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Smithsonian Libraries Receives 2015 *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* Award for BHL Field Notes Project

The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) has selected the “Biodiversity Heritage Library Field Notes Project” for a 2015 *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* award. The award of \$491,713 will help support increased accessibility to original scientific documentation found in archival field notes in participating institution collections.

Field notes provide valuable, primary research data about species and ecosystems that is often unpublished or unavailable through other sources. They can also be extremely valuable for museum research, providing key specimen data related to study sites, collecting details and ecology. Unfortunately, field notes from related persons and expeditions are often scattered across institutions, inaccessible to any but the determined researcher.

Over a two year period, the BHL Field Notes Project will coordinate work to digitize field notes, assign metadata and publish the field notes online through the Biodiversity Heritage Library and Internet Archive, with an emphasis on quality, quantity and closely related content. By enabling the complete, online collocation of collections, the Project will significantly improve research opportunities for scholars with interests as diverse as climate change, evolution, history of science and women and minorities in science.

The Smithsonian Libraries and Smithsonian Institution Archives will serve as the lead institutions on the project. Additional project participants include Missouri Botanical Garden, Peter H. Raven Library; American Museum of Natural History; Yale Peabody Museum; Harvard University Herbaria, Botany Libraries; Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library; University of California, Berkeley Museum of Vertebrate Zoology; The New York Botanical Garden, The LuEsther T. Mertz Library; The Field Museum; and Internet Archive.

The *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* awards program, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, funds projects in which locally executed protocols contribute to a national good, using methods that are cost efficient and subject to wider adoption. It supports the creation of digital representations of unique content of high scholarly significance that will be

discoverable and usable as elements of a coherent national collection. Eighteen projects were selected from among one hundred sixty-seven proposals submitted in 2015. This is the first group of projects supported by the *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* awards program.

About the Smithsonian Libraries

The Smithsonian Libraries maintains a collection of more than 2 million volumes and serves as an educational resource for the Smithsonian Institution, the global research community and the public. The Libraries are located in Washington, Edgewater, Md., New York City and the Republic of Panama. For more information, visit the Smithsonian Libraries website: <http://library.si.edu>.

About the Smithsonian Institution Archives

The Smithsonian Institution Archives captures, preserves, and makes available to the public the history of Smithsonian. From its inception in 1846 to the present, the records of the history of the Institution—its people, its programs, its research, and its stories—have been gathered, organized, and disseminated so that everyone can learn about the Smithsonian. The history of the Smithsonian is a vital part of American history, of scientific exploration, and of international cultural understanding. Learn more about the Archives at siarchives.si.edu.

About the Biodiversity Heritage Library

The Biodiversity Heritage Library is a consortium of major natural history, botanical and research libraries that seek to contribute to the global “biodiversity commons” by digitizing and aggregating the resources housed within each of the participating institutions, providing free and open access to the legacy literature that underpins the work of the natural science community. For more information, visit the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: biodiversitylibrary.org.

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