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Theodore Gill Papers, circa 1858-1909

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Theodore Gill Papers
Identifier:	Accession T89103
Date:	circa 1858-1909
Extent:	1.5 cu. ft. (1 record storage box) (1 document box)
Creator::	Gill, Theodore, 1837-1914
Language:	Language of Materials: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession T89103, Theodore Gill Papers

Historical Note

Dr. Theodore Gill (1837-1914) was a long-time associate in the National Museum of Natural History, Division of Fishes. He was associated with the Smithsonian in a variety of paid and unpaid positions beginning in the late 1850s until his death in 1914. He specialized in the taxonomy and nomenclature of fishes. Gill wrote dozens of works on ichthyology during his career. He was also a professor of natural history and zoology at Columbian (George Washington) University. Refer to Record Unit 7098, Biographical Information File, for a complete profile of Gill and his career.

Descriptive Entry

These papers contain Gill's manuscript notes for a variety of published and unpublished essays on his taxonomic studies and specimen descriptions. Included are descriptive lists and notes of specimens acquired from the U.S. Exploring Expedition (1838-1942), North Pacific Railroad Expedition (1853-1856), and Mexican Boundary Survey (1855-1857). Gill's work with these specimens was probably carried out around 1860. In a portion of one essay Gill briefly discusses his professional disagreements with noted naturalist Louis Agassiz. Much of the papers appear to be draft copies of essays and articles published by the Smithsonian or other scientific bodies. They begin as early as 1858 (a memoir on the history of fresh water fishes of Trinidad, published in the *Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York*). Most of Gill's work was published in the *Proceedings of the United States National Museum*, the *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* or in the *Annual Report* of the Smithsonian. In many instances, it is unclear whether Gill was carrying out his ichthyological studies for the Smithsonian or for the United States Fish Commission, which was headed by Spencer F. Baird for the period 1871-1887.

The papers also include essays and articles used in the ornithological magazine, *Osprey*, which Gill edited from about 1898-1908. A small amount of general correspondence is included, dating 1871-1908. One manuscript volume, entitled *Science and Nature*, appears to be a partially-completed (90 pages, A-B only) handwritten nomenclature dictionary begun by Gill.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Fishes
Ichthyology
Ornithology

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs
Clippings
Manuscripts

Names:

Gill, Theodore, 1837-1914
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Fishes
United States Fish Commission

Preferred Titles:

Osprey : an illustrated monthly magazine of popular ornithology

Container Listing

Box 1

Box 1 of 2 Manuscript notes and correspondence for published and unpublished essays on taxonomic studies and specimen descriptions

Box 2

Box 2 of 2 Manuscript notes and correspondence for published and unpublished essays on taxonomic studies and specimen descriptions

Box 2 of 2 Science and Nature [appears to be a partially-completed (90 pages, A-B only) handwritten nomenclature dictionary begun by Gill]