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James Anthony Schnur

Anthony M. Smith

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An Assessment of Rare Books in the John C. Briggs Collection, USF St. Petersburg

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James A. Schnur
Anthony Smith
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Statement of Problem

Many academic and special libraries have acquired marine science subject collections with rare books and manuscripts. With such materials, librarians often face a number of dilemmas: Common difficulties encountered by library professionals include setting aside resources for time-intensive original cataloging, balancing public access and preservation needs, and providing adequate security for irreplaceable items. For example, the staff must decide how to provide proof of institutional ownership and prevent theft without permanently altering, damaging, or mutilating material, as would occur through property stamping and security stripping a rare book.

This research report assesses the problems and prospects of providing access to monographic materials in the John C. Briggs Collection of marine science and ichthyology at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus. After a review of related special collections in other institutions, this essay introduces the Briggs Collection and discusses technical services, public services, and preservation issues for this collection. Finally, the paper offers some strategies and concluding comments to facilitate bibliographic access to the Briggs books. Such an study will provide an important decision-making tool for librarians as they prepare to catalog the rare books and imprints that constitute the bulk of the Briggs archive.
Related Scholarly Collections

Other libraries have established marine science research collections. In addition to the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, USF St. Petersburg serves as the home of the Florida Marine Research Institute Library, a branch of the state’s Department of Environmental Protection. This facility collects research data, reports, and publications, and exchanges biological literature with other institutions throughout the world. The Otto C. Richter Library at the University of Miami serves as a repository for the Morton Collectanea--which includes more than 30,000 subject files on botany and economic zoology--as well as the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, with its emphasis in tropical oceanography.

Many facilities in other states have established ichthyology and marine science archives. Located at the University of California at San Diego, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography library represents one of the finest research collections in the world. It includes more than 1770 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, related materials. The Hopkins Marine Station Library at Stanford University and the California Academy of Sciences Library in San Francisco maintain comprehensive collections. The Kenneth H. Rockey and Otto Van Kienbusch angling collections in the Rare Books Department at Princeton University offer a treasure trove of titles. The Cooperative Marine Research Facility Library combines the holdings of the College of Charleston and the South Carolina Wildlife Resources Department to provide over 10,000
volumes and 220 current periodical titles devoted to the subject. The State University of New York Maritime College at Fort Schuyler, the Bronx, and the nearby United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, house thousands of rare books on marine topics. The Marine Sciences Institute Library at the University of Texas, Port Aransas, owns nearly 50,000 volumes in the field. Other major holdings appear at the National Geographic Society (Washington, D.C.), the Natural History branch of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries (Washington, D.C.), the Los Angeles County Library, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (Ocean Springs, Mississippi), Academy of Natural Sciences Library (Philadelphia), University of Rhode Island (Narragansett), Texas A&M University (Galveston), and the University of Puerto Rico (Mayaguez).

Introduction to the John C. Briggs Collection

John C. Briggs earned his Ph.D. in biology and natural science from Stanford University in 1952. For many years, he taught at the Department of Marine Science on the University of South Florida's St. Petersburg campus. After entering phased retirement, he decided to donate his extensive collection of works on ichthyology, natural science, botany, and biology to the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

The Briggs Collection offers a valuable research tool.

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Faculty and students in the Department of Marine Science, a masters and Ph.D. program on the USF St. Petersburg campus, as well as state officials from the Florida Institute of Oceanography, the Florida Marine Research Institute, and the Department of Environmental Protection frequently request access to the Briggs materials. This substantial body of publications represented the second major addition to the Special Collections room at USF St. Petersburg; the Papers of Nelson Poynter, former publisher of the St. Petersburg Times, was the first major special collection in the campus library.

The library obtained the titles in the late 1980s and early 1990s. After adding shelves to the walls of a former group study room, the library faculty placed the books in this small room on the second floor of the present structure. An initial sort of the books by Deborah Henry, science librarian, led to an arrangement by discipline (marine biology, theory of evolution, ichthyology, etc.) and content (fine illustrated, foreign language materials, textbooks, general studies, etc.).

