant M. Cook Bird Club later became a scholar and took some of the papers for research. His purpose for borrowing the documents was to write a paper for submission to *The Auk*, a refereed ornithological journal. The article was declined. Jones hopes to contact him in order to retrieve these missing documents in order to restore them to their proper place in the collection;² however, ten years later, nothing has been added.

The records were originally stored in a barn for ten years. There were dried out bug particles in some of the folders but no damage appeared to occurred to the records besides a slight mustiness. The-carton of index cards was disgarded because it replicated information from the bird counting charts and migration reports.

This collection was processed by Lisa Marie Garofali, a 13-year employee of the YSU Archives and Special Collections. She holds a M.A. in History from YSU.

Series Description

SERIES I: Clubs

SERIES II: Correspondence

SERIES III: Observation Data

Sub-Series: Counts

Sub-Series: Lists

Sub-Series: Maps

Sub-Series: Other

SERIES IV: Publications

SERIES V: Writings and Notes

Related Materials

Salem, Ohio by Dale E. Shaffer. Special Collections: F499.S17 S5 1998

The Salem News on Microform (Microform X 0437)

Salem folks in focus by Pearl A. Walker Special Collections: F499.S2 W3

² Information obtained from Randall Jones at the time of donation

Salem schools project / Margaret and William Baker ; interviewed by James L. McNeal Oral History 1139

Birds of Ohio : a field checklist. Division of Wildlife, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, 2012. Ohio Docs ONR 246.17:5363/2012

Index Terms

Aldrich, John W.
Allegheny National Forest
Bird Counts
Breiding, George
Brooks, Maurice
Buchanan, Forest
Claugus, A.H.
Columbiana County
Cooks Forest
Cox, Marion and Ella Smith
Dykma, Karl
Eisenmann, E.
Fordyce, George L.
Garrido, Orlando
Jones, Lynds
Kearns, Dan
King, Ben
Laitsch, Nevada
Mahoning County
Massie, Joel and Bertha
McLaughlin, V.P.
Mellinger, E.O.
Migration Reports
Miller, Lyle
Moore, William
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ornithology
Price, Calvin W.
Rees, Jeanni
Robinson, Len
Salem, Ohio
Sipe, James P.
Smith, Alta
Smith, H. Granville
Snow, David
Stewart, Paul A.
Sturgeon, Myron T.

The Grant Cook Bird Club
The Salem Bird Study Club
The Wilson Ornithological Society
Todd, W.E.C.
Topographical Maps
Torrey, Bradford
Trautman, Milton B.
Troutman, K. Roger
Vardaman, James M.
Watercress Marsh
Weisgerber, H.W.
Wright, Asa

BOX 1

SERIES I: Clubs

This series focuses on William Baker's participation in organizations and clubs. He was an active member in the Grant Cook Bird Club (which focused on the counties of Mahoning and Columbiana), which is now defunct. Baker was also active in his hometown Salem Bird Study Club and was president from 1954-1955. The organization was still having meetings as of 2019. Baker attended the Wilson Ornithological Society's (an international scientific society) annual conference and lectured at the event in 1974-1976. The World Nature Club is an educational and scientific organization devoted to the study of birds and other natural history forms on a world-wide scale (at sub-professional levels) and to the conservation of nature and natural resources. Through this organization, the Bakers were able to travel the world and enjoy their bird-watching activities.

Folder No. Contents

- 1 The Grant Cook Bird Club. Flying Feathers Quarterly. 1950-1954
- 2 The Grant Cook Bird Club. The Ohio Cardinal (Formerly Flying Feathers). 1955
- 3 The Grant Cook Bird Club. The Ohio Cardinal. 1955
- 4 The Salem Bird Study Club. 1954-1984
- 5 The Salem Bird Study Club. Newspaper Clippings. 1954-1956, 1977
- 6 The Salem Bird Study Club. Salem News Articles. 1985
- 7 The Wilson Ornithological Society. 1974-1976
- 8 The World Nature Association/Club; Crowder Tours. 1964-1983

SERIES II: Correspondence

This series is arranged alphabetically by last name and/or subject matter. Most relate to bird-watching, journals, and traveling. The Christmas letters are perhaps the most interesting and personal. These letters include things such as the Bakers yearly activities (most which include exotic trips for bird-watching) and a few descriptions of Baker's teaching at

Youngstown State University and some of the accommodations which were made for his failing eyesight.

