



ARCHIVES – FINDING AID

Collection Title: Robert Ridgway Papers

Creator: Robert Ridgway

Dates: 1875-1916, undated

Extent: 1 Linear Feet (one flat storage box)

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. Contact the Chicago Academy of Sciences' Collections Department for access conditions.

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

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

Processor and Date: Amber K. King, August 2014; updated Mattie Draftz, February 2020

Processing Note: Scrapbook of photographs originally catalogued under different collector name. Copy negatives of prints found in folder brought this to attention of Collections Department Staff and the scrapbook and the copy negatives were transferred to their own collection. Scrapbook is delicate, but in good condition.

Biographical Sketch: Robert Ridgway (1850-1929) was born on July 2, 1850 in Mount Carmel, Illinois to David and Harriet Ridgway as the eldest of ten children. His parents helped foster Robert's love for nature through their own enthusiasm for the natural world. Robert's brother John also contained this passion, going on to be an American naturalist and prominent scientific illustrator for the United States Geological Survey, the California Institute of Technology, and the Carnegie Institution.

When Robert Ridgway was in his youth, he had wanted to know the species of a bird he had seen and had sent a letter to the Commissioner of Patents in 1864 to find out. Spencer Fullerton Baird, who he would later work closely with, replied to Robert's correspondence and encouraged him to draw wildlife, record observations, and prepare specimens. When Ridgway was sixteen years old, he was appointed by Baird to work under Clarence King as a zoologist at the Geological Survey of the Fortieth parallel. He then went on to do field work in Sacramento, California and Salt Lake City. Then returning to Washington D.C. to work under Baird, Ridgway helped prepare the descriptions and drawings for Baird and Dr. Thomas M. Brewer's *A History of North American Birds*.

In 1874, Ridgway was appointed as an ornithologist on the staff of the United States National Museum in Washington D.C. (the Smithsonian's first building that is now known as Arts and Industries). In 1880, Ridgway was appointed Curator of the Department of Ornithology, where he remained until his death in 1929.

In 1875, Ridgway married Julia Evelyn Perkins, the daughter of an engraver who had prepared the blocks for the illustrations for the *History of North American Birds*. Their son, Audubon Wheelock, was born in 1877 and had followed in his father's footsteps in his love for ornithology. Audubon went on to become an assistant to Charles B. Cory, the Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum, but contracted pneumonia shortly after and passed away in 1901. Mrs. Ridgway also preceded Robert in death in 1927.

Ridgway is known for the development of a system of color standards to be used when describing birds called *Color Nomenclature for Birds*. He also has written numerous books, including an eight-volume set of a study of North American birds and *Birds of the Galapagos Archipelago*, with many of his works including his own illustrations. Other contributions that Ridgway has made to ornithology include the founding of the American Ornithologist's Union in 1883. This professional organization is devoted to the scientific study of birds and has had Chicago Academy of Sciences staff members involved with it.

Robert Ridgway retired in 1916 to Olney, Illinois where he set aside sixteen acres of land for native plants as a sanctuary for wild birds named Bird Haven. He passed away at age 79 on March 25, 1929 at his home. He has been commemorated by two genera, twenty three species, and ten sub-species of birds while his color standards are still used by ornithologists today.

Scope and Content: This collection of photographs depicts trees in the lower Wabash River and is accompanied by data about the health and measurements of the trees.

Related Resources: The Academy's collection includes bird specimens collected by Ridgway, most associated with a donation of Stephen S. Gregory material. The Smithsonian Institution Archives holds some personal papers, drawings and field books of Ridgway's. At Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library, their Special Collections and Archives Division contains The Ridgway Family Papers with correspondence, illustrations and scientific illustrations that contributed to the understanding of scientific research in the American West in the 1860's. The Illinois State Museum has a collection of

Ridgway's photographs of forests from the late 1800's. Robert Ridgway also has contributed some descriptions of birds and writings to various issues of the Auk.

Series Description:

Series 1: Photographs (1875-1916, undated)

This series comprises photographs of trees throughout the Midwest and is accompanied with measurement and health data about the trees depicted.