The limited amount of storage space available in the present structure encouraged librarians to divide the Briggs materials into two distinct subcollections. General studies, texts, and reference materials that, taken individually, did not meet collection development guidelines as rare or unique works were separated from those monographs and serials that provided unique--and irreplaceable--sources of information. Items from this first subcollection were sent to the Tampa Campus Library Cataloging
Department, received Briggs bookplates, and were subsequently placed in the circulating or reference areas. Special and rare book materials remained uncataloged in the storage area. Although separated physically, all Briggs materials integrated into the general collection include bibliographic records with annotations that establish and preserve provenance.

The second subcollection includes a number of rare titles. Many works possess fine illustrations, elaborate fore-edge paintings, unmatched lithographic prints, and unique bindings. A few titles represent extremely rare items. For example, an Amsterdam publisher released only ninety complete sets of M. P. Bleeker's nine volume *Atlas Ichthyologique des Indies Orientales Néerlandaises*. This compilation of volumes from 1862 to 1878 had an estimated value of $7,900 in the late 1980s. An octavo by Pierre Belon, *De Aquatilibus, libri duo*, printed in Paris in 1553, had an appraised value of $6,900. Similarly, C. Gesner's *Medici Tigurini Historiæ Animalum Liber IIII. Qui est de Piscium plus Aquatilium animantium natura*--a 1558 folio with woodcuts--represented one of four classic biological studies of the sixteenth century and had a market worth of $7,500.

A new library facility will provide adequate space for the rare, non-circulating Briggs books. Beginning in the July 1996, staff will move into the new Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, a structure more than double the size of the present facility. This state-of-the-art building includes a variety of enhanced service areas, such as a large instructional media center, bibliographic
instruction rooms, and a separate special collections reading room and storage facility. Located on the third floor, Special Collections will include a patron area with large tables, an archivist's office, and a secure room for document, manuscript, and monograph storage with proper climate and humidity controls. While preparing for this relocation, library staff must consider a number of short- and long-term technical services, public services, and preservation issues that will affect all collections. The paragraphs below assess the requirements for the John C. Briggs Collection.²

Technical Services Issues

National bibliographic utilities expedite the cataloging of rare materials. Computer databases, hardware, and software have replaced cumbersome printed union lists with versatile, easy-to-modify online holdings. Sources such as the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) and Firstsearch from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) include over 35-million cataloged records that represent materials from prehistoric times to the present. In addition to these standard library resources, a number of special collections, research libraries, and archives have established Internet sites on the World Wide Web. Through its pilot "Monticello" project, the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET) will soon allow researchers to discover a variety of Internet resources for special collections and archives by visiting a master home page at one institution.

Despite these valuable online resources, the unique nature of rare titles in the Briggs collection requires that librarians provide enhanced bibliographic records. For example, the aforementioned Briggs copy of Belon's \textit{De Aquatilibus} lacks a signature and has an adulterated title page. A generic OCLC record with standard main entry, descriptive cataloging information, and subject headings for this title does not adequately reflect the unique characteristics of this specific holding. Modification of a copy-cataloged record, with additional description of USF holding in the note fields (USMARC "500" fields) allows the library to reveal information added or removed from a particular copy of a
work. For example, annotations by Briggs—or another prominent researcher—provide insights and information not found on other copies. Similarly, pages, portfolios, or plates removed from a copy alter that nature of the item: If a student of ichthyology has an interest in hand colored paintings, and USF's copy of a book lacks these items, the researcher does not obtain the information he or she desires. ³

A 1989 study provides evidence of the importance of cataloging marine science materials in a timely manner. Judith Barnett, a cataloger at the Pell Marine Science Library of the University of Rhode Island, examined original cataloging records for her institution to ascertain use frequencies. Realizing that OCLC expects its members to contribute quality bibliographic records in a timely manner, Barnett wanted to examine the use rate for records in a marine science collection and evaluate such patterns against the time and labor requirements of original cataloging. This study covered records added by the Pell Marine Science Library between December 1983 and December 1986, a period before the expansion of OCLC access via Firstsearch, the Internet, and similar software and network environments. Despite the time period under consideration, Barnett learned that other libraries had used between forty-two and forty-five percent of her institution's records. ⁴


Barnett's study has important implications for the cataloging of marine science materials at USF St. Petersburg. Although patron usage statistics remain low for this and other special research and archival materials in the campus library, the eventual cataloging of the Briggs books should lead to an increase in the collection's use.

