

**Arakelian/ Dr. Orra Phelps Research Collection**  
**1810-1996**

**UC006**

**QUANTITY:** 1 box  
**ACCESS:** Open to research  
**ACQUISITION:** Donation of Mary Arakelian, October, 2013  
**PROCESSED BY:** Margie Amodeo

**Biographical Note:** “Many musts to do.” Orra Almira Phelps was born in 1895 in Storrs, Connecticut. In 1913 the Phelps family moved to Chapel Street in Canton, New York. Phelps attended St Lawrence University from 1914-1916 and graduated Mt. Holyoke College in 1918. She earned her medical degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1927, and completed her internship at Albany Medical Center Hospital in 1928. Phelps taught botany and biology in the Saratoga Springs and Fort Plain School Systems. In December 1943 she received a commission as a Lieutenant United States Naval Reserve as a physician and in January 1944 she reported for active duty in Alexandria Virginia. In 1947 Dr. Phelps became 46er #47. Phelps finished the Northville- Placid Trail when she was 83 years old, a goal she had started working toward 50 years earlier. “Many musts to do.” As she is quoted in the Mount Holyoke College, Class Notes, November, 1943.

**Scope and Content Note:** Mary Arakelian, Dr. Phelps’ niece, donated her notes and drafts based on research for her book, *Doc: Orra A. Phelps, M.D.: Adirondack Naturalist and Mountaineer*, published in 2000. Most folders have maintained original order and original titles. Additional files have been added to contain loose items

**Box and Folder List:**

| <b>Box</b> | <b>Folder</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|------------|---------------|--|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b>      | <i>Our Greatest Mountain and Alpine Regions of Wonder</i> by A.H. Barnes   |
|            | <b>2</b>      | Correspondence, Not Dr. Orra Phelps correspondence not to or from Dr. Phelps regarding Dr. Phelps’s stories, naming of the Orra Almira Phelps Nature Trail, copyright permission for ADK materials to Ms. Arakelian, and proofs of chapters of Ms. Arakelian’s book, stories of Dr. Phelps,<br><br>Names Found: Mary Arakelian, Douglas Ayers Jr. (grandson of Dr. Phelps), Mary Brennan, Karen L. Brooks (Adirondac), Nick Burns (North Country Books), Dr. Victor Cahalane, Bruce Cole, Gloria Friello (niece of Dr. Phelps), John Haines, Fred Hibbard, Mary K., Donald Kohler, Phoebe Lou, Walter M. Medwid (ADK Executive Director), Eugene Ogden, Dr. Nancy Slack, Dr. David Steadman, Marie and Rudy Sturm, Lyn Swafford (Canton Free Library), and Mr. and Mrs. Leo Wilcox |
|            | <b>3</b>      | Miscellaneous correspondence to Dr. Orra Phelps including correspondence   |