Container List:

Photo Box 1 (stored separately, RVWD.302.Film Room.Unit 1.Shelf I)			
Series 1: Photographs (1875-1916, undated)			
p. 1	1 b/w photographic print, portrait orientation, glued to canvas page (image on left missing): Data: [missing image] "Sycamore (<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>). Gibson Co., Indiana, opposite Mt. Carmel, Illinois. (Diameter, above swell, 10 x 15 feet; height, about 160 ft.; spread of top 112 x 134 ft.) (girth at ground 42 ft) Nov. 1875"; (right image) "n. 2, "[BTG#] 80(?)/ Sycamore near Mt. Carmel, Illinois. (On Illinois side of the Wabash) (girth of main trunk, at base, 30 ft.; well above base, 25 ft.; circ. at ground, 57 ft.)"		1875, undated
p. 2	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n.3, [BTG#] 37/ Sycamore tree in White River bottom, Knox Co., Indiana. (Girth, above swell, 21½ ft.; clean trunk about 60 ft., height about 150 ft.) May"; (right image) n. 4, [BTG#] 38/ Same tree, in shadow"		undated
p. 3	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 5/ [BTG#] 118/ Sycamore tree, Big Creek bottom, Richland Co., Illinois. July"; (right image) "n. 6, [BTG#] 115/ Giant Sycamore, bank of Embarras River, Jasper Co., Illinois. July"		undated
p. 4	1 b/w photographic print, portrait orientation, rounded at top edge, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 7, [BTG#] 39/ Different view of No. 3. (Spread of top, this view, 100 ft."		undated
p. 5	1 b/w photographic print, landscape orientation, rounded at top edge, and glued to canvas page (image on right side of page has been removed and is missing). Data: (left image) "n. 9, [BTG#] 44/ Cornfield in White River bottom, Knox Co., Indiana May June, 1885"; (missing image) "n. 10, [BTG#] 456/ Another view, same locality and date"		1885
p. 6	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 11,		undated

		[BTG#] 43/ Another part of same field as No. 10.”; (right image) “n. 12, [BTG#] 42/ Another corn-field in White River bottom, near Wheatland. Middle of June”	
	p. 7	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data (left image) “n. 13, [BTG#] 40/ Another part of same field [in black ink written over following]. White River bottom (same field as preceding). Deadened trees 5-8 ft. diam. June 1885”; (right image) “n. 14, [BTG#] 41/ Still another of same”	1885
	p. 8	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 15, [BTG#] 125/ Remains of giant Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana (camera stood 131 ft. from stump; the latter 8 ft. across top, solid to centre; trunk (63 ft. long) made 30,000 shingles.) July”; (left image) “n. 16, [BTG#] 124/ Typical upland forest, lower Wabash Valley. (Knox Co., Indiana, July.)”	undated
	p. 9	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 17, [BTG#] 126/ Stump of big Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana [written in black ink over pencil of same text]”; (right image) “n. 18, [BTG#] 132/ Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana.”	undated
	p. 10	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 19, [BTG#] 131/ Giant Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana”; (right image) “n. 20, [BTG#] 130/ Distant view of tree shown in foreground of preceding view (No. 19)”	undated
	p. 11	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 21, [BTG#] 133/ Big Tulip trees, same locality as preceding. (These trees 5 to nearly 7 ft. diam.)”; (right image) “n. 22, [BTG#] 128/ Tulip tree in ‘wood pasture’, Knox Co., Indiana”	undated
	p. 12	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 23, [BTG#] 25/ Big Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana. (Early in May.) circ. above swell, 19½ ft. Early in May.” (right image) “n. 24, [BTG#] 27/ Tulip trees, Knox Co., Indiana (June) Smaller tree 2 ft. diam. at 3 ft. June”	undated
	p. 13	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 25, [BTG#] 26/ Old Tulip tree, killed by fire. Knox Co., Indiana. circ. above swell, 19 ½ ft. May 18, 1885”; (right image) “n. 26, [BTG#] 123/ Tulip and Beech trees, Knox Co., Indiana, July”	1885, undated
	p. 14	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, left image	undated

