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Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu

Creator: Cochran, Doris M., (Doris Mabel), 1898-1968

Title: Doris Mable Cochran Papers

Dates: circa 1891-1968

Quantity: 6.69 cu. ft. (12 document boxes) (1 16x20 box)

Administrative Information

Prefered Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7151, Doris Mable Cochran Papers

Historical Note

Doris Mable Cochran (1898-1968) was born in North Girard, Pennsylvania, and came to Washington, D.C., when her father received a government position. She attended Washington schools and following her graduation from high school, she took a position with the War Department. In November 1919 she was appointed an aide to Dr. Leonhard Stejneger in the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians where she worked until her retirement in April 1968.

While at the War Department and later, while at the National Museum, she attended George Washington University nights, receiving her A.B. and M.S. degrees, both in zoology, in 1920 and 1921. At the same time, she attended classes at the Corcoran Art School and developed her artistic talents, becoming a scientific illustrator not only for her own works, but also for those of her colleagues. She continued her studies in zoology and in 1928 received her M.A. in the field from Johns Hopkins University and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in 1933. Her dissertation dealt with the musculature of the blue crab.

At the Smithsonian, she advanced through the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians, becoming assistant curator in 1927, an associate curator in 1942, and curator in 1956. As Stejneger grew older, more of the work of the Division fell to Cochran, and following Stejneger's death in 1943 she became acting head of the Division and supervised the Division alone until 1964 when James A. Peters was appointed associate curator.

Her principal areas of interest were the reptiles and amphibians of Central and South America and of the West Indies, especially Haiti. She made two field trips to the region, in 1935 and 1962-63, where she worked with Adolpho Lutz and his daughter Bertha, noted Brazilian herpetologists. Her major works in this area include The Frogs of Southeastern Brazil (1955) and The Herpetology of Hispaniola (1941). Cochran also traveled to Europe twice, in 1938 and 1951, to study herpetological collections in museums there. In the course of her work, Cochran named nearly 100 new species and 6 new genera.
In addition to her professional work, Cochran published many popular articles and books on herpetology, the most important being *Living Amphibians of the World* (1961), which has been translated into six languages. She also gave a number of radio talks and speeches on reptiles and amphibians to clubs.

**Introduction**

This finding aid was digitized with funds generously provided by the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee.

**Descriptive Entry**

The papers of Doris Mable Cochran include manuscripts, notes and data on herpetology; material concerning specimens received by the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians; photographs of reptiles and amphibians; personal material including clippings, photographs and material related to her education and Smithsonian career; personal correspondence and correspondence concerning publications and material on her travels to Europe and South America.


**Names and Subject Terms**

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

**Subjects:**
- Amphibians
- Herpetology

**Types of Materials:**
- Black-and-white photographs
- Manuscripts

**Names:**
- Cochran, Doris M. (Doris Mable), 1898-1968
- Lutz, Adolpho, 1855-1940
- Lutz, Bertha, 1894-1976
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Reptiles and Amphibians
Peters, James Arthur, 1922-1972
Stejneger, Leonhard, 1851-1943
Series 1: MANUSCRIPTS, NOTES, DATA, AND RELATED MATERIALS ON SCIENTIFIC WORK, c. 1921-1968.

Includes a chronological file of manuscripts, notes, and related materials on herpetology, particularly of Haiti and South America (boxes 1-4) and on the blue crabs (boxes 2-3), an alphabetical file of undated manuscripts, notes and related material (boxes 4-5), material related to specimens received and exchanges with other museums (box 5), data on particular species (boxes 5-6), and photographs and negatives of amphibians and reptiles (box 6). Correspondence concerning the publication of a number of the manuscripts is in Series 2.

Box 1


Folder 2 Typescript and material related to "Notes on herpetological collections from the island of Haiti received from Dr. W. L. Abbott," c. 1924.

Folder 3 Material on penguins, c. 1924.

Folder 4 Typescript of talk to Journal Club of Johns Hopkins University on the Smithsonian, September 5, 1925; notes on article on ciliary movement in mollusks.


Folder 6 Photos and notes of the Leptodactylus from Lutz, either Adolpho or Bertha, of 1926 and 1930.


