



George Clinton Arthur Papers (R0244)

Collection Number: R0244

Collection Title: George Clinton Arthur Papers

Dates: circa 1914-1944

Creator: Arthur, George Clinton, 1905-1962

Abstract: The George Clinton Arthur Papers contain the reminiscences and personal papers assembled in connection with George C. Arthur's work on "Bushwhacker" Bill Wilson during the Civil War in Phelps County, Missouri. There is also genealogical information concerning the Arthur and Turnure families, and correspondence regarding Arthur's books, *Backwoodsmen* and *Bushwhacker*.

Collection Size: 0.3 cubic foot
(3 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *George Clinton Arthur Papers* (R0244); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Lois M. Brown on May 16, 1985 (Accession No. RA0292). An addition was made on November 3, 1999 by Sue Hansen (Accession No. RA0737).

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, February 7, 1986. Revised by John F. Bradbury, November 3, 1999. Revised by Kathleen Seale, February 2, 2022.

Biographical Note:

A native of Phelps County, George Clinton Arthur was born on July 7, 1905 to George T. and Hattie M. *Turner* Arthur. He was raised in the Corn Creek area in the southern part of Phelps County. His family was one of the earliest migrants to settle in the area. He was well-known locally as the author of two books on Phelps County history. Arthur was married to Mary Helen and the couple divorced in 1947. He remarried in 1948 to Nancy Doll Newton. Arthur died on February 10, 1962 in St. Louis and was buried in Newburg.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains the materials of George C. Arthur in connection to his work on his books *Bushwhacker* and *Backwoodsman*. *Bushwhacker*, published in 1938, is the story of the Civil War desperado, Bill Wilson, who was from the same Corn Creek neighborhood as Arthur. *Backwoodsman*, published in 1940, is the story of pioneer lumbermen of the northern Ozarks who logged virgin pineries of Phelps and Texas counties for lumber and railroad ties, rafting timber down the local rivers to St. Louis.

Arthur drew his material exclusively from oral traditions. Much of it came from his own family, and some from individuals who were personally involved in activities chronicled. Both the *Bushwhacker* and *Backwoodsman* include copies of notarized affidavits from Arthur's informants. The affidavits attested to the accuracy of the stories presented by Arthur and authorized him to use the accounts in his publications.

Folder 1 contains drafts of brief reminiscences by John W. Karnes and R. C. Jones collected during preparation of *Bushwhackers*. The reminiscences concern the Civil War in Phelps County, particularly the activities of Bill Wilson and the murders of former Phelps County judge Lewis Wright and his sons by a band of Union militia in August 1865.

Folder 2 contains correspondence and miscellaneous genealogical information on the Arthur and Turnure families. The data was apparently collected by Hattie M. Arthur, mother of George C., in connection with an alleged Turnure inheritance from France. Two letters from United States Senator Roscoe M. Patterson, to who Hattie Arthur had written for information, provide some background on the supposed Turnure estate.

Folder 3 contains miscellaneous correspondence. Included is a postcard from folklorist Mabel E. Mueller of Rolla, a letter and newspaper clippings from Christopher Publishing House in Boston regarding Arthur's books *Bushwhacker* and *Backwoodsman*, and a portion of a letter to Arthur from his wife while he was serving aboard an escort carrier during World War II.

Container List:

Box 001	f. 1	Research for books, 1939, no date
	f. 2	Turnure family research, estate, 1914, 1934, no date
	f. 3	Personal papers, 1940-1944

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