

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

SIR JOHN MURRAY

Newspaper cuttings, 1914

Reel M833

**Mr J.A.J. Murray
19 St Mary Abbott's Terrace
London W14**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1972

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Of Scottish descent, Sir John Murray (1841-1914) was born in Cobourg, Ontario. In 1858 he migrated to Scotland to complete his education and attended Stirling High School and the University of Edinburgh. He chose subjects that interested him, particularly in the natural and physical sciences, but did not bother to sit for exams and never graduated. He also studied in France, Germany and Belgium. He helped a relative, John Macfarlane, assemble a large natural history collection at his home at the Bridge of Allen. In 1868 he was the naturalist on a whaler that sailed to Spitzbergen and the Arctic. In 1872-76 he was one of the naturalists on HMS *Challenger* on its voyage of scientific exploration round the world. On his return to England he joined the staff who compiled the reports on the voyage and in 1882, following the death of Sir Wyville Thomson, he became editor of the *Challenger* reports. Fifty volumes were published, covering zoology, botany, deep-sea deposits, physics and chemistry, as well as the official account of the voyage. The project was completed in 1895.

Murray published a large number of papers on oceanographical, geographical, geological and botanical subjects. He set up an oceanographical laboratory in Edinburgh and between 1882 and 1894 he often sailed on his yacht *Medusa* to investigate physical and biological conditions in the seas and lochs of Scotland. He was secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh from 1891 to 1900. In 1910 he took part in a Norwegian expedition to the northern Atlantic and in 1912, with Johan Hjort, he published *The depths of the ocean*. Murray was one of the pioneers of oceanography as a scientific discipline. He was knighted in 1898 and received many scientific honours.

Murray had a strong interest in coral reefs and he sought the assistance of the British Admiralty in obtaining specimens. In 1887 HMS *Flying Fish* visited Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and collected pieces of rock and coral. Murray detected calcium phosphate in the rocks and urged the Government to annex the uninhabited island. It did so in 1888 and in 1890 Murray and George Clunies Ross acquired a joint lease of the island. In 1897 Murray and Ross formed the Christmas Island Phosphate Company, with Murray as chairman. Murray visited Christmas Island in 1900 and 1908 and was largely responsible for exploring the island and setting up the mining operations. After his death his family continued to manage the enterprise until 1948. Christmas Island became an Australian territory in 1958.

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Cutting book containing newspaper reports of the death of Sir John Murray, accounts of his life and scientific achievements, and details of his will and estate, 17 March – 4 April 1914.

Murray died on 16 March 1914 when his chauffeur-driven car crashed near the village of Kirkliston, west of Edinburgh. The articles were published in a large number of newspapers and journals in Scotland, England, Ireland, Germany, France, the United States of America, and Canada. There is also a cutting from an Australian newspaper, the *Western Argus* (Kalgoorlie).

Some of the more substantial obituaries and articles appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*, *Edinburgh Evening Despatch*, *Illustrated London News*, *The Times* (London), *Yorkshire Herald*, *Birmingham Post*, *Nottingham Guardian* and *Nature*.

Note: the pages were filmed from right to left on the reel, with the title page appearing at the end of the reel.