		rounded at top edge, and both glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 27, [BTG#] 129/ Tulip tree, Knox Co., Indiana. July"; (right image) "n. 28, [BTG#] 119/ Sugar Camp, with beech trees in foreground. Knox Co., Indiana. July"	
	p. 15	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 29, [BTG#] 120/ Beech tree, in 'wood pasture', Knox Co., Indiana (Girth, above swell, 12½ ft.) July"; (right image) 'n. 30, [BTG#] 121/ Another view of same tree"	undated
	p. 16	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, left image rounded at top edge, and both glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 31, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Catalpa tree (<i>C. speciosa</i>). Richland Co., Illinois. (Last of May.)"; (right image) "n. 32, [BTG#] 11/ Large Catalpa tree. Richland Co., Illinois. (Last of May.) June 5)	undated
	p. 17	2 b/w photographic prints [left image is hand-colored], portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 33, [BTG#] 9/ Distant view of preceding. (<i>Catalpa speciosa</i>) June 5."; (right image) "n. 34, [BTG#] 18/ Persimmon (<i>Dispyros virginiana</i>). Knox Co., Indiana. Circ. 6 ft. at 3 ft. from ground."	undated
	p. 18	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 35, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Elm tree, in Mt. Carmel, Illinois"; (right image) "n. 36, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Elm tree, Mt. Carmel, Illinois. (Spread, 108 ft.; girth, above 'swell', 15 ft. Several large branches broken off by heavy wind storm.) May, 1890	1890, undated
	p. 19	1 b/w photographic print, portrait orientation, rounded at top edge and glued to canvas page [right image has been removed and is missing]. Data: (left image) "n. 37, [BTG#] 69/ Elm tree in Olney, Richland Co., Illinois. (Girth above spurs, 16 ft.; greatest diameter at ground, 18 ft. Top branches badly wrecked by heavy windstorm.)"	undated
	p. 20	1 b/w photographic print, portrait orientation, rounded at top edge and glued to canvas page [left image is missing]. Data: (missing image) "n. 39, [BTG#] 74/ Sweet Gum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>), near Mt. Carmel, Illinois. October"; (right image) "n. 40, [BTG#] 91/ Sweet Gum tree, Knox Co., Indiana. July"	undated
	p. 21	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 41, [BTG#] 29/ Sweet Gum tree ('girdled'). Knox Co., Indiana"; (Right image) "n. 42, [BTG#] 92/ Pin-Oak (<i>Quercus palustris</i>) Knox Co., Indiana. July"	undated

p. 22	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 43, [BTG#] 96/ Shellbark Hickory. Embarras bottom, Jasper Co., Illinois. July"; (right image) "n. 44, [BTG#] 28/ Shellbark Hickory, near Monteur's Pond, Knox Co., Indiana. Diam. About 4 ft. Early April May 10, 1885"	1885, undated
p. 23	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 45, [BTG#] 71/ Pecan Tree, near Mt. Carmel, Illinois. (Girth, above 'swell', 16½ ft.) October 1875"; (right image) "n. 46, [BTG#] 73/ Black Walnut trees, Wabash bottom, near Mt. Carmel, Ills. October 1875"	1875
p. 24	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 47, [BTG#] 34/ Sugar Maple. Knox Co., Indiana. Spread, 60 ft.; circ., 9½ ft.; ground to first branch 6 ft."; (right image) "n. 48, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Honey Locust. Black Gum (<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>). <i>Ulmus Americana</i> . <i>Platanus occidentalis</i> . <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> . 'The Commons', Mt. Carmel, Illinois."	undated
p. 25	1 b/w photographic print, portrait orientation, glued to canvas page [left image has been removed and is missing]. Data: (missing image) "n. 49/ Bur-Oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>), near Mt. Carmel, Illinois. (Circ., above 'swell', 18½ ft.). October 1875"; (right image) "n. 50, [BTG#] 76/ Bur-Oak, bank of Wabash River, near Mt. Carmel, Illinois. Circumference 22 ft."	1875, undated
p. 26	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 51, [BTG#] 77/ Bur-Oak. Distant view of preceding."; (left image) "n. 52, [BTG#] 111/ Big Creek bottom, Richland Co., Illinois. (Rough trunk in foreground is <i>Celtis mississippians</i>). July"	undated
p. 27	2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, right image rounded at top edge, and both glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 53, [BTG#] 142/ Bank of Embarras River, Jasper Co., Illinois. (Overhanging tree is <i>Betula nigra</i> .) July"; (right image) "n. 54, [BTG#] 107/ Virginia Creeper on Sycamore, near Mt. Carmel, Illinois (Indiana side of Wabash River). July"	undated
p. 28	2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 55, [BTG#] 108/ Old clearing, Wabash bottom, opposite Mt. Carmel, Illinois. July"; (right image) "n. 56, [BTG#] 109/ Typical bottom-land forest. Gibson Co., Indiana, nearly opposite Mt. Carmel, Illinois. July"	undated
p. 29	1 b/w photographic print, rounded at top edge, and glued to	undated

