

Archives & Manuscript Collections
National Sporting Library
Middleburg, VA

**Orange County Hunt
Hunting Diaries
1936-1969**

Name: **Orange County Hunt (est. 1900)** **MC 0034**

Materials: Hunting diaries

Dates: 1936-1969

Volume: 1.0 cubic feet (Document boxes 1-2)

Donation: Gift of Mrs. Fletcher Harper, 1966, et al.

Usage: Unless otherwise stated by NSL staff, these records are open for research without restrictions.

Historical Note

The Orange County Hunt was established in 1900, and officially recognized in 1902. The Hunt had been organized in and named for Orange County, New York, the home of the wealthy families who established it, such as that of railroad magnate E. H. Harriman. However, by 1903 the New York hunt territory was being overrun by urbanization, so the Hunt was relocated to The Plains, Virginia; in 1905 the Hunt purchased the farm and pack of William Skinker, Jr. to replace their ill-equipped English foxhounds. The present hunt country covers an area 16 by 12 miles in northern Fauquier County near Middleburg; it is separated from the territory of the Piedmont Hunt by "Segregation Lane," so named because of the boundary disputes between the two hunts. In terms of hunt livery, only members of the hunt staff are permitted to wear scarlet, with white facings for the evening; no collars, only buttons are permitted in the field. Members must own land in the area, although guests are permitted to hunt for a capping fee. The Hunt was fortunate enough to enjoy the service of one of the most widely-respected foxhunters in the world, Melvin Poe, for a period of roughly 30 years; Poe joined the staff in 1962 before becoming Huntsman in 1964, in which capacity he served until his retirement in 1991. Prominent MFHs of the Hunt were Fletcher Harper, Mike du Pont, and James Young. Several celebrities have hunted on occasion with the Orange County Hunt, including Jackie Onassis, Robert Duvall, and Dick Smothers. The Hunt holds annual point-to-point races and hunter trials.

Collection Description

The Orange County Hunt hunting diaries are comprised of 32 diaries which chronicle the hunting seasons from 1936 to 1969. The diaries are written in spiral bound and regular composition books, and spiral bound calendars. The first 16 diaries, 1936-1949, were compiled by MFH Fletcher Harper; the remaining 16 appear to have been written by Jt.-MFH Charles G. Turner and Honorary Secretary Donald W. Patterson. These final diaries are contained within spiral bound day calendars, some of which were supplied by Patterson; as they cover one calendar year, these diaries begin with the ending of one season and end with the beginning of another. The last diary, dated for the 1969-1970 season, is entirely blank, except for a loose sheet in the front listing the possible starting points for the season. The diaries are housed in two boxes in chronological order.

Series and Subseries

- I. Hunting Diaries, 1936-1969** **32 diaries**
 32 hunting diaries containing descriptions of hunt meets. Information includes date, starting locations, country covered, weather, hunting conditions, members of field, number of hounds, and results. Earlier diaries (written by Harper) tend to be more descriptive, with longer entries.

Container List MC 0034

I. Hunting Diaries

<u>Box</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	Hunting diaries written by Harper	1936-1949
2	Hunting diaries written by Turner, Patterson	1954-1969

This collection was processed by Michele M. Tourney, July 2004.