Folder 9 Manuscript and notes related to "The Fire Toad," 1927.

Folder 10 Notes on W. J. Eyerdam collection from Haiti and his field notes, 1927.

Folder 11 Data on Pseudemys palustris, 1927-1928.
Folder 12 Data on Ialtris dorsalis, 1928, including copy of "The Identity of Werner's Dromicus W-Nigrum."


Folder 14 Data sheets from turtle experiments, 1929-1931.

Folder 15 Material concerning "The Herpetological Collections made by Dr. Hugh M. Smith in Siam from 1923 to 1929," 1930, including photographs, bibliographic notes, notes on species, lists of specimens collected, and a reprint of the article.

Folder 16 Data on Leiocephalus, c. 1933.

Folder 17 Typescript of radio talk "Some reptiles found near the city of Washington," July 13, 1933.

Folder 18 Typescript and announcement of speech to Kiwanis Club of Alexandria, Virginia, "Habits, distribution and economic importance of our local varieties of Snakes, Frogs, Turtles Lizards, Crocodiles and Salamanders," July 27, 1933.

Folder 19 Typescript and material related to "Bahaman Reptiles and Amphibians collected by Dr. Paul Bartsch under the auspices of the Walter Rathbone Bacon Scholarship Fund," c. 1934.

Folder 20 Typescript of radio talk "Frogs, Toads and Turtles," July 19, 1934.

Folder 21 Typescript and material related to "Herpetological Collections made in Hispaniola by the Utowana Expedition, 1934," 1934.

Box 2

Folder 1 Typescripts of "Expedition to Brazil," c. 1935; "Frog Collecting in Brazil," 1935; and "The Dragon Lizard of Komodo," n.d.


Folder 2 Material related to "New Reptiles and Amphibians collecting in Haiti by P. J. Darlington," 1935, including article reprint.

Folder 3 Typescript "Collecting Frogs in Brazil," c. 1935.

Digital Content: Typescript "collecting frogs in Brazil," circa 1935.

Folder 4 Typescript of Paciencia, Senhora, c. 1935.

Folder 5 Typescript of Just a Minute, Miss, c. 1935.

Folders 6-8 Material on The Skeletal Musculature of the Blue Crab, Callinectus Sapidus Rathbun, Ph.D. dissertation for University of Maryland, 1935, including notes, drawings, photographs, bibliographic notes, and x-ray photographs.
Folders 1-12 Material on *The Skeletal Musculature of the Blue Crab, Callinectus Sapidus Rathbun*, Ph.D. dissertation for University of Maryland, 1935, including notes, drawing, photographs, bibliographic notes, and x-ray photographs.

Folder 13 Notes and photographs on twinning in turtles, c. 1937-1940.

Folder 14 Typescripts of "The Diamond-back Terrapin Culture: Further Studies" and "The Feeding and Care of Young Diamond-back Terrapins" by Samuel F. Hildebrand, c. 1931.

Folder 15 Turtle recipes.

Folder 16 Notes on Darlington collection from Museum of Comparative Zoology, 1938-1939.

Folder 17 Review of *The Herpetology of Hispaniola*.

Folder 18 Typescript of "The pokeweed, a national defense food" including comments regarding its publication by Leonhard Stejneger and Alexander Wetmore, 1941-1942.

Folder 19 Typescript and notes on "Reptiles and Amphibians of the South Pacific Islands," 1944.

Box 4

Folder 1 Number of species in living order, 1946.

Folder 2 Notes on Dr. Adolpho Lutz's species identified as new, c. 1949; notes on specimens, n.d.

Folder 3 Identification of frogs from P. Vanzolini, c. 1949.

*Digital Content: Typed, two page list entitled "Identification list of frogs from P. E. Vanzolini". These frogs were either collected by Vanzolini or identified by him. The list is dated 1949, but the specimens may have been collected in an earlier year.*

Folder 4 Typescript and material related to "Our Friend the Turtle" and "Nature's Tank, the Turtle," 1952.

Folder 5 Typescript of "A new subspecies of toad from Santa Catharina, Brazil," 1950.

Folder 6 Manuscript, typescript and photograph for "Our Snake Friends and Foes," 1954.


