

C Christisen, Donald M. (1920-2005), Papers, 1870-2003
4054 18.1 linear feet, 2 audio tapes, 27 audio cassettes

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INTRODUCTION

Donald M. Christisen was a field biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation who specialized in the study of native prairies, prairie chicken and squirrel populations, along with the study of mast (forage nuts). Christisen was also a railroad enthusiast. The papers include correspondence, reports, daily field diaries, clippings, newsletters, publications, maps, railroad timetables, railroad employee work logs, railroad brochures, audio tapes, and photographs and slides.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Donald M. Christisen Papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Christisen (Accession Nos. 2623, 2811, 2839, 2856, 2922, 2927, 2956, 3022, 3058, 3149, and 5810) from 7 November 1986 to 14 April 2006. An addition to the collection was received on 18 April 2006 from Christisen's wife, Virginia Kinsey Christisen.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Donald M. Christisen was born 16 December 1920, in Perry, Iowa, to Herbert L. and Rosa Phillips Christisen. He graduated from Perry High School in 1939 and spent a summer in the Canadian Rockies. Christisen graduated from the University of Missouri in 1943 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture. He married Virginia Caroline Kinsey of Carrollton, Missouri, on 30 August 1946. He was a member of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, where he was a deacon and choir member.

Christisen worked in agriculture and conservation for the state of Missouri for 43 years, devoting much of his career to prairie and greater prairie chicken conservation. He retired from the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1986. He co-founded the Missouri Prairie Foundation in 1966 and was a charter member and two-time chairman of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council. He also served as editor for the Mid-Missouri Railfans bulletin for more than eight years.

Christisen received many awards, including the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year Award in 1978, the Gulf Oil Conservation Award for Professionals in 1984, and the Hamerstrom Award of the Prairie Grouse Technical Council in 1993. He died on 28 September 2005.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Donald M. Christisen Papers consist of correspondence, field diaries, reports, studies, publications, and photographs from his work as a field biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation. The papers also include material from Christisen's interest in railroads. They are arranged into eight series: **Correspondence, Reports, Publications, Missouri Department of Conservation, Photographs and Slides, Railroads, Work Diaries, and Miscellaneous.**

The **Correspondence** series consists of inter-departmental communication within the Missouri Conservation Commission, staff notes, memos, and updates. This material is arranged primarily in a chronological manner, though to a large extent, also by topic.

The **Reports** series consists of surveys and investigation projects including studies of tree squirrel population dynamics and harvest analysis, age and sex ratios of squirrels, annual surveys of mast yields and improved mast production, the status and trends of prairie chicken populations, agricultural crops as a key to identifying the prairie chicken range and population density, and studies of the location and status of the few remaining areas of native prairie in Missouri. The material is arranged chronologically.

The **Publications** series consists of newsletters and other publications, covering such topics as acorn crops, squirrels, prairies, and the greater prairie chicken.

The newsletters include *Conservation News*, printed by the National Wildlife Federation; *Currents*, the newsletter for and about Conservation Department employees; *Squirrel Chatter*; and *Boom*, published by the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, devoted to the welfare of the greater prairie chicken. The newsletters have been grouped by title, then arranged in chronological order.

Also included are various conservation manuals and other assorted publications, covering the 1940s to 1980s. The material has been arranged chronologically.

The **Missouri Department of Conservation** series consists of in-service bulletins, employee rosters, activity reports, and field manuals. The majority of the contents focus on informing the general public of the importance of conservation, recognizing diseased animals when hunting, and the continuing and future development of conservation programs. Please note that in earlier years this department was known as the Missouri Conservation Commission. This material is arranged chronologically.

The **Photographs and Slides** series consists of photographs of train engines and railroad depots, various native prairies in Missouri, including prairie remnants that were discovered along railroad tracks; conservation agents and biologists; and prairie chickens and squirrels. The squirrel hunting photographs came about when the Commission solicited images from hunters, some of which were selected for a publication. This material is arranged chronologically.

The **Railroads** series consists of railroad maps, accident reports, advertising brochures, promotional material, employee logs, timetables, newspaper clippings, and images of train depots and engines. Also included are blueprints of equipment, newsletters, architectural renderings of the KATY depot in Columbia, Missouri, mechanical renderings of a steam locomotive, and audio recordings of railroad sounds and folksongs. This material is arranged chronologically.

The **Work Diaries** series consists of diaries kept by Christisen and another field biologist, Leroy J. Korschgen. The diaries contain a daily log of wildlife and environmental research activities, including lab and field work, which involved analysis, description, the preparation of reports, and surveys. These diaries are arranged by author and then chronologically.

The **Miscellaneous** series consists of a mixed assortment of conservation maps of Missouri counties and various other topographical maps. The series also includes two audio tapes, one of an interview of the engine driver of the Flying Scot on the locomotive while on tour at Mexico, Missouri, in 1970, and the other of a speech on prairie

preservation Christisen gave before the Kansas City John Burroughs Nature Club in 1966. The material is arranged by format and then chronologically.

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