



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Records, 1865-1941

by Smithsonian Institution Archives

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <i>osiaref@si.edu</i> |
| Creator: | United States National Museum, Division of Fishes |
| Title: | Records |
| Dates: | 1865-1941 |
| Quantity: | 1.8 linear meters. |

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 213, United States National Museum, Division of Fishes, Records

Historical Note

The origins of the Division of Fishes of the United States National Museum and its ichthyological work can be traced to the arrival of Spencer F. Baird as Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian in 1850. When he arrived, Baird brought with him his private collection of specimens, which he had collected and arranged. Among these specimens were a number of fishes, and these were the earliest basis for the fish collections of the United States National Museum.

Although the first catalogue entry of fishes is dated in 1856, ichthyological work had been carried out for some time before this. In 1850, Baird brought Charles Girard, a student of Jean Louis Agassiz, to the Smithsonian, where he remained until 1860. During this period, Girard published 42 ichthyological papers based on the Museum collections. Baird himself published little in the field, although he did collaborate with Girard on a number of papers. Theodore Nicholas Gill joined the Smithsonian in 1859 to help prepare the reports for the Northwestern Boundary Survey and spent the rest of his life working on the museum collections, although he was never an official division staff member.

The two other principal bases for the fish collections were the United States Exploring Expedition specimens, which were brought to the Museum in 1858, and the collections deposited by the United States Fish Commission and its successor agencies.

The Division of Fishes and the United States Fish Commission were closely associated from the latter's founding in 1871. In addition to Baird's duties as assistant secretary, he was commissioner of Fish and Fisheries from its founding until his death in 1887. He also assigned Smithsonian staff members to Fish Commission duties, and the distinction between the activities of the Fish Commission and the Division of Fishes appears very nebulous in these papers, particularly for the early period.

Tarleton Hoffman Bean joined the staff as assistant ichthyologist in 1877 and became curator following the organization of the United States National Museum in 1879. Fish Commission duties became too time consuming, however, and he was made honorary curator from 1888 to 1905. His brother, Barton A. Bean,

was appointed assistant in 1882, aid in 1886, and curator in 1890. He retained this title until his retirement in 1932. Barton Warren Evermann held the title of curator from 1906 to 1913 but apparently spent the greater part of his time on Bureau of Fisheries matters.

Since 1932, curators of the division have included George Sprague Myers, assistant curator in charge (1933-1936); Leonard Peter Schultz, assistant curator in charge (1936-1938), curator (1938-1965), and senior scientist and associate (1965-); Loren P. Woods, associate curator (1947-1948); Edward C. Raney, associate curator (1949); Ernest A. Lachner, associate curator (1949-1965) and curator (1965-); William Ralph Taylor, associate curator (1949-); Robert H. Gibbs, Jr., associate curator (1963-1969) and curator (1969-); Victor G. Springer, associate curator (1963-1967) and curator (1967-) and Stanley H. Weitzman, associate curator (1963-1968) and curator (1968-).

Introduction

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

Descriptive Entry

This record unit includes correspondence of the division, 1865-1941; accession and distribution record books, 1882-1936; invoices on specimens, ca. 1895, 1911-1923; and related notes, lists and materials on fishes.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Ichthyology

Names:

Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
Bean, Barton A. (Barton Appler), 1860-1947.
Bean, Tarleton H. (Tarleton Hoffman), 1846-1916
Evermann, Barton Warren, 1853-1932.
Fowler, Henry Weed, 1878-1965
Gill, Theodore, 1837-1914
Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931.
Myers, George S. (George Sprague), 1905-1985
Schultz, Leonard P. (Leonard Peter), 1901-
United States Fish Commission

Container Listing

Series 1: OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, 1882-1914.

The outgoing correspondence of the Division of Fishes for this period is located in the letterpress books in this series. The books are not indexed unless otherwise noted in the folder listing. A very rough chronological order was maintained, but exceptions to it are frequent. The majority of the letters were written by Tarleton Hoffman Bean and Barton A. Bean in their capacities as curators of fishes at the United States National Museum. A number of letters, however, appear to have been written by T. H. Bean in his capacity as a member of the United States Fish Commission.