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|  |           | <p>regarding sale of Dr. Phelps' land, a "thank you" note, letters from her mother (1946), conservation efforts, trail notes from the Northville Lake Placid Trail, Adirondack Loj, other trail notes from A.T. Shorey, Dr. Phelps' appointment to the Outing Committee, minutes of ADK meeting, the Hewitt Amendment, possible Fort Plain Chapter of ADK, ADK membership application and materials, an invitation from Paul Schaefer to come to camp with his family, camping on Piseco Lake, the ADK Natural History Committee meeting,</p> <p>Names Found: Adirondack Mountain Club, W.A. Andrews, Russell M.L. Carson, "Chicken Little," Clarence L. Fisher, H.W. Hicks, Jed Hyde, Lawrence, Mrs. William Lohnes, Preston H. Porchum, Frank R. Rix, Paul Schaefer, A.T. Shorey, Ari Ticknor (tenant), The Nature Conservancy, Bill Toporcer, El Wagner, Mrs. White, Lt. Commander F.L. Willoughby,</p>  |
|  | <b>4</b>  | Notes for Dr. Orra Phelps Biography including a timeline  |
|  | <b>5</b>  | Timeline 1810- 1986   |
|  | <b>6</b>  | Dr. Phelps Notes for Talks "Start of Tal by R. Schottman and O. Phelps July 24, 1982," "Outline of Talk- Alpine Plants," ADK Flowers," "Alpine Plants," "N.Z. Slides," "Alpine Flora Outline," "Alpine Flora Slides," "Nature Miscellany," "Slides Missing from Old F.P. Talk," "Forest Preserve," "Nature Miscellany used 7/12/69," "Slide Show- ADK Loj Taped,"   |
|  | <b>7</b>  | Articles Written on Dr. Orra Phelps "Trail Expert" from "The Upstate Monthly,"  |
|  | <b>8</b>  | Printed Material on Other Topics "Adirondack Wildguide," Eleventh Annual Meeting and Dinner Adirondack Mountain Club," copy of "Marcy's 100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary" article in High Spots December 1937, "Wild Flower" magazine published by The Wild Flower Preservation Society, Inc., "Wild Flowers" catalogue published by Edward Gillett, and "Flora and Vegetation of the Gaspé Peninsula" by Dr. Pierre Dansereau   |
|  | <b>9</b>  | <p>Research for Ranger Naturalist including correspondence regarding appreciation of Dr. Phelps' presentation at the Adirondack Loj, Arakelian's draft for section on Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas' hike with Phelps, "The Garden Journal of the New York Botanical Garden November-December 1963" including mention of Phelps in article, "Holiday Reminiscences in the Adirondacks" by Edmund H. Fulling, information sheet on the Adirondack Loj at Heart Lake, "Orra Phelps: An Appreciation" by E.H. Ketchledge" in Adirondac January-February 1972, drafts for chapter 21, "A Bird's Eye View" by Doris Herwig, "Lore of the Woods Unfolds" by Charlotte A. DuBois for the Christian science Monitor April 26, 1972, two pages ("written while family lived in Canton, 1913-1916") "I could tell you of interesting experiences about almost every bird on my list, but as space does not permit that, I have chosen a few of the most interesting."</p> <p>Names found: Grant Cole, Charlotte A. DuBois, Marvin E. Kirkland,</p> |
|  | <b>10</b> | Research for Cold River, The Hermit, the 1941 Trail Guide 1938-1941 notes on and draft of the chapter, copy of a letter from Phelps to Landon, two typed pages (yellowed with age) titled "Cold River Country in 1938,"   |

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| <b>11</b> | Research for Northville- Placid Trail including copies of Northville- Placid Trail Data written by Phelps, "Ten Days on the Northville-Lake Placid Trail" by Vincent Birge, "Raspberry Country" by John "Dickinson, copy of a letter to William White asking for the Northville- Placid "Record of Trip" form and copy of completed form |
| <b>12</b> | Guardian of Orra Phelps several drafts of the chapter describing her personal relationship with Phelps   |
| <b>13</b> | Articles written by Dr. Orra Phelps including "Table Top Mountain," "Hunting Curly-Grass," "Some Flowers of Forteau, Labrador, Mountaintop Flora," and "Before you take the trail:"  |
| <b>14</b> | Additional Notes on Dr. Orra Almira Phelps including article by Arthur E. Newkirk, "Orra Phelps, ADKer"  |
| <b>15</b> | Song Book from the Appalachian Mountain Club   |
| <b>16</b> | Copies of Maps   |
| <b>17</b> | Slides of flowering plants and one photograph of "Leon and OAP at Heart Lake Lean-to, 1930"  |
| <b>18</b> | Resolution No. 267 in memoriam of Orra A. Phelps, M.D.   |
|           | Gray, Asa, and Merritt Lyndon Fernald. <i>Manual of Botany; a Handbook of the Flowering Plants and Ferns of the Central and Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada</i> . New York: American Book, 1950. Print. with letters, articles, and notes inside where found, also included are pressed leaves                            |
|           | Names found: John E. Erb, Mildred E. Faust, and H. P Sartwell, Ph.D., M.D.   |
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