A Cataloging Case Study: Five Briggs Books and Their OCLC Records

In 1992 and 1993, library staff sent all of the circulating or reference Briggs materials to the Tampa Campus Library Cataloging Department. These items, available for check-out or perusal during regular library hours, appear on the public access catalog with full bibliographic records and a provenance note on the individual item record (um=John C. Briggs Collection). Rare and unique materials remained in the Special Collections room, and await cataloging. Of the Briggs monographs that reside in Special Collections, however, less than three percent have received bibliographic holding statements on the Library User Information System (LUIS), the online catalog of the State University System of Florida. A clear majority of rare Briggs books (over eighty-five percent) do have adequate records available through national bibliographic utilities (such as OCLC) that facilitate copy cataloging.

The following random sample compares four Briggs books with the cataloging records available through OCLC. A discussion of each book and its bibliographic record addresses the adequacy of
the record and potential modifications that allow the record to better represent the item owned by the USF St. Petersburg library. Sources consulted in this sampling include standard cataloging reference materials, such as the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd ed., Revised (AACR2R2), OCLC bibliographic formats and standards manuals, Library of Congress classification books (for "Q", general sciences), and the OCLC Participating Institutions Manual.

Record 1: The Life of the Salmon, by W. L. Calderwood (1907)

The University of California, San Diego, provided an excellent bibliographic record for this title. However, with the liberal number of illustrations in the book, the USF St. Petersburg Special Collections librarian might wish to add an additional illustration statement in both the physical description field ("300 |b ill., . . .") and the notes fields (500s). See figure one for the complete OCLC record.5 The call number adequately represents the book:

QL ---Zoology  
638 ---Osteichthys (Bony fishes)  
.S2 ---Salmonidae (Salmon)  
.C2 ---Cutter number

Record 2: Extinct Animals, by E. Ray Lankester (1905)

Two OCLC cataloging records represent this title. The first record, entered in 1975, failed to provide a place of publication or sufficient physical description, including the presence of preliminary pages or the height of the book. This record appears as the second figure in the appendix. In 1978 the Library of Congress offered a better record (figure three) that includes a

"500" note field, place of publication in the "260" publication/imprint field, and a complete "300" field that describes the physical characteristics of the item. However, minor modification of this record is required because it does not reveal the presence of an index. To account for this oversight, the librarian would add a note field ("500 Includes Index.") and change the control fields to indicate that an index is present. Similar to Calderwood's Life of the Salmon, the call number provided by the Library of Congress fits the book properly within the USF St. Petersburg collection.6

Record 3: The Habits of the Salmon, by John P. Traherne (1889)

Though the OCLC record for this item (figure four) seems rather short, it does describe Traherne's study of salmon. This book lacks illustrations, bibliographical references, and an index. The original record was entered by the United States Bureau of Fisheries in 1980.7

Record 4: Sketches of the Natural History of Ceylon, by James Emerson Tennent (1861)

The Library of Congress cataloged this zoological study of Sri Lanka in 1976. The OCLC record contains adequate main entry and title statement information (figure five), although additional description in the note fields and subject headings might assist the researcher. While this natural history includes chapters on mammals, insects, and fishes, the subject analysis provides only two categories in the "650" field: "Zoology--Sri Lanka" and "Elephants." If the book covers a gamut of land and water fauna, the subject should either include other animals heavily represented in the text, or replace "elephants" with a broader term that better describes the entire work. Also, the USF St. Petersburg cataloger might wish to add either a "505" formatted contents note or a "520" summary note to expand on the major chapters and themes included in


Public Services Issues

The unique nature of many rare books and archival materials poses a dilemma for staff in special collections: Librarians must balance the access and informational requests of their patrons against the preservation needs of the collection. Thus, a repository often finds itself in the paradoxical position of encouraging the public to visit an archives while, at the same time, limiting access to the collection through closed stacks, call slips, and special restrictions (such as permission required before photocopying an item). Any special library with rare or unique materials must maintain a clear and concise policy that governs the use of its items.