Box 1

Folder 1 Outgoing correspondence, February 1882 - January 1883.

Folder 2 Outgoing correspondence, July 1882 - January 1883, July 1884, September 1885 - April 1887.

Folder 3 Outgoing correspondence, January - June 1883, October 1883 - June 1884, March 1888.

Folder 4 Outgoing correspondence, April 1884 - November 1885.

Folder 5 Outgoing correspondence, April 1887 - May 1888, October 1888 - February 1889.

Box 2

Folder 1 Outgoing correspondence, July - September 1887 (written from Somers Point, New Jersey), February 1888, June - August 1888, October 1888, February 1889 - July 1890. Partially (?) indexed.

Folder 2 Outgoing correspondence, July 1890 - June 1891, September 1891 - November 1895. Also includes lists of fishes. Partially (?) indexed.

Folder 3 Outgoing correspondence, November 1895 - December 1898.

Folder 4 Outgoing correspondence, December 1898 - May 1902.

Box 3

Folder 1 Outgoing correspondence, May 1902 - August 1903. Also includes copies of requisitions and invoices.

Folder 2 Outgoing correspondence, September - December 1903. Also includes copies of lists, invoices, and packing memoranda regarding school sets, 1904-1918. Indexed.

Folder 3 Outgoing correspondence, January 1904 - March 1906.

Folder 4 Outgoing correspondence, March 1906 - March 1909.

Box 4

Folder 1 Outgoing correspondence, March 1909 - July 1911. Indexed.

Folder 2 Outgoing correspondence, June 1911 - October 1914. Indexed.

Folder 3 Outgoing correspondence, February - July 1905, September 1905, December 1905 - May 1906, October 1906, February - April 1907, March 1908, March 1909, June 1911, June 1912.

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Series 2: CORRESPONDENCE, 1865, 1867, 1869-1941.

The correspondence of the Division of Fishes in this series includes incoming correspondence to 1909 and both incoming and outgoing from 1909-1940. For the outgoing correspondence to 1909, see Series 1.

Box 5

- Folder 1 Abbot - Awerinzew
- Folder 2 Bain - Baird
- Folder 3 Baker - Baur
- Folder 4 Beall - Bean
- Folder 5 Beardslee - Benjamin
- Folder 6 Bennett - Boynton
- Folder 7 Breder - Byrd

Box 6

- Folder 1 Cahn - Catrellier
- Folder 2 Chabanand - Chaves
- Folder 3 Cheney - Civil Works Administration
- Folder 4 Clark - Colegi de San Pedro Apostol
- Folder 5 Russell J. Coles, 1911-1913, 1915-1919
- Folder 6 Collett - Cushman
- Folder 7 Dabney - Dean
- Folder 8 Deane - Dwight
- Folder 9 Earle - Edwards

Box 7

- Folder 1 Carl H. Eigenmann, 1887, 1891, 1901-1915, 1917-1920, 1922-1924
- Folder 2 Elliot - Evermann
- Folder 3 Fairchild - G. Fowler
- Folders 4-6 Henry Weed Fowler, 1905-1906, 1909-1910, 1917-1933, 1937-1941
- Folder 7 Francis - Furlong
- Folder 8 Gaer - Geographic Magazine
- Folder 9 Gibbs - Gill

