

Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
ARCHIVES – FINDING AID

Collection Title: Laura Brodie Papers

Creator: Brodie, Laura (1908-2004)

Dates: 1912-1955, bulk 1946-1951

Extent: 1.5 Linear Feet (3 manuscript boxes)

Level of Description: Folder Level

Repository: Natural History Collections and Archives, Chicago Academy of Sciences /Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Access Conditions: Open for research.

Ownership and Literary Rights: The Laura Brodie Papers are the physical property of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. Access is provided to materials in the collection for non-commercial educational and research purposes. Copyright may belong to the authors or their legal heirs or assigns. For permission to publish or reproduce any materials from this collection, contact the CAS/PNNM Collections Department.

Citation: Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item], [folder], [box], Laura Brodie Papers, Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.

Acquisition Information: The original acquisition of this collection is unknown.

Processor and Date: Julie Wroblewski and Amber K. King, January - February 2011; Alexandra Katich, October 2019.

Processing Note: Organization not based on original order as documents moved repeatedly before final processing. A small number of unrelated materials were removed from this collection.

Biographical Sketch: Laura Brodie (1908-2004) was a herpetologist who worked at both the Field Museum in Chicago and the University of Michigan Museum. She was a graduate of Batesburg-Leesville High School and attended Winthrop College. She was the daughter of Furman Edward and Ida Johnson Brodie, owners of Brodie Light & Power Co., who first supplied

electricity to Leesville, Gilbert, and Summit, SC. She was also the great-granddaughter of Confederate General Paul Quattlebaum, who invented the Quattlebaum rifle and owned and operated a rifle works, lumber business, and flour mill. Brodie grew up on Rockwood Farm, approximately five miles south of Leesville, South Carolina in Lexington County, where she was known for her childhood fascination with area wildlife. As a high school student, she started a small museum, called Rockwood Museum, where she displayed her personal collection of specimens. Brodie's biology professor at Winthrop College, who was a former classmate of Howard K. Gloyd (1902-1978) at Kansas State College, recommended her to Gloyd. Gloyd in turn helped Brodie obtain employment at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, where she continued her herpetology research and collecting. Brodie joined the herpetology staff at the Chicago Natural History Museum (now the Field Museum) in 1946. As part of her responsibilities at the Field Museum, she conducted the annual check of marked blue-racers (*Coluber constrictor foxii*) in the Indiana dune region, part of a long-term project in the Division of Reptiles to learn more about this snake's movements and hibernation. She was affiliated with the Chicago Academy of Sciences in the late 1950s. In 1956, Brodie was nearly killed in an automobile accident in Chicago and the injuries she sustained effectively ended her research career. She returned to Leesville, South Carolina shortly after where she continued to informally collect and study snakes and reptiles until her death in 2004.

Sanders, Albert E. "Laura Brodie." South Carolina Encyclopedia.

<http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/brodie-laura/> (Accessed October 30, 2019).

Scope and Content: The materials found within this collection are focused on Brodie's herpetology collecting and research for the Chicago Field Museum, her personal travel, and her personal correspondence. Most of the research and field notes deal with her research on blue racer snakes. The majority of the correspondence is personal letters and postcards between Brodie and colleague Geneva Smithe of Ann Arbor, Michigan; the travel materials also deal primarily with Brodie's 1946 cross-country automobile trip with Smithe.

Series Description:

Series 1: Personal (1921-1949, undated)

This small series contains tags and labels from clothing and other merchandise as well as news clippings, mainly travel related, collected by Laura Brodie.

Series 2: Correspondence (1913-1951, undated)

The series contains letters and postcards between Brodie and various others. The bulk of the material is from 1950 -1951 and is between Brodie (often referred to as Tip or Flip) and her friend and colleague Geneva Smithe of Ann Arbor MI (often referred to as Smit), including copies of letters Brodie sent to Smithe. Their correspondence covers personal matters, Brodie's research, travel plans including their cross-country trip, and Smithe's efforts to collect library materials (possibly for what would become the Geneva Smithe Library of St. Francis of Assisi

Church in Ann Arbor). Other correspondents include Estelle Downing, K. Merry, G.O., G.L., and Virginia Smith as well as some unlabeled letters.

Series 3: Research and Field Notes (1912-1955, undated)

This series contains notes, annotated maps, observation journal pages, and other materials related to Brodie's research into various species of snakes, turtles, lizards, and other herpetological species. The bulk of the notes and observations cover her ongoing work with *Coluber constrictor foxii* (blue racer snakes) likely undertaken for the Chicago Field Museum. Also included are catalog cards and labels for Brodie's personal collection of books and periodicals and specimens.

Series 4: Travel (1929-1946, undated)

This series consists of materials related to Brodie's travel and is divided into four subseries: Narratives, Notes, Printed Materials, and Scrapbooks. The majority of the contents pertain to Brodie's 1946 cross-country automobile trip with Smithe and include planning notes and itineraries, brochures and other tourism publications for California, New Mexico, and other locations, as well as detailed accounts of mileage and expenses. Also included are two copies of a travel narrative about the trip written by Smithe.

Series 5: Photographs (undated)

This is a small series consisting of two unidentified black and white photographs: one of a group of men and women and one of a forest landscape.

Container List:

Box 1

Series 1: Personal (1921-1949, undated)

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Tags and Labels | 1942-1949,
undated |
| 2 | Clippings | 1921, 1931, 1946-
1947, undated |

Series 2: Correspondence (1913-1957, undated)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 3 | Geneva Smithe and Others | 1913, 1928, 1946,
1949, undated |
| 4 | Geneva Smithe and Unknown | 1950 |
| 5 | Geneva Smithe and Others | 1951, 1957, |

Series 3: Research and Field Notes (1912-1955, undated)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 6 | Blue Racer, Miscellaneous | 1946, 1948-1952,
undated |
| 7 | Catalog Cards | 1912, 1917, 1919,
1924, 1929-1930,
1932, 1934, 1936- |

		1937, 1939, 1946-1951, 1954-1955, undated
Series 4: Travel (1929-1946, undated)		
Sub-series 1: Narratives (1946)		
8	Cross Country Trip with Geneva Smithe	1946
Sub-series 2: Notes (1946)		
9	Cross Country Trip with Geneva Smithe	1946
Sub-series 3: Printed Materials (1929-1946, undated)		
10	California	1929, 1936, 1946, undated
11	New Mexico	1946, undated
12	Miscellaneous	1939, undated
Series 5: Photographs (undated)		
13	Brodie with Unidentified People and Hartwick Pines State Park, Michigan, Landscape	undated
Box 2		
Series 1: Personal (1921-1949, undated)		
14	Diary	1946
Box 3		
Series 4: Travel (1929-1946, undated)		
Sub-series 2: Notes (1946)		
15	Diary, Cross Country Trip with Geneva Smithe	1946
Sub-series 4: Scrapbooks (1946)		
17	Cross Country Trip with Geneva Smithe	1946