



# Griffin (Donald R.) papers

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Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rockefeller Archive Center
<b>Creator:</b>	Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research
<b>Creator - aut:</b>	Griffin, Donald R. (Donald Redfield)
<b>Creator:</b>	Rockefeller University
<b>Title:</b>	Donald R. Griffin papers, Rockefeller University Faculty
<b>ID:</b>	FA164
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	circa 1940-1984
<b>Physical Description:</b>	12.76 Cubic Feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	29 document boxes, including several oversize boxes.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Mixed materials [box]:</b>	13
<b>Mixed materials [box]:</b>	26
<b>Mixed materials [box]:</b>	27
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**Mixed materials**      24  
**[box]:**

### Preferred Citation

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <http://www.rockarch.org/research/citations.php>

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## Biographical/Historical note

Biographical note	
1915	Born August 3, 1915, Southampton, NY
1938	Harvard College, B.S.
1940	Harvard University, M.A.
1942	Harvard University, Ph. D.
1940-1941, 1946	Junior Fellow, Harvard University
1946-1947	Assistant Professor of Zoology, Cornell University
1947-1952	Associate Professor of Zoology, Cornell University
1952-1953	Professor of Zoology, Cornell University
1953-1965	Professor of Zoology, Harvard University (Chair, Dept. of Biology, 1962-1965)
1965-1986	Professor, The Rockefeller University (Board of Trustees, 1973-1976)
1965-1969	Director, Institute for Research in Animal Behavior, jointly sponsored by the Rockefeller

	University and the New York Zoological Society
1987-	Visiting lecturer, Dept. of Biology, Princeton University
1979-1983	President, Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation

Donald Redfield Griffin was born on August 3, 1915 in Southampton New York. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1938, a Masters in 1940, and a Ph. D in 1942, all from Harvard. While still an undergrad, Dr. Griffin began an extensive project banding bats in the American North East. Part of this project was based in Woods Hole, Massachusetts where his uncle, Alfred Redfield, worked. Dr. Griffin banded bats into the 1950s' and the results of the banding led to new discoveries in Bat longevity, migration, and colony sizes.

The first experiments of his regarding echolocation were also started while he was an undergrad at Harvard. Dr. Griffin and another student Robert Galambos first herd the ultrasonic chirps of bats with help from physics Professor George W. Pierce. Dr. Griffin worked as a Junior Fellow and teaching assistant in Biology at Harvard after graduation and became a research associate in the Psycho-Acoustic, Fatigue, and Biological Laboratories.

During World War II, Dr. Griffin worked under US government contracts researching communication equipment and cold weather clothing improvements for the Armed Forces. Harvard's Fatigue Lab was used at this time to analyze the properties of clothing, especially for pilots in the Air Force.

In 1946 Dr. Griffin joined the faculty at Cornell University Department of Zoology, progressing from assistant professor to full professor. Both the Air Force and the Navy supported his research in the late 1940's into the 1950's pertaining to bird migration patterns and the use of radioactive isotopes in bird tracking. This research was conducted at Point Barrow and Fairbanks, Alaska. The US Air Force also supported his research during the mid 1950s' in Alaska pertaining to insulating properties of small mammal's fur.

In 1953 Dr. Griffin returned to Harvard as a professor. He served as Chairman of the Biology department between 1962 and 1965. At Harvard he resumed his studies into bats use of echolocation, the word coined by him, to determine the size, distance, and location of objects including prey. He also began studying birds homing abilities here, going so far as leaning how to fly a plan to track the birds.

He then moved to Rockefeller University as a professor and became a fellow of the New York Zoological Society. Between 1965 and 1969 he served as director of the Institute for Research in Animal Behavior. During the late 1960's and 1970's Dr. Griffin returned to studying bird's ability to navigation in clouds when neither the sky nor ground was visible to them for orientation. The US National Science Foundation sponsored a expedition to Queensland, Australia in 1980 for the study of sensory physiology and perception in Bats and Cave Swiftlets. Dr. Griffin retired from Rockefeller University in 1986. His research and analysis of animal behavior established his argument that animals possess the ability to think and are not just impulsive automatons radically changed how scientist viewed and studied animals.

Dr. Griffin was associated with many professional organizations including: National Academy of Sciences, American Philosophical Society, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Society of Mammalogists, American Physiological Society, and American Ornithologists Union.

Dr. Griffin published many articles and books. His most famous include: *Listening in the Dark* (1958) for which he was awarded the Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal of the National Academy of Sciences, *Echoes of Bats and Men* (1959), *Animal Structure and Function* (1962), *Bird Migration* (1964) for which he won the Phi Beta Kappa Science Prize, *The Question of Animal Awareness: Evolutionary Continuity of Mental Experience* (1976 and a revised edition in 1981).