Folder No. Content

- 9 John W. Aldrich. 1947-1988
- 10 Maurice Brooks and George Breiding. 1953, 1956
- 11 Forest Buchanan. 1933-1980
- 12 Christmas Letters. 1962-1987
- 13 A.H. Claugus. 1977, undated
- 14 Ella Smith and Marion Cox. 1972
- 15 E.Eisenmann. 1968
- 16 Orlando Garrido. 1979
- 17 Lynds Jones. 1932
- 18 Ben King. 1982
- 19 Dan Kearns. 1979
- 20 Nevada Laitsch. 1963-1989
- 21 Bertha and Joel Massie. 1964-1982
- 22 V. P. McLaughlin (Salem Bird Study Club). 1957-1981
- 23 E. O. Mellinger. 1950-1987
- 24 Lyle Miller. 1952
- 25 William Moore. 1970
- 26 Ohio Biological Survey. 1979-1986
- 27 Ohio Department of Natural Resources. 1980
- 28 Calvin W. Price (Wedding Trip). Undated
- 29 Jeanni Rees. 1946
- 30 Len Robinson. 1974-1980
- 31 H. Granville Smith. 1973-1974
- 32 James P. Sipe. 1968-1969
- 33 Alta Smith. 1946-1963
- 34 David Snow. 1977
- 35 Paul A. Stewart. 1945-1980
- 36 Myron T. Sturgeon. 1944-1986
- 37 W.E.C. Todd. 1932-1933
- 38 Bradford Torrey (subject). 1947-1952
- 39 Milton B. Trautman. 1933-1981
- 40 K. Roger Troutman. 1976
- 41 James M. Vardaman. 1973-1982
- 42 Various. 1968. 1980-1987
- 43 Watercress Marsh (subject). 1978

BOX 2**SERIES III: Observation Data****Sub-Series: Counts**

This subseries is similar to the list sub-series but the materials has more specific information. This information includes the bird species, the status of the species (common, uncommon, rare...etc.), how many were seen, and the dates of the arrivals and departures. The locations/sightings are specific (mostly-in Salem and Columbiana County). The Migration Reports were submitted to the U.S. Biological Survey. William Baker made his own migration reports for Columbiana County for the years 1929-1968 and the raw data is included. The Audubon Society holds national Christmas counts each year, and the Grant Cook Society (as well as the Salem Study Bird Society) would participate to represent the local areas. The Bakers were continuous participants in this activity.

Folder No.	Content
1	Counts. Bird Migration Reports. George L. Fordyce and H. W. Weisgerber. 1908-1920
2	Counts. Bird Migration Reports. U.S. Biological Survey. 1936-1941
3	Counts. Bird Migration –Site. Columbiana and Southern Mahoning Counties in Ohio. 1929-1968
4	Counts. Bird Migration – Site. Columbiana County Ohio and Wheeling, West Virginia. 1929-1968
5	Counts. Christmas Counts. 1969-1987

Sub-Series: Lists

Most of these lists reflect the Bakers' travelling and document the birds native to those places. Some of the lists are blank and others have check marks and counts of the birds he saw during his travels. There are several folders dedicated to Columbiana County with lists and migratory reports.

Folder No.	Content
6	List. A.O.U Checklist. 1983
7	List. Australia. 1974
8	List. Breeding Birds Preliminary List by William Baker. 1934, 1945, 1953

- 9 List. Bird Lists. Undated
- 10 List. Birds. Miscellaneous. 1951-1974
- 11 List. Birds. Trees: A year round food supply. Undated
- 12 List. California Bird Lists. 1979
- 13 List. Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. 1969
- 14 List. India and Sir Lanka. 1976
- 15 List. Maylaya and Philippine. 1963, 1980
- 16 List. New Zealand. Undated
- 17 List. North America. Undated
- 18 List. Ohio. 1953-1978
- 19 List. Ohio. Columbiana County. 1954, undated
- 20 List. Ohio. Breeding Birds of Columbiana County. 1978
- 21 List. Ohio. Columbiana County Checklist with a 40 year personal migration table by William Baker. Undated
- 22 List. South America. 1966, 1977
- 23 List. United Kingdom List. 1974
- 24 List. United States, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. 1973-1974, undated

Sub-Series: Maps

Some of these maps correspond to the bird counts, such as the Christmas Counts. All of these maps show the local areas Mr. and Mrs. Baker would visit for birdwatching. Some of their favorite places, besides home, included Presque Isle State Park and Cooks Forest in Pennsylvania. Some of the maps have markings of locations or circumferences of areas for birdwatching-Most of the maps are Columbiana and Mahoning counties, which are filed in the Oversize box (Box 4)