Folder 10 Typescript and notes for "Description of a new genus and species of Frog (Leptodactylidae) from Colombia," 1961.
Folder 11 Photographs of Colombian Frogs, 1962.
   Digital Content: 21 photographs (some may be duplicate images) of frogs from Colombia dated May 1962 (date developed?), perhaps taken during Cochran's 1962-1963 trip to South America to collect frogs and visit natural history museums. Frogs are unidentified and photos are unlabeled.


Folder 13 Manuscript of article on frogs for Merit Students Encyclopedia and Certificate of Appreciation, c. 1967.


Folder 15 Typescripts on frogs and toads; typescripts of " Beauties of Microscopic Animals and Plants," n. d.

Folder 16 Manuscript of " All About Snakes," n.d.

Folder 17 Bibliographic material, n.d.


Folder 19 Typescript of " Discoglossid toads, Family Discoglossidae," n.d.


Folder 21 Check list for Haiti, n.d.

Folder 22 Notes and photos concerning herpetology and mammoth fossils, n.d.

Folder 23 Key to the genera and species of amphibians in Santo Domingo, n.d.

Folder 24 Notes on lizards, n.d.

Folder 25 Material concerning Bertha Lutz, n.d.


Box 5

Folder 1 Manuscript and typescripts of "Museum Scouts," n.d.


Folder 4 Notes on A. C. Younglove, n.d., including copies of portions of letters from Younglove to Spencer Baird, dated April 20, 1866, May 11, 1866, from Haiti and September 1, 1866, from Switzerland.

Folder 5 Material concerning specimens collected by Bertha Lutz, 1935, 1941, 1945.

Folder 6 List of specimens received from Brazilian Embassy, 1938.

Folder 7 Lists of specimens sent to Doris M. Cochran 1938-1939, 1947-1948; photograph of specimens.

Folder 8 Material related to shipment of specimens, 1939, 1941, 1944, 1946.

Folder 9 Notes concerning specimens, plates, nomenclature, localities where specimens were collected and Hyla, c. 1944-1952.

Folder 10 Exchange lists of Museum of Comparative Zoology, c. 1944.


Folder 15 Notes on specimens received from J. R. Tamsitt, 1961.

Folder 16 Notes on specimens received from Fred Medem, 1961-1964.

Folder 17 Material related to shipment of specimens from Brazil, 1962-1963.

Folder 18 Notes on specimens received from C. J. Marinkelle, 1964.

Folder 19 Loan of Hispaniolan specimens from Field Museum of Natural History, n.d.


Folder 21 Notes on West Indies herpetological collections; includes: information sheet from United States Consul in Haiti, 1926; portion of 1931 letter from A. Loveridge and notes on A. E. Vinson.

Folder 22 Data on Alsophis anomalus, Haiti

Folder 23 Data on Ameira.
Folder 24 Data on Amphiebaena.
Folder 25 Data on Anolis, also Audantis.
Folder 26 Data on Anolis chlorocyanus.
Folder 27 Data on Anolis cybotes.

Box 6
Folder 1 Data on Anolis distichus.
Folder 2 Data on Anolis ricordii.
Folder 3 Data on Anolis semilineatus.
Folder 4 Data on Celestus.
Folder 5 Data on Crocodilus americanus.
Folder 6 Data on Cyclura.
Folder 7 Data on Epicrates.
Folder 8 Data on Gonatodes notatus, also Aristelliger.
Folder 9 Data on Hemidactylus mabouia, H. Brookii.
Folder 10 Data on Hispaniola lizards.
Folder 11 Data on Hypsirhynchus ferox.
Folder 12 Data on Leimadophis.
Folder 13 Data on Mabuya.
Folder 14 Data on Salientia of Hispaniola.
Folder 15 Data on Sauria of Hispaniola.
Folder 16 Data on Serpentes of Hispaniola.
Folder 17 Data on Sphaerodactylus.
Folder 18 Data on Tropidoplus.
Folder 19 Data on Typhlops.
Folder 20 Data on Uromacer.
Folder 21 Data on West Indian Reptiles.
Folder 22 Examples of the use of amphibians and reptiles in art.
Folder 23 Negatives and prints of toads and frogs in art.
Folder 24 Painting of five Costa Rican frogs. (removed to box 13)
Folder 25 Negatives and prints of plates of frogs.