He was married twice, first to Ruth Castle and later to Joycelyn Crane. He has three children Janet Abbott, Margaret Griffin, and John Griffin. Donald Griffin died November 7, 2003 in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Prizes and Honors Elliot Medal of the National Academy of Sciences for *Listening in the Dark*, 1961, Phi Beta Kappa Science Prize for *Bird Migration*, 1966, Honorary D. Sc., Ripon College 1966, Honorary D. Sc., Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, FRG 1988

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## Scope and Contents

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The majority of the material in this collection is related to Dr. Griffin's professional work as a scientist between the years 1930-1985 and consists of correspondence, project reports, lab books, and publications.

Items of special interest include: plans for visitation with both foreign and domestic scientist; Short correspondence between Dr. Griffin and Paul Ehrlich; Use of electrically heated clothing as a defense for divers against the Bends see John Lawrence; Correspondence to/from Karl Von Frisch Nobel Prize recipient for Honey Bee Dance discovery; A letter to his Senator (McMahon) concerning the use of Atomic material; and Support for a fellow scientist against the House Un-American Activities Affairs Committee.

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## Arrangement

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The Donald R. Griffin papers are arranged in 5 series. Folders are arranged alphabetically with the exception of the Lab books which are in original date order. Within folders material is organized alphabetically and then chronologically with most recent dates first. An alphabetical list of correspondents' names is provided in the draft finding aid available onsite at Rockefeller Archive

Center. Some correspondence could not be identified due to missing surnames or inability to decipher handwriting.

Series 1 - Curriculum Vitae Series 2 - Professional Correspondence Series 3 - Projects Series 4 - Lab Books Series 5 - Publications

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## File Plan note

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Former Classification: I 450 G875 and I 450 G875-U

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Rockefeller Archive Center

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Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

### Revision Description

Paper finding aid converted to EAD/XML by AureXus in 2010. Imported into the Archvists' Toolkit by Becky Robbins. 2010 August 26

### Processing Information

Initial processing of the Donald R. Griffin Papers was conducted by Alexandra Ward, Rockefeller Archive Center summer intern 2012, to organize, describe, and prepare the materials for researcher access.

Processing of the collection remains ongoing. The information presented here is in draft form. As such, some names, dates, and associated description, may be incomplete or otherwise inaccurate. Once processing is completed, this guide will be fully edited, and revised, and will also include a complete container list.



## Conditions Governing Use

The Rockefeller Archive Center has legal title, copyright and literary property right to the collection.

## Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for scholarly research, with select materials restricted.

RAC is unable to provide access to obsolete media. When feasible, a digital surrogate may be created via special order. All applicable charges will apply. See RAC Head of Archival Services or RAC Head of Digital Programs for details.

## Immediate Source of Acquisition

Collection was ingested as Accession 1990:008.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Biology -- Research
- Life sciences
- Zoology
- Cell and biomolecular sciences
- Animal behavior
- Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research
- Griffin, Donald R. (Donald Redfield)
- Rockefeller University

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## Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

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Materials requiring specialized equipment for access (film, audio, video, slides) may be restricted from scholarly research dependent on availability of the applicable equipment.

Brittle or damaged items, or materials otherwise in need of preservation care, may be restricted from scholarly research at the discretion of the RAC Head of Archival Services/RAC Head of Reference.

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## Collection Inventory

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### Correspondence

#### Scope and Contents

Biographical material including: Curriculum Vitae, correspondence to/from family and friends

Subject matter ranges from visiting scientists, to lecture requests, to questions from the general public, to supplying bats, to locating caves.

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### Projects

#### Scope and Contents

A) correspondence regarding specific, identified projects: Alpha Helix, Arctic Research Lab, Bird Migration in Clouds, Department of the Interior, Fatigue Lab, Federal Security Agency- Public Health Service Exam, Psycho-Acoustic Lab at Harvard, Queensland Australia, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Bat Banding. B) reports on some project results C) "equipment" correspondence pertaining to obtaining and developing equipment for conducting research.

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### Lab Books

#### Scope and Contents

A) identified projects include: Alpha Helix, Jamming experiments, underwater sound, Bats catching insects, Silmia Trinidad, bats hitting targets, wind tunnel experiments, New Guinea bats, Human Echolocation, Ground Echolocation, and Grid Echoes. B) some lab books kept by colleagues: Judith Friend and M. Flinn. C) includes printouts from spectrums, photos and other equipment.

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### Publications

## Scope and Contents

A) reprints by Donald Griffin. B) reprints by Others. C) Books by Donald Griffin. D) Books by Others. E) Reports by Donald Griffin. F) Clippings.

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