Guide to the
McMillan-Wreden California Condor Collection, 1953

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McMillan-Wreden California Condor Collection
Processed by Nancy E. Loe, 2008; encoded by Byte Managers, 2008

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A. CORRESPONDENCE AND CLIPPINGS 10

Descriptive Summary

Title:
McMillan-Wreden California Condor Collection, 1953 (bulk 1953)

Collection Number:
MS 044

Creator:
McMillan, Ian Irving, 1905-1991
Wreden, William P., 1910-1995

Abstract:
Contains correspondence between naturalist and environmental activist Ian McMillan and rare book dealer and rancher William P. Wreden and other conservationists and government officials on the conservation of the California condor. Wreden owned the Pinole Land and Cattle Company near McMillan's ranch in eastern San Luis Obispo County. The two men corresponded on environmental advocacy efforts on behalf of California condors in 1953.

Extent:
1 box

Language:
English

Repository:
Special Collections
Robert E. Kennedy Library
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, California 93407

Administrative Information

Provenance:
Acquired by purchase from William P. Wreden, the collection is housed in and administered by Special Collections at Cal Poly.

Access:
Collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only. For more information on access policies and to obtain a copy of the Researcher Registration form, please visit the Special Collections Access page. Collection stored remotely. Advance notice for use required.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:
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Preferred Citation:
[Identification of Item]. McMillan-Wreden California Condor Collection, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Abbreviations Used:
c.: circa
n.d.: no date

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:

Subjects:

McMillan, Ian I., 1905–1991

Birds – California – San Luis Obispo County

Birds, Protection of – California – San Luis Obispo County

California condor

McMillan, Ian I., 1905–1991 – Correspondence

Natural history – California – San Luis Obispo County

Shandon (Calif.) – History

San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) – History

Genres and Forms of Material:

Correspondence
Newspaper clippings

Related Materials

Related Collections:

Guide to the Ian McMillan Papers, 1925-1990 (MS 111)
Guide to the Enrico Bongio Papers, 1952-1993 (MS 124)
Guide to the Kathleen Goddard Jones Papers, 1933-2001 (MS 119)
Guide to the Harold Miossi Papers, 1942–1990 (MS 112)
Guide to the Lee Wilson Papers, 1956-1989 (MS 113)

Biographical Note

Ian McMillan

The following biographical sketch was found in Mr. McMillan's papers:

> Ian McMillan, a native of eastern San Luis Obispo County, California, with a lifetime of experience as a grain and cattle grower, is also an active long-standing conservationist. From studies of natural history of his region he has written a book on the California condor and various articles on other matters of wildlife conservation. *The Current Status and Welfare of the California Condor* by Alden Miller, Ian McMillan, and Eben McMillan, was the forerunner to McMillan's later condor writings. He is a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences, a member of the California Parks and Recreation Commission, and belongs to a number of other conservation organizations including the Cooper Ornithological Society, National Audubon Society, and the Cholame Township Sportsmen's Association. In recent years he has carried out various special assignments as a field observer and reporter for the National Defenders of Wildlife.

Ian Irving McMillan was born on the family ranch outside Cholame, San Luis Obispo County, California, on November 15, 1905. Ian McMillan's grandparents and their seven adult children took up adjoining homesteads in a canyon among the open rolling hills near the little settlement of Starkey, now known as Shandon, in 1885. Ian's father, Alexander, married the local schoolteacher, Mary Harte, in 1894. They raised a family of five boys and two girls on their ranch in McMillan Canyon.

Of his childhood, McMillan's children wrote: "Prior to November of 1934, it can be said that Ian's life, even though adventurous, was one of great hardship with few personal rewards. Ian's mother, a loving mother, a person of artistic talent with a sensitive awareness of nature was, early in Ian's childhood, unable to cope with the daily struggles of domestic responsibility. Ian's father lost his home and land to those of different principles and his wife to mental illness. Alexander McMillan died in despair."

In 1934 Ian married May Reed and his life changed. His children wrote: "May was his secretary, typing and retyping everything he wrote. She fed and entertained the many visitors who came to exchange views and witness this magnificent area of California. She took responsibility for making certain that all of the needs of their three children, Don, Barbara, and Irv, were fully met. This well organized and hard-working woman allowed Ian the freedom to pursue his interests."

