

MSS. Collection #118

Climax Lodge Collection, 1899-1943. 1 box (4 folders), 4 items.

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

The Climax Lodge Collection consists of three game books and a photograph album relating to the Climax Lodge hunt club in Guilford County, NC. The game books are of historical note for their frequent reference to wealthy public figures of the Gilded Age, including J.P. Morgan (1837-1813), J.P. Morgan, Jr. (1867-1943), James Swan Frick (1848-1927), and Robert Bacon (1860-1919), as well as local photographer John Walker Fry (1854-1938). They also contain weather recordings during winter months, which may be of potential interest for early-to-mid 20th century climatological research.

Arrangement: This collection consists of two series: **Game Books**, 1889-1943, and **Photograph Album**, 1899-1943.

Provenance: The game books in this collection were donated by J. L. Donnell, son of William Donnell, in 1994 and assigned accession numbers 1994.75.1-3. In 1995, Donnell donated the photo album, which was added to the collection and assigned accession number 1995.138.1.

Processing: The finding aid for this collection was prepared by volunteer Alice Bailey in June 2013.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Climax Lodge was founded and constructed by General John Gill and James Swan Frick of Baltimore in 1889. The lodge grounds were situated on four acres of land and members reserved hunting rights to 13,000 surrounding acres of farmland (later 20,000). The lodge was maintained by William Donnell, who kept the property, trained dogs, made hunting arrangements, and managed operations. After the death of his father Jack Morgan in 1943, Junius Morgan inherited sole interest in the lodge and, declining to continue support, closed and had it liquidated for building materials.

During its existence (1899-1943), the lodge attracted notable wealthy northerners, including Robert Bacon, J.P. Morgan, and J.P. Morgan, Jr. Amateur photographer John Walker Fry, a railway superintendent and bank president originally from Richmond, Virginia, was the only local member. Husband of Governor John Motley Morehead's granddaughter Annie Gray, Fry's interests in hunting, fishing and gardening are reflected in his photography, which features landscape scenes prominently.

Historical Sources: The main source used to compile this biographical note was Book I, Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Photography of John Fry*, by Mary Lewis Rucker Edmunds (1982). Additional information was found in Vic Venter's article entitled "J.P. Morgan's Birds" in *Wildlife in North Carolina*, vol. 54, no. 12 (ca. 1991).

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of three game books and a photograph album. The information recorded daily in the game books about weather is consistently thorough and accompanied by commentary on the bird population when outside the norm. Although the arrival, participation and departure of members is carefully noted, mentions of other incidents are infrequent, and personal notes are rare and limited to indirect references to other members. The photographs, similar to the game books, do not focus on the individual members but rather document the hunt.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Game Books. 3 folders (3 items). 1899-1943.

These game books were kept by James Frick during hunting season, from November 14th to March 1st. They contain logs of weather, lodge activities, members participating in the hunt, number of game animals killed and population levels of game animals when outside the norm.

2. Photograph Album. 1 folder (1 item). 1899-1943.

The photograph album contains about thirty black and white photographs taken by member and local resident John Walker Fry. Predominantly outdoor scenes, the subjects include males shooting rifles, hunting dogs, game animals, and the exterior of houses and farm buildings. One photograph of the interior of Climax Lodge is included.

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Game Books	-- Climax Lodge (1899-1910)
	2	"	-- " " (1911-1924)
	3	"	-- " " (1925-1943)
2	1	Photograph Album	-- Climax Lodge (1899-1943)