Folder 26 Negatives and prints of frogs.

Folder 27 Negative and print of map of Hispaniola in a Mr. Leonard's office.

Folder 28 Negative of plates from Jimenez de Espada.

Folder 29 Negatives and copies of Plates I, II, III in Agassiz, *Contributions to Natural History, Turtles*.

Folder 30 Typescript, negative and print of plate II from "On a collection of Batrachians made by Professor Charles Spegazzini at Colonia Resistencia, South Chaco, Argentine Republic" by G. A. Boulenger.

Folder 31 Photocopy of "Description of a new species of Lacerta from Persia," by G. A. Boulenger, 1908.

Folder 32 Negative and print from Burmeister's *Fauna Brasiliens*, 1856.

Folder 33 Negative and print of plate XII from Mehely's "Investigations on Paraguyan Batrachians".

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This series contains a chronological file of personal materials including clippings, photographs and material related to Cochran's education and Smithsonian career (boxes 7-8), personal correspondence and correspondence relating to publications (box 8-11), and material concerning her travels to Europe and South America (boxes 11-12). Manuscripts and other material related to Cochran's publications are in Series 1.

Box 7

Folder 1 Composition book of Cochran, Grade 8A.

Folder 2 Material concerning Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland, 1929-1933.

Folder 3 Johns Hopkins University Biology Department Alumni Letters, 1935, 1938-1942.


Folder 9 Bibliography 1922-1965; Doris M. Cochran number of Herpetologica, 1953.

Folder 10 Card file to species named by and for Cochran and to her publications.

Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran at desk, Spring 1938. [Image no. 96-948]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran working in the collections area with her assistant, Barry Hampton, in September 1954. [Image no. 96-949]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran working with collections, September 1954. [Image no. 96-950]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran measuring a turtle shell, 1954. [Image no. SIA2009-0711 or 96-951]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran with snake, 1954. [Image no. 96-952]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran working at desk, 1956. [Image no. 96-953]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran at desk, c. 1930. [Image no. 96-954]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran at desk holding frog, 1934. [Image no. 96-955]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran holding frog, c. 1930s. [Image no. 96-956]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran at desk with specimens, c. 1930s. [Image no. 96-957]
Digital Content: Portrait of Doris Mabel Cochran [Image no. SIA2014-00034]
Digital Content: Doris M. Cochran article, "Frog Lady," THE AMERICAN magazine. [Image no. SIA2014-00043]
Digital Content: Newspaper clipping - "Woman Curator at Smithsonian Works with Snakes and Reptiles” [Image no. SIA2014-00035]
Digital Content: Newspaper clipping on Doris M. Cochran. [Image no. SIA2014-00036]
Digital Content: Newspaper clipping - "Smithsonian Aid, Visitor Here, Tells of Scientific Tour Through Brazil," The Minneapolis Journal, July 1, 1936. [Image no. SIA2014-00037]
Digital Content: Newspaper clipping - "Woman Keeps 130,000 Bottled Reptiles, Doesn't Have Creeps," Star-Times, Washington Bureau. [Image no. SIA2014-00040]
Digital Content: Newspaper clipping - "Snakes Are Her Specialty." [Image no. SIA2014-00041]

Folder 16 Certificate of Achievement from Ross Allen's Reptile Institute, 1954.

Digital Content: Certificate of Achievement from Ross Allen's Reptile Institute, 1954. [Image no. SIA2014-00045]
Folder 17 Notes on members of museum staff in 1920s, and other colleagues including James E. Benedict, Oliver Perry Hay, his son W. Perry Hay, Howard A. Kelly of Johns Hopkins, Maynard M. Metcalf of Johns Hopkins, Marcus Benjamin, Newton P. Scudder.

Box 8

Folder 1 Notes of Antonio Zeno Shindler, Smithsonian artist, c. 1900.

Folder 2 Negatives of Dr. Adolpho Lutz taken at Nova Friburgo, May 1935 and of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, front view. Also list of photographs of Brazil.

Folder 3 Photographs from Life magazine, 1953.

