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Guide to the Franklin E. Roach Papers. 1931-1994

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Overview of the Collection

Creator: Roach, F. E. (Franklin Evans)

Title: Roach, Franklin E. Papers

Dates: 1931-1994 (inclusive)

Quantity: 13 cubic feet

Collection Number: USUAFV3-145

Summary: The bulk of the Franklin E. Roach Papers contain his notes, drafts, charts, correspondence, photographs, and publications generated from his research in upper-atmospheric physics. The materials also include Roach's lecture notes, his correspondence files from his work on unidentified flying objects, and some biographical papers.

Repository: University of Alaska Fairbanks
Alaska Polar Regions Collections & Archives
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library
PO Box 756808
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775

Languages: EnglishFrench

Sponsor: Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historic Publications and Records Commission.

Biographical Note

Franklin Evans Roach contributed greatly to the field of upper-atmosphere physics, conducting and publishing many photometric studies of airglow, zodiacal light, and diffuse galactic light. In 1929, he began his early training in astronomy at Yerkes Observatory under Otto Struve. After obtaining his Ph.D. in astrophysics from the University of Chicago in 1934, he began work as the first resident astronomer at the McDonald Observatory in Texas. In 1936, he accepted a position as associate professor at the University of Arizona where he taught astronomy and physics for six years. During World War II, Roach initially worked designing military rockets at Cal Tech and then was reassigned to work on the Manhattan Project. He resumed his civilian research after the war, first, working for the Naval Ordnance Test Station in Pasadena and studying airglow at the Cactus Peak observatory and then at the Fritz Peak observatory at the National Bureau of Standards in Boulder, Colorado. He also helped establish an observatory at Mt. Haleakala on the island of Maui in Hawaii. He retired from civil service in 1966.

Interspersed throughout his career were smaller interesting assignments including studying as a Fulbright scholar in Paris in 1951-52; traveling around the world as an airglow observer for the International Geophysical Year in 1957-9; working as a consultant for NASA in briefing and debriefing astronauts in the 1960s; and working on the Condon Report from 1966-1968, a study sponsored by the Air Force to investigate unidentified flying objects.

Roach published more than two hundred papers and was awarded a Gold Medal for Exceptional Service by the US Department of Commerce. He died in Tucson, Arizona on September 21, 1993.

Content Description

The bulk of the Franklin E. Roach Papers contain his notes, drafts, charts, correspondence, photographs, and publications generated from his research in upper-atmospheric physics. The materials also include Roach's lecture notes, his correspondence files from his work on unidentified flying objects, and some biographical papers.

Notes and AK numbers written in pencil on the outside of most objects are from Roach's family, presumably as an indication that these files were chosen to be sent to Alaska. The files have been arranged either by subject into series or according to Roach's numbering system rather than by the AK numbering system on the outside of each file.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Access :

Access limited to Alaska Polar Regions Collections & Archives research room hours

Preferred Citation :

Franklin E. Roach Papers. Box #, Folder #, Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series I: Publication files. , 1932-1991

9 boxes

Roach's publication files consist of reprints of his journal contributions as well as drafts, notes, charts, correspondence, and illustrations used in his research and publications. The reprints, located in the first box, have all been assigned a number by Roach. The R series represent his work from 1932-1942; the A series include publications from 1949-1988; the B series are a collection of his minor contributions, including reviews and an encyclopedia entry; and the M series are his publications pertaining to the subject of Red Arcs while at the National Bureau of Standards in Colorado. Roach also assigned publication numbers to files which contained documents pertaining to that particular publication. Boxes 2-5 contain files pertaining to publications A101-A237. Unnumbered files where the related publication could not be ascertained have been placed in boxes 6-9 along with Roach's card index of his publications.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
1	Publication Lists; Reprints	
2	Publication files, A36-A130	
3	Publication files, A131-A165	
4	Publication files, A166-A201	
5	Publication files, A212-A227	
6	Publication index (card file), unnumbered files	
7	Publication files, unnumbered	
8	Publication files, unnumbered	
9	Publication files, unnumbered	

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Series 2. : UFO Files., 1967-1977

1 box

Contains correspondence, charts, and photographs from Roach's work on the Condon Report in 1966-1968 as well as the Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) UFO Symposium in 1969. The series also includes roach's correspondence with the general public on unidentified flying objects, some articles on UFOs which reference Roach, and an audiotape of Roach talking about UFOs to the Hawaiian Astronomical Society in January 1970.

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Series 3: Lecture files, 1959-1983

1 box

This series contains Roach's lecture notes and examinations from University courses he taught as well as his correspondence, charts, and notes pertaining to lectures he gave for organizations.

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Series 4: Photographs, 1931-1994

1 box

Materials include photographs and slides documenting Roach's work. Virtually all of the observatories Roach worked at are covered as well as much of the equipment he used throughout his career. There is also a collection of slides with illustrations from his journal publications; Roach has labeled several of the slides with manuscript numbers. Images also depict many of his colleagues, some personal portraits, as well as a photograph of his gravesite in Boulder, Colorado.

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Series 5: Biographical papers, 1941-1991

1 box

Roach's biographical papers include copies of his obituaries, a program from his memorial service, an interview transcript from 1941, and a description of the Franklin E. Roach memorial scholarship at the University of Arizona. There is also a copy of "Musings and Memoirs of Franklin Evans Roach," his autobiography published by his family.

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Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the online catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Personal Names :

Roach, F. E.(Franklin Evans), 1900---Archives

Corporate Names :

McDonald Observatory
Naval Ordnance Test Station (China Lake, Calif.)

Subject Terms :

Airglow
Atmospheric physics--History--Sources
Aurora
International Geophysical Year, 1957-1959
Unidentified flying objects

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Finding aid prepared by Wendi Lyons
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