The USF St. Petersburg library designed a set of guidelines for researchers who request materials such as the Briggs books (figure six). All patrons must answer a research registration form and provide appropriate identification before requesting materials. The researcher then completes a call slip for the items he or she wishes to examine. These provisions allow the Special Collections staff to reconstruct circulation patterns for materials, as well as maintain department use statistics. In accordance with Florida statutes, all information on call slips must remain confidential. Before library staff retrieve Briggs books or other research

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materials, the patrons who request these items must leave all briefcases, bags, and other personal property at an assigned area near the entrance to the reading room. Only pencils, paper, and lap-top computers are permitted at the table, as a means of preventing the theft or removal of pages, pictures, or other items.

On rare occasions, other departments (Marine Science, the Advancement Office, etc.) might request a loan of certain Briggs materials to create a display, to impress a potential donor, or to serve some similar function. Any removal of Briggs materials from Special Collections must include adequate documentation by all parties involved. A clearly defined circulation period must guarantee that the loaning party will return the book on or before an expected due date.

The Special Collections area will fulfill interlibrary loans for the Briggs books only under exceptional circumstances. For example, the Miami-Dade Public Library requested rare and unique titles from many Florida institutions for a recent "Treasures of Florida Libraries" exhibit. USF St. Petersburg loaned three works, with a combined value of approximately $5,000, to the exhibit only after insurance and special transportation arrangements were arranged. Indeed, any loan arrangements must include the consent of the library director and collection development librarian.

**Preservation Issues**

Libraries must preserve Special Collections items for posterity. Staff often evaluate rare materials in terms of their
informational and intrinsic values. For example, if a patron discovered a 1936 *St. Petersburg Times* newspaper clipping in the vertical file, such an item would certainly be considered "rare"; however, the true value of the clipping resides in the information contained on the paper, not the paper itself. In most circumstances, newsprint from twentieth century periodicals has only a limited intrinsic value, and the information found on such items usually appears in alternative formats, such as microfilm. By comparison, an incunabula, diary, photograph, or other item may be duplicated in microfilm or microfiche, but its greatest value is its intrinsic value.9

Similar to access guidelines, archival repositories must establish rules that protect and preserve their holdings. The Special Collections reading room at USF St. Petersburg has developed a number of regulations that govern the use of the Briggs books and other materials. For example, staff prohibit patrons from using any type of ink pen or permanent pencil while they examine rare materials. Items requiring additional arrangement, description, processing (i.e., encapsulation), rebinding, or similar measures may be withheld; library staff may provide photocopies instead of originals for extremely rare or brittle materials. Books should be handled with the utmost care to prevent

9A number of resources provide an introduction to conservation and preservation practices. For an excellent work that discusses strategies for preserving papers, photographs, diaries, and other items of intrinsic value, see: Craig A. Tuttle, *An Ounce of Preservation: A Guide to the Care of Papers and Photographs* (Highland City, FL: Rainbow Books, 1995).
tears, creases, or damage to the spine. Staff might require white
gloves or other protective materials for patrons who handle certain
manuscripts, plates, or photographs. Library staff must approve
any photocopying request after considering the condition of the
material and provisions of the copyright law.

The Briggs materials pose a challenge for the Poynter Library.
Although he was an avid fan of the sea, John Briggs was unfamiliar
with the climate and humidity controls required to sustain such a
collection. Briggs often kept his office windows open in the
Marine Science Laboratory (old 'A' building), a building along
Bayboro Harbor and Tampa Bay. Environmental fluctuations and
exposure to light have led to weakened paper fibers and
discoloration in some of the titles. A few titles suffered from
mold outbreaks, and evidence of silverfish and other vermin
appeared in some of the boxes.