		canvas page. Data: "n. 58, [BTG#]106/ Virginia Creeper on Ash Tree (<i>Fraxinus Americana</i> ?) Richland Co., Illinois, July"	
p. 30		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 59, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Woods along Big Creek, Richland Co., Illinois (Tree immediately over 'x' is one whose lower part is shown in No. 58. May 1890"; (right image) "n. 60, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Forest of 40 years growth. (The ground covered by this growth was a corn-field cultivated by my informant only 40 years before photograph was taken. Near Sugar Creek Prairie, Richland Co., Illinois. July 1885"	1885, 1890
p. 31		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 61, [BTG#] 112/ Natural park, Richland Co., Illinois. (Tree in foreground is Laurel Oak, <i>Quercus imbricaria</i> .) – Laurel Oak)[in pencil] <u>May</u> .; (right image) "n. 62, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Sassafras woods, edge of Sugar Creek Prairie, Richland Co., Illinois. May 1890"	1890, undated
p. 32		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 63, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Edge of Sugar Creek Prairie, Richland Co., Illinois, showing clumps of Persimmon and Sassafras trees. May 1890.; (right image) "n. 64, [BTG#] 14/ Sugar Creek Prairie. (Two trees in centre are <i>Quercus imbricaria</i> , nearly denuded of foliage by "June Bugs." Grove to left composed wholly of Persimmon. May or June"	1890, undated
p. 33		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 65, [BTG#] 13/ A part of Sugar Creek Prairie. (Woods 40 years old in distance)"; (right image) "n. 66, [BTG#] 12/ Another part of Sugar Creek Prairie."	undated
p. 34		1 b/w photographic print, landscape orientation, rounded at top edge, and glued to canvas page. (Image on left has been removed and is missing). Data: (missing image) "n. 67, [BTG#] 54/ Thicket of undergrowth of <i>Rhus copallena</i> , with dense growth of <i>Podophyllum</i> underneath. (the Rhus 25-35 ft high.) Knox Co., Indiana. May 10, 1885"; (right image) "n. 68, [BTG#] 97/ <i>Crataegus</i> species. Bank of Wabash River, near Vincennes, Indiana. July"	1885, undated
p. 35		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) "n. 69, [BTG#] 48/ Edge of forest, Knox Co., Indiana. May or early June"; (right image) "n. 70, [BTG#] 110/ Clearing in Wabash	undated

		bottom, opposite Mt. Carmel, Illinois. July”	
p. 36		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 71, [BTG#] 49/ Planting corn, Knox Co., Indiana. Late April or early May.”; (right image) “n. 72, [BTG#] 46/ A ‘block’ of primitive forest (replants), Knox Co., Indiana. June”	undated
p. 37		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 73, [BTG#] 53/ A ‘clearing’ in primitive forest, Knox Co., Indiana. June”; (right image) “n. 74, [BTG#] 50/ From same point as preceding view, looking out. June”	undated
p. 38		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 75, [BTG#] 51/ Same as last, but more detail in distance.”; (right image) “n. 76, [BTG#] 65/ Edge of Monteur’s Pond, Knox Co., Indiana, in early Spring. May 14, 1885”	1885, undated
p. 39		1 b/w photographic print, landscape orientation, rounded at top edge, and glued to canvas page. (Image on left has been removed and is missing). Data: (missing image) “n. 77, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Wrecked condition of forest in Wabash bottom, near Mt. Carmel, Illinois, May 1890”; (right image) “n. 78, [BTG#] not catalogued/ Near same view as preceding.”	1890, undated
p. 40		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 79, [BTG#] 100/ Big Drift’, Embarras River, Jasper Co., Illinois. (The river absolutely jammed with flood debris for nearly ¾ of a mile.) July”; (right image) “n. 80, [BTG#] 101/ Another view of the ‘Big Drift’”	undated
p. 41		2 b/w photographic prints, portrait orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 81, [BTG#] 21/ Swamp Cottonwoods (<i>Populus heterophylla</i>), edge of Monteur’s Pond, Knox Co., Indiana, May 1885”; (right image) “n. 82 ‘Broken’, [BTG#] 22/ Another group of Swamp Cottonwoods, same locality and date”	1885
p. 42		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 83, [BTG#] 64/ Monteur’s Pond, from Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, in early Spring. May 14, 1885”; (right image) “n. 84, [BTG#] 90?/ Same spot in June 1888.”	1885, 1888
p. 43		2 b/w photographic prints, landscape orientation, rounded at top edges, and glued to canvas page. Data: (left image) “n. 85, [BTG#] 62/ Spatter-docks and Cat-tails in Monteur’s Pond”; (right image) “n. 86, [BTG#] 61/ Another view in Monteur’s Pond”	undated

	p. 44	1 b/w photographic print, landscape orientation, glued to canvas page (left image missing). Data: (left image) "n. 87, [BTG#] 63/ Spatter-docks (<i>Nuphar advena</i>) in Monteur's Pond"; (right image) "n. 88, [BTG#] not catalogued/ 40 acres of <i>Nelumbium</i> . Horse-shoe pond, Knox Co., Indiana."	undated