



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Records, 1873-1968

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Records
Identifier:	Record Unit 161
Date:	1873-1968
Extent:	12.98 cu. ft. (9 record storage boxes) (1 document box) (6 tall document boxes)
Creator::	National Museum of Natural History. Division of Reptiles and Amphibians
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 161, National Museum of Natural History.
Division of Reptiles and Amphibians, Records

Historical Note

The collection of reptiles and amphibians under the care of the Smithsonian Institution had its origins in the collection of Spencer F. Baird which he presented to the Institution when he came to Washington to accept the position of Assistant Secretary in 1850. For the next three decades there was no curator officially in charge of the collection, and most of the early publications resulting from the collection were produced by Baird and Charles Frederic Girard (1822-1895), who from 1850-1860 was Baird's chief assistant.

In 1879 Henry Crécy Yarrow (1840-1929), an army surgeon who had served as naturalist on the explorations west of the 100th meridian led by Lt. George Wheeler, was appointed Honorary Curator of the Department of Herpetology, a position which he filled on a part-time basis until his resignation in 1889. During the early 1880's the Department was known variously as the Department of Herpetology, the Department of Reptiles, and the Department of Reptiles and Batrachians. But by about 1885 the latter title had become standard. In 1947 the name was changed to the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians.

In 1897 the National Museum was reorganized into three departments: Biology, Geology, and Anthropology, with Reptiles and Batrachians as a Division of the Department of Biology. In 1947 another administrative reorganization took place in the United States National Museum. As part of the reorganization the Department of Biology was split into Departments of Botany and Zoology with Reptiles and Batrachians (renamed Reptiles and Amphibians) becoming a Division of the Department of Zoology. In 1964 the Department of Zoology was divided into three departments: Vertebrate Zoology, Invertebrate Zoology, and Entomology, with Reptiles and Amphibians a Division of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology.

Leonhard Stejneger (1851-1943), the first full-time curator of the Division of Reptiles and Batrachians, came to the Smithsonian in 1881 as an ornithologist. During 1882 and 1883 he worked as an observer for the U. S. Signal Service in the Commander Islands, where he made large collections for the U. S. National Museum. After his return to Washington he was made Assistant Curator in the Department of Birds (1884), a position which he held until asked to assume the position of Curator of the Department of Reptiles and Batrachians in 1889, after the resignation of Yarrow. He accepted the position and held it until his death in 1943.

Doris Mable Cochran (1898-1968) was appointed Aid in the Division in 1919. In 1927 she was named Assistant Curator; in 1942 she became Associate Curator; and in 1956 she was named Curator, a position which she held until her death.

Descriptive Entry

This collection consists of correspondence of the Division of Reptiles and Batrachians, a correspondence which was conducted by Yarrow, Stejneger, and Cochran.

The correspondence of James A. Peters (1922-1972), who came to the United States National Museum in 1964 and was appointed Curator in Charge of the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians in 1966, is maintained by the Division at this time.

The records contain general correspondence carried out by the Division's curators. Materials of Leonhard Stejneger pertaining to the international congresses he was invited to and attended as a representative of the USNM (1895-1911) are included. In addition, administrative memoranda regarding the USNM operations for the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians and the Departments of Biology, Vertebrate Zoology, and Zoology are included. This material pertains to requisitions, budgetary matters, publication policy, expeditions of curators, museum exhibitions, and personnel matters.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Congresses and conventions
- Herpetology
- Museum exhibits
- Museums -- Administration

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts

Names:

- Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
- Cochran, Doris M. (Doris Mable), 1898-1968
- Girard, Charles Frederic
- National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Vertebrate Zoology
- Peters, James Arthur, 1922-1972
- Stejneger, Leonhard, 1851-1943
- United States National Museum

United States National Museum. Department of Biology
United States National Museum. Department of Zoology
Wheeler, George M. Lt.
Yarrow, H. C. (Harry Crécy), 1840-1929

Container Listing

Series 1: General Correspondence (Incoming and Outgoing), 1873-1968, arranged alphabetically.

This material consists of the correspondence of the three curators of the division, Henry Crécy Yarrow, Leonhard Stejneger, and Doris Mable Cochran. The loose correspondence (boxes 1-9) is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically there under, with the exception of incoming correspondence to Yarrow. This bound volume (1881-1884) is arranged in a rough chronological order. Some of Stejneger's correspondence predates his appointment as Curator in the Division in 1889. This correspondence concerns his work in the Department of Birds. Outgoing correspondence prior to about 1922 can be found in Series 2.

Box 1

- Box 1 of 16 Aarhus - Aus
- Box 1 of 16 Austin - Thomas Barbour, 1920
- Box 1 of 16 Thomas Barbour, 1921-1945

Box 2

- Box 2 of 16 Thomas Barbour - Letters Relating to Agassiz turtle drawings, 1936-1938 - Frank N. Blanchard
- Box 2 of 16 Keith Blanchard - Brockett
- Box 2 of 16 Brodie - Cary

Box 3

- Box 3 of 16 Case - Conant
- Box 3 of 16 Condit - Mary Cynthia Dickinson
- Box 3 of 16 S. D. Dickinson - Eigenmann

Box 4

- Box 4 of 16 Eiselt - Helen Thompson Gaige, 1937
- Box 4 of 16 Helen Thompson Gaige, 1938 - Coleman Jett Goin, 1960

