Robert Torrens Hatt (1902 - 1989)

Papers, 1919-1984
1.75 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1999-14
Acquisition: Gift of Jennifer Hatt Windus.
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Photographs: Box 2.
Processing: Amy James, January 2000
History

Robert Torrens Hatt was born on July 17, 1902 in Lafayette, Indiana. He was the son of William Kendrick Hatt, a professor of civil engineering at Purdue University, and Josie Belle Appleby Hatt.

Dr. Hatt grew up in Lafayette and attended Purdue University from 1919-1920. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1923 from the University of Michigan. Hatt began his career in museums at Michigan when one of his professors, Dr. Ruthven, assigned him a research desk at the old University Museum. Dr. Hatt pursued his interest in the study of mammals at Columbia University, where he was awarded a masters degree (1925), and a Ph.D. in zoology (1932). During this time, Dr. Hatt was an instructor of biology at New York University (1923-1928), and an Assistant Curator of Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (1928-1935).

A long association with Cranbrook began on July 1, 1935, when Dr. Hatt was appointed Director of the Cranbrook Institute of Science (CIS), a position he held until retirement on June 30, 1967. Under his direction, CIS went through several building expansions and research conducted there drew the attention of the scientific community worldwide. In appreciation for his years of service, Dr. Hatt was awarded a Founders Medal in 1964 from the Cranbrook Foundation.

In addition to his administrative duties as CIS Director, Dr. Hatt spent a significant amount of time on field work and consultation. His research on the mammals of the United States, Mexico, Iraq, Pakistan, the Congo, and Southern Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe] resulted in many published papers and books. He was a Fellow in the Zoological Society of London and the New York Zoological Society, and the American Museum of Natural History. Hatt was a Research Fellow with the Fulbright Foundation in Iraq (1952-1953), and was appointed as the Ministry of Education, Consultant on Science Museums through UNESCO in Pakistan (1956).


Following retirement, Dr. and Mrs. Hatt continued their research and world travels, with a home base in Littleton, New Hampshire. Dr. Hatt died in 1989 after suffering a stroke.

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection is divided into five series: Personal, Travel Journals, Published Works, Photographs, and Ephemera.

The Personal series document Dr. Hatt’s life and work at Cranbrook Institute of Science and elsewhere. Within the correspondence folder are letters describing Dr. and Mrs.
Hatt’s travel in Pakistan and Africa. Two diaries chronicle Dr. Hatt’s activities during his retirement years.

Several decades of world travel and field work are described in the Travel Journals series. Starting in 1919 with his summer field work in Wyoming and Colorado, Dr. Hatt recorded both professional and personal observances in these journals. They are arranged chronologically.

Items in the Published Works series represent only a small part of the approximately 250 scientific papers and reports authored by Dr. Hatt during his career. The works are arranged chronologically. One book in this series, Laboratory Manual of Testing Materials, was written by Hatt’s father, William Kendrick Hatt, a professor of civil engineering at Purdue University.

Materials in the Photographs series are of special interest to those studying early Cranbrook and CIS history. Subjects documented are: the first house built on Faculty Row (occupied by the Hatt family), the CIS original building and planetarium, ca. early 1930s, and the gardens at Milles House at Cranbrook during the Hatt family residence.

Dr. Hatt’s metal field notebook clipboard is the only item in the Ephemera series. The condition of the clipboard indicates that it was used extensively during Dr. Hatt’s field work and travels.

Related Collections

- CIS Director’s Papers, 1990-31
- Cranbrook Publications collection
- E&M file, Robert T. Hatt
Box Number--Description

**Series I**  Personal

**Box 1**

1. Biographical (obituary, newsclippings, curriculum vita, press releases)
2. Correspondence, 1920-1921, various 1950s – 1971
3. Cranbrook general, n.d., 1943
4. CIS programs, n.d., 1944
5. Diary, 1974-1978
7. Financial matters, 1920
8. Retirement dinner (CIS), 1967

**Series II**  Travel Journals

9. Summer record, Vol. 1, 1919
12. Angelo Halpern expedition to Yucatan, 1929
14. #20, Field notebook, Colorado and California, 1939
15. #23, United States museums, 1940, 1943-1944
16. #25, Mexico, 1944
17. #30, Mexico City, Yucatan, 1947
18. #31, Mexico and S.W. United States, 1951
19. #33, Europe, Middle East, 1952-1953
20. #37, World tour, 1956-1957
21. #38, World tour, 1956-1957
22. #41B, Mexico, 1958
23. #39, Europe, 1959
24. #43, Africa, 1961
25. #44, Africa, South Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1961
26. #45, United States, Puerto Rico, 1962
27. #46, Europe, 1962
28. #47, Europe, 1962
29. #49, Hawaii, 1964
30. #50, United States, West Indies, 1965-1966
31. #51, Yucatan, 1966

**Box 2**

**Series II cont.**

1. #52, Japan, Burlington, Vermont, 1966
2. #53, United States and Canada, 1966-1967
3. #55, World tour, 1968
4. #56, United States, West Indies, 1969-1970
5. #57, Europe, 1970
6. #58, Europe, 1970
7. #59, United States and Canada, 1970-1972
8. #60, Mexico, 1971
9. #61, Borneo, 1972
10. #62, United States, 1972-1974
11. #63, United States, Caribbean, South America, 1974
12. #64, Spain and France, 1977
13. #64, Cuba, China, California, Baja California, 1978
14. #23, Miscellaneous travel, 1979-1982
15. Costa Rica, Mexico, Isle Royale, Jamaica, various United States, 1981-1984

Series III  Published Works


Series IV  Photographs

Box 2, cont.

Series V Ephemera

26. (1) metal field notebook clipboard