William E. Ritter Papers

Descriptive Summary
Title: William E. Ritter Papers
Identifier/Call Number: SMC 0004
Contributing Institution: Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, California, 92093-0175
Languages: English
Physical Description: 3.25 Linear feet (5 archives boxes, 1 flat box)
Date: ca. 1890-1944
Abstract: The collection consists of professional correspondence, administrative papers documenting the formative years of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, a selection of Ritter's manuscripts and notes, and photographs.
Creator: Ritter, William Emerson, 1856-1944

Biography
William E. Ritter (1856-1944) was a biologist and co-founder of the Scripps Institution for Oceanography. Ritter received his BA from the University of California and his MA and Ph.D. in zoology from Harvard. He returned to Berkeley in 1891 to teach biology at the University of California, shortly thereafter becoming chair of the new Department of Zoology. He married physician Mary Elizabeth Bennett in 1891. Ritter was determined to set up a coastal laboratory for the study of marine biology, and in 1903, with the support of E.W. Scripps and Ellen Browning Scripps, Ritter founded the Marine Biological Association of San Diego. The laboratory settled into its present location in La Jolla in 1905. Negotiations between the Scripps family and the University of California were completed in 1912, and Ritter served as the first scientific director of SIO from 1912-1922. A humanist, scientist, and prolific author, Ritter developed the organismal theory of biology and advocated for popular science literacy and education after his retirement from SIO. He remained active in the scientific community until his death.

OFF-SITE STORAGE
SIO ARCHIVES COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE: ALLOW ONE WEEK FOR RETRIEVAL OF MATERIALS.

Publication Rights
Publication rights are held by the creator of the collection.

Digital Content
Selected photographs from this collection have been digitized and can be viewed through links in the container list.

Acquisition Information

Preferred Citation

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of professional correspondence, administrative papers documenting the formative years of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, a selection of Ritter's manuscripts and notes, and photographs. The material is principally related to Ritter's role as the first scientific director of the Marine Biological Association of San Diego, revealing his interests, management philosophy, fundraising efforts, and research as a zoologist and marine biologist.
The collection is arranged in five series: 1) CORRESPONDENCE, 2) MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO AND SCRIPPS INSTITUTION FOR BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH, 3) NOTES, WRITINGS AND LECTURES, 4) PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES, and 5) PHOTOGRAPHS AND MISCELLANEOUS.
SERIES 1: CORRESPONDENCE consists of three boxes of professional letters on topics such as research, funding, laboratory supplies, scholarly publishing, and management. Major correspondents include Morse Cartwright, Barton Evermann, Victor H. Henderson, Hugh McCormick Smith, Robert G. Sproul, and Benjamin Wheeler. Arranged chronologically.
SERIES 2: MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO AND SCRIPPS INSTITUTION FOR BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH consists of annual reports on the activities of the station to the Department of Zoology at UC Berkeley, and related research and administrative materials. Arranged chronologically.
SERIES 3: NOTES, WRITINGS AND LECTURES consists of research notes and a small selection of Ritter's manuscripts, lectures, and writings. Arranged chronologically.
SERIES 4: PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES consists of meeting minutes and papers from Ritter's work in scientific associations.
SERIES 5: PHOTOGRAPHS AND MISCELLANEOUS consists of portraits and informal snapshots; a guestbook from the Ritter dwelling at Scripps, and reproductions of plans for a home in Berkeley, California.

Processing History

William E. Ritter's literary executor, Edna Watson Baily, donated Ritter's papers on the administration of SIO to the Scripps Library in 1963. In 1979, material concerning the following individuals was removed and interfiled in the SIO Biographical Files (SAC 5): Winfred Emory Allen, Fred Baker, Percy Spencer Barnhart, S. Stillman Berry, Wesley Clarence Crandall, Christine Eisenberg, Calvin Olin Esterly, Jacob Chandler Harper, Charles Atwood Kofoid, George Francis McEwen, Ellis Leroy Michael, James Ross, E. W. Scripps, Ellen Browning Scripps, Francis Bertody Sumner, Margaret E. Sumner, Harry Beal Torrey and Julius Wangenheim. The remaining papers were processed in 1982, and a revised finding aid with a correspondent index was published (SIO Reference Number 82-16). Eight additional small accessions of Ritter material, including photographs and the guestbook, were added to the papers in 2014.

Related Materials

Bennett Family Papers (SMC 48); Marine Biological Association of San Diego Records (SAC 37); Mary Bennett Ritter Diaries (SMC 47); Ritter Family Papers (SMC 15); SIO Biographical Files (SAC 5).

