



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Oral history interviews with
S. Stillman Berry, 1980-1982

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Oral history interviews with S. Stillman Berry
Identifier:	Record Unit 9526
Date:	1980-1982
Extent:	3 audiotapes (reference copies). 6 digital .mp3 files (reference copies).
Creator::	Berry, S. Stillman (Samuel Stillman), 1887-1984. interviewee
Language:	Language of Materials: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9526, Oral history interviews with S. Stillman Berry

Historical Note

S. Stillman Berry (1887-1984), was a private researcher working in both malacology and horticulture. He received the B.A. in biology from Stanford University in 1909, the M.A. from Harvard University in 1910, and the Ph.D. from Stanford in 1913. While at Harvard he began his research in cephalopods; he continued work on that subject at Stanford under Harold Heath, where he wrote his dissertation on cephalopods of western North America.

After receiving the Ph.D., Berry accepted a position at the Scripps Institution of Biological Research as Librarian, where he developed the Institution's library collection. This was to be his only paid professional position in the sciences, and he remained at Scripps until 1919.

Following his father's death in 1917, Berry became corporate president of his family's ranch in Montana, but remained in Redlands, California, to continue his career as an independent researcher. He privately published a journal, *Leaflets in Malacology*. In that publication, as well as several others, he described 401 new taxa of mollusks, mostly from California and the eastern Pacific. In addition to his primary research interests in cephalopods, chitons, and land snails, Berry was an avid horticulturist. He maintained an orange grove and is credited with developing many new varieties of daffodils and irises. A lifelong collector, he amassed a highly significant shell collection, as well as a personal library of important and rare scientific works.

Berry's professional affiliations and honors included appointment as Honorary Member in the Cephalopod International Advisory Council, Life President of the American Malacological Union, and Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives' record and manuscript collections with an Oral History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or student on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

The S. Stillman Berry interview was donated to the Oral History Collection because of his long career and contributions to the field of American malacology.

Descriptive Entry

S. Stillman Berry was interviewed by Donald R. Shasky, a physician and shell collector, because of his long career and contributions to the field of American malacology. Interviews cover his work at Scripps, reminiscences of colleagues, and development of his private library. These complement the S. Stillman Berry Papers which are also located in the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Berry's cephalopod collection is now housed in the National Museum of Natural History, along with selected publications from his library.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Collectors and collecting
- Oceanography
- Zoology

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Interviews
- Oral history
- Transcripts

Names:

- Berry, S. Stillman (Samuel Stillman), 1887-1984
- Keen, A. Myra (Angeline Myra), 1905-1986
- Mann, William M., 1886-1960
- Scripps Institution of Biological Research
- Shasky, Donald R., interviewer
- Stearns, Robert E. C. (Robert Edwards Carter), 1827-1909

Container Listing

Box 1

Transcripts of Interviews

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1 : 4 May 1980

[Digital Content: S. Stillman Berry, when a student at Stanford University, is seated at a table looking into a microscope, circa 1905-1909. \[Image No. 91-8778\]](#)

[Digital Content: S. Stillman Berry, room at Stanford University, circa 1905-1909. \[Image No. 91-8777\]](#)

[Digital Content: John Brooks Henderson, Jr., \(1870-1923\), circa 1900, was appointed a citizen member of the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents in 1911 and retained that post until his death. Interested in shell collecting as a youth, Henderson later concentrated on the marine life of the West Indies and participated in several expeditions to the Caribbean. \[Image No. 88-11258\]](#)

Box 1 of 1

Interview 2: 7 May 1980

[Digital Content: Harald A. Rehder, James Pendergrass, S. Stillman Berry and Joseph Rosewater, circa 1970s. \[Image No. 88-11262\]](#)

[Digital Content: Dr. Edward Sylvester Morse \(1838-1925\), circa 1910, of Maine was a good friend and scientific colleague of S. Stillman Berry. Morse studied invertebrate zoology and also collected Japanese ceramics. \[Image No. 88-11261\]](#)

Box 1 of 1

Interview 3: 4 February 1982

[Digital Content: S. Stillman \(Samuel Stillman\) Berry, circa 1970s, is seated holding a rare book from his collection. Selected publications from his library are housed in the National Museum of Natural History. \[Image No. 88-11259\]](#)

Audio Recordings of Interviews

Box 1 of 1

Interview 1: 4 May 1980

Box 1 of 1

Interview 2: 7 May 1980

Box 1 of 1

Interview 3: 4 February 1982