

Accn 2019-10

18 April 2019

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Dr. Dean Hendrickson
Curator, Ichthyology
Texas Natural History Collections
10100 Burnet Rd., PRC 176/R400
Austin, TX 78758-4445

Dear Dean,

I have just received a copy of the Biodiversity Blog from the Univ. of Texas at Austin from it's Facebook post concerning the ULM fish collection. I could not be more pleased! As you can imagine my emotions during the last several years have been mixed and strong. Starting with disbelief, frustration and anger it gradually changed to realization and finally to one of relief, gratitude and thanksgiving.

Even before the initial shock of the news of the divestment of our collections, it became increasingly apparent that the ULM administration would never support our research collections and the deplorable present housing conditions for the collections were as good as it would ever be.

I am so thankful and I praise God that there are the Hank Bart's and the Dean Hendrickson's out there that realized the value of irreplaceable historic scientific specimens. I am especially grateful to Hank Bart for his initiative and ability in obtaining funds, securing space at Tulane for the entire collection and orchestrating the disbursement of the fishes to other institutions.

Since the UT at Austin Biodiversity Collections now contain fishes from the Bryan C. Marshall expeditions, I am including what I know about this most interesting naturalist and how we obtained his specimens.

I regret that I was 13 years into retirement and not present when you first visited our collection. If there is anything that you feel that I might help you with---let me know. At 87, I still have an office on campus and do identifications of fishes for the Corps of Engineers--- so I still got a little left in the tank.

All the best,



Neil H. Douglas, PhD.
Emeritus Professor of Biology
Emeritus Director, Museum of Natural History

I would also like to offer this information concerning the Bryan C. Marshall specimens that were incorporated into the ULM collection. There are not many of us still living that know of his passion for collecting biological specimens and even my knowledge is second hand but from a very reliable source. I believe it was sometime in the 1970's that a Northeast Louisiana State College (now ULM) faculty member returned from a weekend trip to Hot Springs, AR with the news that in an antique/curio shop on the outskirts of Hot Springs were hundreds of jars of snakes, lizards frogs, salamanders, fish etc. that were going to be discarded and the jars retained as antiques that were to be sold. I immediately contacted the owner of the shop, named Ozark Annie's, and told her of my interest in the specimens that were to be discarded. She said that I could have the animals ---if I would agree to empty and wash each jar with hot soapy water. Not knowing what to expect, I got several of my grad students and another faculty member and headed to Hot Springs the next day. What we found were fully documented, beautifully preserved biological specimens that Bryan C. Marshall had collected or obtained from trades from throughout the world. Most were contained in bale-top jars that Annie could sell in her shop as antiques. Unfortunately I was told that several large drums of mammal and bird study skins were burned just weeks prior to our visit.

This I learned from Annie. Bryan C. Marshall was a biological collector that submitted specimens to Smithsonian and Carnage Institutes and various universities for study. He was reported to be a very eccentric bachelor from Imboden, AR that lived with his mother. Later in life he moved to Hot Springs and rented space downtown to display many of his specimens and charged a small fee for admission. Eventually, when his health began to fail, he fell behind on his rent, was evicted, and died. Annie learned of the bale-top jars containing the specimens and purchased them all and moved them to her shop. She never realized what treasures the jars contained.