When the books arrived at the Poynter Library, they were
placed in a room with adequate light controls, but a generally poor
air circulation system. As the Briggs books move into the new
library, they will have adequate storage space and environmental
controls. In addition, the size of the archival holdings in the
new building allows for frequent examination of materials to check
for mold, insect infestations, or other items that might led to
further deterioration.
Another Important Dimension: Collection Development

Libraries must establish sound collection development policies that describe both the type of materials the institution hopes to collect and the items it will refrain from collecting. As a regional campus library for the University of South Florida, the Poynter library has a clearly defined mission to support the academic and research needs of its constituency. With a graduate-level marine science program, the expansion and development of marine science scholarly resources falls within the collection policy. The specialized nature of the John C. Briggs books affords faculty, staff, students, and visiting researchers an opportunity to examine primary and secondary sources found in few other facilities.

The acquisition of rare books encourages donations of other unique materials to a collection. In the summer of 1995, staff selected approximately 200 single Briggs titles for a collection evaluation. Using OCLC Firstsearch and other descriptive cataloging materials, staff searched OCLC Firstsearch to locate suitable bibliographic records for the titles. Once staff located an appropriate OCLC number, they recorded it on a book slip and created a list for future cataloging projects. Surprisingly, less than fifteen books (of the 200 in this sample) failed to appear on the OCLC Firstsearch database; these unique items were set aside for full and original cataloging. However, of the titles successfully located on Firstsearch, many appeared at fewer than five institutions throughout the United States and Europe. This
survey, although not scientific, demonstrates the rarity of many Briggs titles. As other researchers learn about the Briggs books, potential donors might select USF St. Petersburg as an appropriate repository for other collections that would enhance the overall Special Collections area.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Timeline for Action}

Since USF St. Petersburg sends nearly all items that require original cataloging to the Tampa Campus Library, preliminary cataloging of the rare books could be accomplished through the work of a librarian or paraprofessional familiar with general source materials (\textit{AACR2R2}, etc.).

The following timetable provides a general guideline:

\textbf{Summer 1996:}

Move Briggs books into the new Nelson Poynter Memorial Library after the university receives a certificate of occupancy for the structure.

\textbf{Summer 1996-Spring 1997:}

Continue earlier project of searching for Briggs titles and cataloging records on OCLC. Obtain appropriate information (OCLC accession number, main entry information, etc.). Emphasis should be placed on popular titles, such as Darwin’s treatises, and series or multi-volume works, such as Oken’s thirteen-volume \textit{Naturgeschichte} and Buffon’s extensive \textit{Oeuvres Complètes}.

\textsuperscript{10}For a historical treatment of this subject see: Judith A. Overmier, "Table d’Hôte and À La Carte: Collecting Rare Science Books," \textit{Collection Management} 12 (#3/4, 1990): 113-124.
Fall 1996:

Negotiate cataloging arrangements with the Tampa Campus Library and technical services staff on the St. Petersburg campus. Design a specific plan and checklist to track the cataloging of items. Due to the fragile nature of many Briggs books, only a photocopy of the title page, as well as physical description information provided by St. Petersburg campus library staff, should be sent to Tampa. Librarians must not allow the actual books to leave the Special Collections area of the library.

Fall 1996-onward:

Send information to the Tampa Campus Library for the cataloging of Briggs books.

Winter 1996:

Add information about the Briggs collection to the Internet homepage of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

Winter 1996-Spring 1997:

Investigate possible rebinding and additional treatments for delicate or damaged books. For example, a 1944 work entitled *Poissons et animaux aquatique au temps de Pline* has acidic pages similar in quality to newsprint. Edges of the paper easily break. Staff should consider alternative formats and storage arrangements for such brittle works.