Folder 4 Unidentified personal photographs.

Folder 5 Autographs and return addresses of scientists.

Folder 6 Notes on Russian language, c. 1964.
  Digital Content: Doris Cochran's Russian Exercise [Image no. SIA2014-00046]

Folder 7 Stamp notebook of Cochran.

Folder 8 Material related to tubular four leaf clovers, Trifolium pratense L., c. 1955.

Folder 9 Personal correspondence including thank you notes, Christmas greetings, wedding announcements, concerning school work at University of Maryland, and commencement at Johns Hopkins, get well notes, retirement congratulations, 1924, 1927-1935, 1940-1953, 1959-1968.

Folder 10 Correspondence concerning The Skeletal Musculature of the Blue Crab, Callinectus Sapidus Rathbun, 1929-1933.

Folder 11 Correspondence concerning "Our Friend the Frog", 1931-1937.

Folder 12 Correspondence concerning "Museum Scouts", 1936-1938, 1940-1941.

Folder 13 Correspondence concerning Patiencia, Senhora, 1937-1938.

Folder 14 Correspondence concerning Herpetology of Hispaniola, 1941.

Box 9

Folder 1 Correspondence concerning "Nature's Tank, the Turtle" (Our Friend the Turtle), 1949-1954, 1967.

Folder 2 Correspondence concerning "Our Snake Friends and Foes," 1951-1955.

Folder 3 Correspondence concerning "Frogs' World," 1956-1957.
Folders 4-7 Correspondence concerning *Living Amphibians of the World*, 1958-1968.


Folder 10 Typescript and manuscript of "The Life and Adventures of Anthony Curtiss."


Folders 12-14 Correspondence with Anthony Curtiss, collector and amateur natural historian, concerning his life and collecting activities in Haiti, Morocco, and Pakistan, 1942-1944.

Box 10


Box 11

Folders 1-7 Correspondence with Anthony Curtiss, 1961-1968.

Folder 8 Travel diary excerpts from Cochran trip to Brazil, 1935; and "Outfit of Dr. Doris M. Cochran to Brazil," 1934.

  Digital Content: Eight pages of typed excerpts from Cochran's travel diary during her 1935 trip to Brazil to collect frogs.

Folder 9 "Catalogue of Herpetological Specimens in The Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, 1935."

Folder 10 Diary of European trip, 1938.

Folder 11 1938 European trip itinerary and notes.

Folder 12 "European Museum Notes," 1938.

Box 12

Folder 1 European notebook, 1951.

Folder 2 Research proposal to National Science Foundation, 1962.


  Digital Content: The 1962-1963 travelogue documents Doris Cochran's National Science Foundation funded trip to visit museums in South America and collect frog specimens, building on collections she made there in 1935. [Image nos. SIA2012-4384 to SIA2012-4484]
Folders 4-5 Material concerning National Science Foundation trip to South America, 1962-1963.
  Digital Content: This item contains mostly receipts, notes on expenses, and travel documents from Doris Cochran's trip to various countries in South America in 1962-1963.
  Digital Content: This item contains mostly to-do lists, addresses of South American contacts, personal notes, and expenses from Doris Cochran's trip to various countries in South America in 1962-1963.

Folder 6 Maps of Columbia.
  Digital Content: Six traced and printed maps of Colombia, possibly used for Cochran's 1962-1963 trip to South America to collect herpetological specimens. Also includes a list of localities corresponding with some of the maps.


Folder 9 Personal items from 1962-1963 South American trip.

Folder 10 Material concerning 1966 International Symposium on Animal Venoms, Sao Paulo, Brazil, including paper presented by Cochran, program, papers presented by other participants, lapel pin and Vital Brazil commemorative medal.
Series 3: LARGE FORMAT MATERIAL.

Box 13

Folder 1 Painting of five Costa Rican frogs (from box 6, folder 24)
  Digital Content: Painting of five Costa Rican frogs with frog identifications on verso, by Doris M. Cochran. [Image nos. SIA2014-00026a and SIA2014-00026b]

Folder 2 1938 letter from Naturhistorisches Museum and a log of specimens (used in USNM Bulletin 288, 1970) (Accession 08-125)

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