- | Folder No. | Content |
|-------------------|--|
| 25 | Maps. Christmas Counts. Undated |
| 26 | Maps. Index. 1964 |
| 27 | Maps. Ohio. Topographical Maps. 1920-1954 |
| 28 | Maps. Ohio. Columbiana County. Undated |
| 29 | Maps. Ohio. Columbiana County. Breeding Birds. Undated |
| 30 | Maps. Ohio. Columbiana County. Highway and City. 1928-1970 |
| 31 | Maps. Ohio. Ohio Counties (not Mahoning or Columbiana). 1940-1948, undated |
| 32 | Maps. Ohio. Mahoning, Columbus and Franklin Counties. Highway and City. 1946, 1973 |
| 33 | Maps. Ohio. Park. Gibbs Park Map. Undated |
| 34 | Maps. Ohio. Park. Hocking Hills State Park Area. 1927-1948, undated |
| 35 | Maps. Ohio. Streams. 1938 |
| 36 | Maps. Parks. Undated (circa 1960-1970s) |

BOX 3

Sub-Series: Maps (con't)

Folder No.	Content
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|---|---|
| 1 | Maps. Pennsylvania. Topographical Maps. 1920-1944 |
| 2 | Maps. Pennsylvania. Cooks Forest and Allegheny National Forest. 1941-1977 |
| 3 | Maps. West Virginia and Virginia. Topographical Maps. 1924-1945 |

Sub-Series: Other

This sub-series contains miscellaneous observational data that does not fall into the other sub-series.

Folder No.	Content
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|---|---|
| 4 | Other. Breeding Bird Atlas, Ohio. 1983, undated |
| 5 | Other. Life-Zone Study. Undated |
| 6 | Other. Sonagram. Undated |

SERIES IV: Publications

Any news articles, pamphlets, journal magazines or articles, catalogs and prints which did not fall into the other series are maintained in this series. William Baker wrote several articles for the Salem News in 1932 and had his own column "On the Wing" ~~in~~ from 1977 to 1978. Included also are newsletters, and journal articles related to birds. The only non-orthinogrphy/Baker publications in this series are the articles by Karl Dykema and the Committee to Restore the Constitution.

Folder No.	Content
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| 7 | Articles by Karl. W. Dykema. 1945-1954 |
| 8 | Bird Houses Catalog. 1936, 1960 |
| 9 | Bird Lists of lists. 1978, 1980 |
| 10 | "Birds of Chile" by A.W. Johnson. 1966 |
| 11 | Birds – Offprints. 1930-1973 |
| 12 | Chickadees. Richard Brewer. 1961, 1963 |
| 13 | Committee to Restore the Constitution. 1978 |
| 14 | <i>The Humble Way</i> and the <i>Ohio Conservation Bulletin</i> . 1961, 1971 |
| 15 | "The Kentucky Warbler in Columbiana County" by H.W. Weisgerber. undated |
| 16 | Newsletter: The Tundra Telegram. 1963-1968 |
| 17 | Newsletter: Questers Nature Tour Notes. 1978 |
| 18 | Quarterly Reports of the Ohio Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. 1953-1954 |
| 19 | "Salem Folks in Focus." Founders Week program. 1976 |
| 20 | "Salem History" Junior High. 1936 and 1975 |
| 21 | Salem News Articles. "On the Wing" by William Baker. 1977 |

- 22 Salem News Articles. "On the Wing" by William Baker. 1978
- 23 Salem News Articles written by William Baker. 1932

SERIES V: Writings and Notes

These are unpublished works created by William Baker or notes Baker took on other writings, some of which he gave presentations on for the local bird club meetings. His thesis draftwork is included as well as a few papers for graduate work. The bibliographies and annotated lists seem to be in preparation for a book he was planning to write on the birds of Columbiana County. "How it Began with Me" may have been part of the biographical section of that book. It describes William Baker growing up near Little Beaver River and his fascination with birds early in his life. Some of these notes are typed, but many are handwritten (possibly Margarets writing) and appear to be drafts.

Folder No. Content

- 24 Annotated list of the Birds of Columbiana County. Undated
- 25 Bachman's and Wilson's Warbler. Text notes. Undated
- 26 Bachman's Sparrow. Notes. Undated
- 27 Bibliography. Undated
- 28 The Birds of Meredith's Poetry. Undated
- 29 Bruce Peninsula. 1931
- 30 Compositions –Birds. 1933, undated
- 31 Common Birds of Columbiana County. Bird descriptions 1984
- 32 "How it Began with Me" and other text. 1977, undated
- 33 Thesis work. Draft. Undated.
- 34 Thesis "The Influence of Walt Whitman on John Burroughs" undated

BOX 4

Oversize box for Maps of Columbiana and Mahoning counties. 1908-1978