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Marine Biological Association of San Diego (Calif.).

Ritter, William Emerson, 1856-1944 -- Archives

Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Oceanography--History

CORRESPONDENCE 1913-1941

Box 1

Undated 1893-1912

Box 2

1913-1917

Box 3

1918-1941

MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO AND SCRIPPS INSTITUTION FOR BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Box 4, Folder 1

"Report on hydrographic work, done in connection with the Marine Biological Investigations at San Pedro" 1901

Box 4, Folder 2

"Preliminary report to the President of the University...on the marine biological explorations conducted by the Zoological Department..." 1901

Box 4, Folder 3

Annual reports 1902-1905

Box 4, Folder 4

Notes, "Requirements for making the boat house at Coronado serviceable for a marine biological laboratory" ca. 1903

Box 4, Folder 5

Materials on the Scripps Institution for Biological Research 1906-1916

Box 4, Folder 6

Notes, "Course to be followed" 1907

Box 4, Folder 7

Comments on the culture of the Department of Zoology and the study of biology for the President's Report 1910 April

Box 4, Folder 8

Draft, "Aims of the proposed laboratory to the fulfillment of which the University agrees to be bound" ca. 1912

Box 4, Folder 9

Advertisement for a public Scripps lecture series entitled "Resources of the sea" 1914 August

Box 4, Folder 10

Scientific collecting permits from the CA Fish and Game Commission 1915-1918

Box 4, Folder 11

"Warnock's data showing relation between water temperature and the albacore catch" 1917

Box 4, Folder 12

"Resolutions re an international treaty and an international commission for the study of fishery problems of the North Pacific" 1923 January 27

Box 4, Folder 13

Directions for collecting microplankton by measured water method undated

NOTES, WRITINGS AND LECTURES

Box 4, Folder 14

Miscellaneous notes undated

Box 4, Folder 15

Notes on Balanoglossus ca. 1890
NOTES, WRITINGS AND LECTURES

| Box 4, Folder 16-20 | Manuscript and illustrations, *Enteropneusta of Pacific coast of North America* ca. 1900-1904 |
| Box 4, Folder 21 | Notes and drawings on *Tornaria* ca. 1900-1905 |
| Box 4, Folder 22 | Manuscript and notes, "Theoretical phylogenic aspects of *Enteropneusta*" ca. 1902-1936 |
| Box 4, Folder 23 | "Lecture to the citizens of La Jolla," on the expansion of Scripps 1907 July |
| Box 4, Folder 24 | Photographs, sketches and notes on *Dermochelys schlegelii* (leatherback turtle) caught in La Jolla 1908 June 22 |
| Box 4, Folder 25 | "Science for the Millions" reprint from *Scientific American Monthly* and *Science Service ephemera* ca. 1921 |
| Box 4, Folder 26 | Notes 1921 September |
| Box 4, Folder 27 | Printed booklet, *Natural Versus Supernatural* 1930 |
| Box 4, Folder 28 | Manuscript, "Philosophy of E. W. Scripps" 1944 |

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

| Box 5, Folder 1 | "Recommendations and suggestions of the Committee on Conservation of Marine Life of the Pacific...relating to the Fur Seal Treaty of December 15, 1911" 1922 February |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Minutes of the Committee on Zoological Investigations 1917-1918 |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science 1918-1922 |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | Minutes and remarks, National Research Council, Division of Foreign Relations 1921-1922 |

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MISCELLANEOUS

| Box 5, Folder 5 | Guestbook 1910-1923 |
| General note | Guestbook was a gift from Ellen Browning Scripps in 1910. Contains signatures and remarks of guests of the Ritters at their apartment in the Scripps Laboratory from June 24, 2010 to June 23, 1923, including all station staff, members of the Scripps family, University administrators, and distinguished visitors like David Starr Jordan, Clarance Darrow, and Lincoln Steffens. |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Ritter house plans, Berkeley, Calif. 1908 October 1 |
| General note | Photographic reproductions of plans for the house, never built, designed by Morgan and Hoover, Architects. Originals at UC Berkeley, College of Environmental Design. |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | Portraits of William E. Ritter and Mary Bennett Ritter 1908-1940 |
| General note | One photograph from this folder has been digitized and may be viewed through the link below. |
| Box 6, Folder 1-2 | Oversize portraits of William E. Ritter and Mary Bennett Ritter 1908-1925 |
| General note | One photograph from this folder has been digitized and may be viewed through the link below. |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | Portrait of Ellen Browning Scripps 1919 |
| Box 6, Folder 3 | Portrait of E. W. Scripps (?) 1900 |