Summer 1997-onward:

After the bulk of the books have received some level of cataloging, the library might plan to hire or subcontract with an OPS (temporary) student assistant familiar with Chinese and/or Japanese to transliterate titles into Roman script. Similar transliteration of Cyrillic and other non-western scripts should also take place as

Concluding Thoughts

This paper addressed cataloging, access, and preservation concerns for the John C. Briggs Collection at the USF St. Petersburg library. A variety of technical service and public service considerations were presented, as well as conservation strategies that should facilitate use for generations to come. In addition, this essay offered a discussion of collection development ideas and proposed a timeline for incorporating the rare Briggs books into the public access catalog. It is hoped that this report will assist librarians at USF St. Petersburg as they plan to move into the new facility during the summer of 1996.
The life of the salmon with reference more especially to the fish in Scotland, by W.L. Calderwood.

London, E. Arnold, 1907.

xxiv, 160 p. front., VII pl. 23 cm.

Includes bibliographical references.
Figure 2.
Figure 3

A corrected shorthand report of the course of lectures adapted to a juvenile audience given by me during the Christmas holidays 1903-4 at the Royal Institution, London."--Pref.

Paleontology.
Figure 4
Sketches of the natural history of Ceylon: with narratives and anecdotes illustrative of the habits and instincts of the mammalia, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, &c. including a monograph of the elephant and a description of the modes of capturing and training it with engravings from original drawings / by Sir J. Emerson Tennent.
Welcome to Special Collections at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, University of South Florida at St. Petersburg. Researchers may examine materials in Special Collections after completing a registration form and agreeing to abide by the following regulations, which serve to protect and to ensure the integrity of our materials for future scholars.

1. Complete the Research Registration Form and provide appropriate identification (such as a driver's license, USF identification card, etc.). While Special Collections reserves the right to use data from this form for statistical purposes, all personal information--including materials loaned--will remain confidential in accordance with Florida statutes and university guidelines.

2. Leave all briefcases, bags, or other personal property at the entrance to the reading room. Only pencils, paper, and lap-top computers are permitted. Special Collections staff forbid the use of any type of ink pen or permanent pencil, and reserve the right to inspect all articles used at the tables.

3. Please complete a clearly written call slip for materials you wish to use. Materials in Special Collections cannot be removed from the reading room. The researcher is responsible for safeguarding all materials borrowed for use, and may not transfer items to another researcher. When finished with archival items, please return all materials to the staff. Mutilation, destruction, or theft of materials will subject the parties involved to prosecution.

4. The use of certain items may be restricted by statute, by office of origin, or by other restrictions. The researcher assumes full responsibility for fulfilling the terms connected with any restricted material. For the protection of the collections, staff members reserve the right to restrict access to records that require further arrangement, description, processing, or conservation, or additional security due to exceptional value. In some cases, copies may be substituted for originals.

5. Handle materials with the utmost care. Refrain from adding or erasing any marks. Avoid making any tracings, rubbings, or other drawings that will damage the integrity of the original. Keep manuscripts, photographs, and other items flat on the table--and handle brittle books with additional care--to prevent tears, creases, or damage to the spine. In certain cases, researchers may be required to wear gloves or to examine copies to protect the original materials.

6. Maintain the exact order of materials in folders, and of folders in boxes. Do not remove materials from more than one folder at a time. If you discover a mistake in the arrangement of items, please notify a staff member. Never attempt to rearrange materials or to change the order of items in a collection.

7. Special Collections honors photocopy requests if such duplication neither injures the condition of the materials nor violates the provisions of copyright laws. The staff will provide, at a nominal cost, single copies for the researcher's personal use and these copies may not be further reproduced. Neither permission to examine materials nor the receipt of a photocopy constitutes authorization to publish.

8. Researchers who plan eventual publication of their work should inquire about restrictions on publication before beginning research. The patron must obtain all applicable copyright permissions for publication, as well as written permission from the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, as owner of the materials. The USF St. Petersburg Library does not surrender any rights to the material when it grants permission to cite and publish items. Exclusive rights to examine or publish material will not be granted under any circumstances. Special Collections assumes no responsibility for copyright infringement in the materials held by others. In the event that this project becomes a source for publication, Special Collections requests a copy of the publication along with appropriate acknowledgment in the publication.