Box 4 of 16 Coleman Jett Goin, 1961 - Grote

Box 5

Box 5 of 16 Groves - Hildebrand

Box 5 of 16 Hill - Ives

Box 5 of 16 Jackley - A. Kelly

Box 6

Box 6 of 16 R. S. Kelly - Legler

Box 6 of 16 Lehrs - Adolph Lutz

Box 6 of 16 Bertha Lutz - Marinkelle

Box 7

Box 7 of 16 Mark - Moore

Box 7 of 16 Moreland - Ortenburger, undated & incomplete dates

Box 7 of 16 Ortenburger, 1921 - Piper

Box 8

Box 8 of 16 Plank - Rivero

Box 8 of 16 Robb - Albert Schwartz

Box 8 of 16 Frank Schwartz - Hugh Smith

Box 9

Box 9 of 16 Malcolm Smith - Terentjev

Box 9 of 16 Test - Walton

Box 9 of 16 Wandolleck - Miscellaneous Correspondence

Box 10

Box 10 of 16 Letters Received, Book B. Department of Reptiles, 1881-1884

Box 10 of 16 Correspondence Log, June 24, 1899 - October 4, 1902

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Series 2: Outgoing Correspondence, 1882-1883, 1889-1922, arranged chronologically.

Consists of bound letterpress books. All volumes indexed individually.

Box 10

Box 10 of 16 October 16, 1882-December 13, 1883 (Letters Answered, Book A.
Department of Reptiles)

Box 10 of 16 March 21, 1889 - September 8, 1891

Box 11

Box 11 of 16 December 26, 1890 - May 15, 1900

Box 11 of 16 September 7, 1891 - November 3, 1892

Box 11 of 16 November 3, 1892 - April 23, 1894

Box 11 of 16 April 23, 1894 - December 23, 1895

Box 12

Box 12 of 16 January 19, 1896 - February 4, 1898

Box 12 of 16 May 20, 1896 - February 9, 1904

Box 12 of 16 February 4, 1898 - July 26, 1899

Box 12 of 16 July 3, 1899 - August 20, 1900

Box 13

Box 13 of 16 August 17, 1900 - January 7, 1902

Box 13 of 16 January 7, 1902 - May 11, 1903

Box 13 of 16 May 12, 1903 - February 6, 1905

Box 13 of 16 February 6, 1905 - July 7, 1906

Box 14

Box 14 of 16	July 9, 1906 - April 9, 1908
Box 14 of 16	April 10, 1908 - April 4, 1910
Box 14 of 16	April 9, 1910 - January 8, 1913
Box 15	
Box 15 of 16	January 14, 1913 - March 2, 1916
Box 15 of 16	March 7, 1916 - February 2, 1922

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Series 3: Correspondence Related to Scientific Congresses, 1895-1911, arranged chronologically.

Consists of material sent to Leonhard Stejneger regarding the various congresses he was invited to and attended as a representative of the United States National Museum. The correspondence (mostly incoming) relates to Stejneger's duties as the Organizing Secretary, Section of Zoogeography, Seventh International Zoological Congress (1907) and his participation on the International Committee on Zoological Nomenclature (1899-1909). The correspondence is arranged chronologically by congress and alphabetically thereunder by correspondent.

Correspondents in this series include: Joel Asaph Allen, Frank Baker, Edward Asahel Birge, Wilhelm Blasius, Frank Michler Chapman, Theodore D. A. Cockerell, Daniel William Coquillett, John Thomas Gulick, Ernst Johann Otto Hartert, Angelo Heilprin, Frederick Webb Hodge, David Starr Jordan, Samuel P. Langley, Gerrit Smith Miller, Jr., Wilfred Hudson Osgood, George Howard Parker, Richard Rathbun, William DeC. Ravenel, William Emerson Ritter, P. S. Sclater, R. Bowdler Sharpe, Charles Wardell Stiles, Charles D. Walcott.

Box 16

Box 16 of 16	Third International Zoological Congress, 1895
Box 16 of 16	Seventh International Geological Congress, 1897
Box 16 of 16	Fourth International Zoological Congress, 1898
Box 16 of 16	International Committee on Zoological Nomenclature, 1899-1907 (3 folders)
Box 16 of 16	Fifth International Zoological Congress, 1901 (3 folders)
Box 16 of 16	Sixth International Zoological Congress, 1904 (2 folders)
Box 16 of 16	Fourth International Ornithological Congress, 1905 (2 folders)
Box 16 of 16	Seventh International Zoological Congress, 1907 (3 folders)
Box 16 of 16	Fourth International Fishery Congress, 1908
Box 16 of 16	Fifth International Ornithological Congress, 1909
Box 16 of 16	Eighth International Zoological Congress, 1910
Box 16 of 16	Tenth International Geographical Congress, 1911

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Series 4: Administrative Memoranda, 1946-1966.

This material relates to the operation of the United States National Museum, particularly the Department of Biology, Department of Zoology, and the Department of Vertebrate Zoology as well as the Division of Reptiles and Amphibians. Includes requisitions, budgets, publication matters and policies, expeditions by curators, exhibitions, personnel changes, and other routine matters within the Smithsonian Institution and the U. S. National Museum.

Box 16

Box 16 of 16

Correspondents in this series include: Herbert Friedmann, Arthur Remington Kellogg, Waldo LaSalle Schmitt.

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