They bought their ranch in Gillis Canyon in 1936. His children wrote: "Never a man who chased the dollar, when the ranch was owned free and clear, he dedicated his life to the issues of land use, government accountability, wildlife protection, and human ecology. After his marriage, Ian's first priority was getting out of debt, followed by building a modest home and then funding for his children's college educations. Ian had absolutely no interest in owning more land, building bigger houses, owning the newest model shotgun or anything not having essential value. He enjoyed breaking horses and training hunting dogs and

proudly displayed their talent to any audience. It can be said that Ian did well not because of how much he had, but in how little he needed."

The National Audubon Society commissioned Ian and Eben to study the decline of condors in 1968. The years of research resulted in publication of Ian McMillan's *Man and the California Condor: The Embattled History and Uncertain Future of North America's Largest Free-Living Bird* (New York: Dutton, 1968).

Ian McMillan died of congestive heart failure at the age of 85 on February 21, 1991 in Templeton, California.

Sources

Groshong, Warren, "Naturalist Ian McMillan Dies," *San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) Telegram-Tribune,* 25 Feb. 1991
McMillan family, 1994
Social Security Death Index, Ancestry.com
U.S. Census, 1910, 1920, Ancestry.com

<u>William P. Wreden</u>

William Paul Wreden was born on May 2, 1910, in Petaluma, California, to William P. and Elizabeth Prien Wreden. A rare book dealer and rancher, Wreden was educated at Stanford University and began his career at the Anglo-California National Bank in San Francisco. In 1937, he left banking to start an antiquarian book company, Wm. P. Wreden Books & Manuscripts in Burlingame, California. After 16 years, he relocated to Palo Alto, where he remained in business until shortly before his death on February 5, 1995. Wreden also owned and operated the Pinole Land & Cattle Co. in Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo County, California.

Sources

Social Security Death Index, Ancestry.com
Who's Who in the West. 24th edition, 1994-1995. New Providence, NJ: Marquis Who's Who, 1993.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains correspondence between naturalist and environmental activist Ian McMillan, rare book dealer and rancher William P. Wreden, and other conservationists and government officials on the conservation of the California condor. Wreden owned the Pinole Land and Cattle Company, located near McMillan's ranch in eastern San Luis Obispo County and the two men corresponded on environmental advocacy efforts on behalf of California condors in 1953.

The provenance, or original organization, of the papers has been preserved for the most part. The collection is housed in one box and has one series: Correspondence and Clippings.

Researchers should note that Cal Poly also holds the papers of Ian McMillan (MS 111), which contain extensive primary source documentation in Series 1. Subseries D. of his efforts to save the California condor, including manuscripts, correspondence, field studies, photographs, and research material relating to McMillan's book, *Man and the California Condor: The Embattled History and Uncertain Future of North America's Largest Free-Living Bird* (New York: Dutton, 1968). Also included are decades of McMillan's field notes and survey data on condors, long-term correspondence on condors with naturalists Aldo and Starker Leopold, soil scientist William A. Albrecht, author and activist W.H. Ferry, and *New York Times* theater critic Brooks Atkinson.

Series Description / Folder List

Series 1. Correspondence and Clippings, 1953
Contains one subseries: A. Correspondence and Clippings.

A. Correspondence and Clippings
Contains correspondence between McMillan, Wreden, and other conservationists and government officials on the conservation of the California condor, arranged in original order, 1953. 11 folders.

Box 1 Folder 1
Ian McMillan to State Senator A. A. Erhart, 22 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 2
Senator A. A. Erhart, California's 29th District to Ian I. McMillan, 3 Jun 1953

Box 1 Folder 3
"Statement Concerning the Trapping of California Condors presented to the California Commission of Fish and Game," by Alexander Sprunt, IV, Pacific Coast Representative, National Audubon Society, 21 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 4
William Wreden letter to the editor re California condors, with McMillan's holographic comments, 29 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 5
William P. Wreden to Ian I. McMillan, 23 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 6
Ian I. McMillan to Senator A. A. Erhart, 11 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 7
Alexander Sprunt of National Audubon Society to William P. Wreden, 11 May 1953

Box 1 Folder 8
Ian I. McMillan to W. P. Wreden, 23 Apr 1953

Box 1 Folder 9
Ian I. McMillan to Senator A. A. Erhart, 28 Jan 1953

Box 1 Folder 10
Frank A. Pitelka of the University of California, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology to Ian I. McMillan, 8 Apr 1953

Box 1 Folder 11
Ian I. McMillan to Senator A. A. Erhart, 4 Jan 1953