

Bingham Oceanographic Collection Archives

IZAR.001780



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2014

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History
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CALL NUMBER: IZAR.001780

CREATOR: Bingham Oceanographic Collection

TITLE: Bingham Oceanographic Collection Archives

DATES: 1925-1959

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 linear feet

LANGUAGE: In English.

SUMMARY: Archives of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ymp.izar.001780>

Administrative Information

Cite As

Bingham Oceanographic Collection Archives, Invertebrate Zoology, Yale Peabody Museum

Biographical Sketch

In 1959, with the opening of the new Bingham Oceanographic Laboratory building next door, the Bingham Oceanographic Collection was integrated into the Yale Peabody Museum's Division of Vertebrate Zoology ichthyology collection. (The Bingham Lab had been housed in a former residential mansion on Hillhouse Avenue in New Haven—the library was in a paneled grand ballroom lit by a crystal chandelier, and the fish collection was stored in a brick-paved wine cellar!)

Harry Payne Bingham, a graduate of Yale and a New York City businessman, sponsored 3 oceanographic expeditions for fish and invertebrate specimens for his own private research collection. The first expedition, in 1925, was to the Caribbean Sea aboard Bingham's yacht Pawnee. The second expedition, in 1926, to the Pacific coast of Central America and the Gulf of California was aboard Bingham's newly built yacht Pawnee II, which was specially designed for deep sea trawling and research. The third expedition, with the Pawnee II in 1927, was concentrated around the Bahamas and, to a lesser extent, Bermuda. Louis L. Mowbray and Francis West were enlisted to collect, preserve and identify the specimens from the first 2 expeditions. Charles M. Breder, Jr. described many of the new fishes.

Albert E. Parr, the new curator of Bingham's growing fish collection, went along on the third expedition. Also in 1927, Bingham established the Bulletin of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection to publish the research on his specimens. In 1928, Bingham brought his entire collection to New Haven for a 2-year loan

to Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, where Parr became Assistant Curator of Zoology. When the loan expired in 1930, Bingham donated the entire collection to the Peabody Museum and set up the Bingham Oceanographic Foundation to continue the research in marine biology and oceanography, and to publish the results. Parr exchanged publications with other institutions and societies, and the Yale Peabody Museum library quickly grew.

By 1929, the Bingham Oceanographic Foundation had ?under a joint research program with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries?launched into a study of the spawning and early life history of the North and Middle Atlantic fishes of our shores. Mr. Parr directed a cruise in the Delaware Bay region for 4 months last summer [1929].? Many of the specimens collected from 1929 to 1935 are now at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. In 1932, the Yale North India Expedition examined the geology, anthropology and biology of the region around the Ladak Range in northern India and western Tibet. The fishes collected and subsequently reported on, including three new species of cobotids, are not in the Division's collections, but presumably may be found at the Indian Museum in Calcutta.

Through the 1930s the Foundation also conducted four joint cruises with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution using its ship, Atlantis, to investigate the fauna, flora and oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Sargasso Sea. On these cruises Parr made many hydrographic studies, examined the Sargassum weed and tested an experimental trawl net designed to capture larger fish specimens. Charles Breder, now a Research Associate of the Bingham Laboratory, accompanied Parr on the 1934 cruise to study the life history of flying fishes.

In 1937, through a gift from Henry Sears, Parr established the Sears Foundation for Marine Research to promote research and publication in marine sciences. Sears had studied oceanography at Yale and donated a small collection of fishes from Tahiti. The Foundation's Journal of Marine Research and its Memoirs of the Sears Foundation of Marine Research (including the series Fishes of the Western North Atlantic) remain important references today.

When Parr left New Haven in 1942 to become the director of the American Museum of Natural History, he left behind a strong legacy in deep sea ichthyology. His successor at the Bingham Oceanographic Laboratory was his student Daniel Merriman, whose interests ran towards fisheries and applied aspects of marine biology. Ernest F. Thompson, formerly Fisheries Officer for Jamaica, became a Research Assistant in 1944 and then a curator from 1946 to 1949.

Description of the Material

Archives of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection.

Collection Contents

Series I: Bulletin of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection, 1925-1959

Archives, manuscripts, etc. related to the Bulletin of the Bingham Oceanographic Collection.

Ichthyology. Archives related to papers on Ichthyology for the Bull. BOC. 1925-1959
001782

Ichthyology. Rough draft of L.L. Mowbray's contribution to Breder, C.M. 1927. Bull. 1927
B.O.C. 1(1);1-90. See associations tab.
001783

Series II: Wilfrid Swancourt Bronson, 1925-1959

Original drawings by W. S. Bronson while working for Bingham Oceanographic Collection

Invertebrate Illustrations. Original drawings by W. S. Bronson of invertebrates. 005659	1925-1959
Invertebrate Illustrations. Sketch of a sea hare from Concepcion Bay 005661	1925-1959
Vertebrate Illustrations. Original drawings by W. S. Bronson of vertebrates. 005660	1925-1959

Series III: Expeditions, 1925-1959

Materials relating to various expeditions undertaken by the BOC.

Yacht Pawnee. Materials relating to the expeditions of the Yacht Pawnee. 005910	1925-1927
Yacht Pawnee log book. Log book of the 1925 expedition. 005911	1925
Yacht Pawnee log book. Log book of the 1926 expedition. 005912	1926
Yacht Pawnee log book. Log book of the 1927 expedition. 005913	1927

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Geographic Names

Atlantic Ocean
Caribbean Sea
Gulf of California
Gulf of Mexico
Sargasso Sea

Corporate Bodies

Yale Peabody Museum
Yale University