Box 8

Folder 1 Ginsburg - Greene

Folder 2 Gregg - Guthrie

Folder 3 Hague - Hazen

Folder 4 Heap - Herrick

Folder 5 Higgins - Hilgard

Folder 6 Hobbs - Hoy

Folder 7 Hubbs - Hyatt

Folder 8 I

Folder 9 Jackson - Jones

Folders 10-11 David Starr Jordan, 1878, 1880-1897, 1899-1912, 1917

Box 9

Folders 1-3 David Starr Jordan, 1918-1927, 1929

Folder 4 Jouy - Jung Lo

Folder 5 K

Folder 6 L

Folder 7 McAtee - Maynard

Folder 8 Mead - Meyers

Folder 9 Michael - Mitchell

Box 10

Folder 1 Mooney - Murray

Folder 2 George Sprague Myers, 1925, 1930-1934, 1937-1940

Folder 3 N

Folder 4 O

Folder 5 P

Folder 6 Q

Folder 7 Radcliffe - Rathbun

Folder 8 Ravenel - Rawson

Folder 9 Read - Reynolds

Folder 10 Rhoads - Ritter

Folder 11 Robertson - Ryman

Box 11

Folder 1 Safford - Scudder

Folder 2 Seal - Serud

Folder 3 Shattuck - Slade

Folder 4 Smallwood - Smyth

Folder 5 Snoworth - Sowerby

Folder 6 Spofford - Steindachner

Folders 7-8 Leonhard Stejneger, 1884, 1901, 1903-1904, 1907-1909,
1911-1933

Folder 9 Sterkes - Swinnerton

Box 12

Folder 1 Tanaka - Thompson

Folder 2 Tillman - Trewavas

Folder 3 Frederick William True, 1893, 1896, 1899-1903, 1905, 1907-1914

Folder 4 Truitt - Tyler

Folder 5 U - V

Folder 6 Wagner - Washburn

Folder 7 Webb - Wetmore

Folder 8 Wheeler - Worth

Folder 9 Wray - Wyatt

Folder 10 Y - Z

Folder 11 Correspondence with illegible signatures.

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Series 3: DIVISIONAL ACCESSION RECORD, 1884-1936.

These accession books contain handwritten entries concerning accession of fishes. Information given includes accession number, catalog number, donor, description of specimen, and occasionally notes on the accession. Some volumes are indexed by donor and are so marked on the folder lists. Book 13 is marked as "Recorded on permanent cards May 1936" and "completed" appears after the last entry.

Box 13

Folder 1 Accession record, 1884-1886.

Folder 2 Accession record, 1886-1888.

Folder 3 Accession record, 1888-1889.

Folder 4 Accession record, 1890-1891.

Folder 5 Accession record, 1892-1893.

Folder 6 Accession record, 1893-1898.

Folder 7 Accession record, 1898-1902. Indexed by donor.

Folder 8 Accession record, 1903-1907. Indexed by donor.

Folder 9 Accession record, 1907-1911. Indexed by donor.

Folder 10 Accession record, 1912-1917. Indexed by donor.

Folder 11 Accession record, 1917-1925. Indexed by donor.

Folder 12 Accession record, 1925-1934.

Folder 13 Accession record, 1934-1936. Also includes record of field data and collecting numbers of E. D. Reid, 1930-1931.

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Series 4: DISTRIBUTION RECORD, 1882-1934.

These books contain handwritten records concerning the distribution of specimens. Information given includes person or organization to whom sent, date sent, address, and description of material sent.

Box 13

Folder 14 Distribution record, 1882-1884.

Folder 15 Distribution record, 1885-1887.

Folder 16 Distribution record, 1887-1892.

Folder 17 Distribution record, 1892-1902.

Folder 18 Distribution record, 1902-1907. Indexed.

Folder 19 Distribution record, 1908-1920. Indexed.

Folder 20 Distribution record, 1921-1934. Indexed.

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Series 5: INVOICES, PACKING MEMORANDA, AND RELATED MATERIAL CONCERNING SPECIMENS SENT OUT BY THE DIVISION OF FISHES, 1895, 1911-1913, 1915, 1918-1923.

Box 14

Folder 1 Invoices and packing memoranda for specimens, 1913, 1915

Folder 2 Invoices and packing memoranda for specimens, 1918-1919

Folder 3 Invoices and packing memoranda for specimens, 1920-1921

Folder 4 Invoices and packing memoranda for specimens, 1922-1923

Folder 5 Lists of fishes distributed by the Smithsonian Institution on behalf of the National Museum, 1895.

Folder 6 Handwritten list labeled "Division made of Panama Fishes" giving field number, National Museum number, name, locality, date, and allotment number. ca. 1911-1912.

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