Resurrecting Orphaned Collections

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Some statistics

May of 1998
• 26,956 lots ledger catalogued
• None databased
• Some backlog

June of 2014
• 74,378 lots (906,811 specimens) databased
• Total holdings are approximately 115,000 lots (1.4 million specimens) = significant backlog
• 88,000+ lots acquired (including early backlog and recent acquisitions)
To accept or not accept?

Factors we consider:

- Benefits to our collection
- Space
- Financial responsibilities
- Staff
- Condition of orphaned collection
  - Specimens
  - Data
We have accepted it.....now what?

Workflow after initial packing and transport to NCSM:

• Initial curating of specimens, including stabilizing in appropriate environment (e.g., fluid, acid-free container, cryogenic vial, etc.), procuring and permanently associating legacy data, and organized storage to facilitate easy location and retrieval
• In some cases, further early curatorial steps (e.g., transfer from formalin to alcohol solutions)
• Sorting, identification, ID-labeling (including associated field #), and subdividing to new containers
• Entering locale data, georeferencing, and upgrading to NCSM standards
• Proofing and appending locale data to permanent locality tables
• Entering lot-specific data from specimen containers into temporary species tables
• Proofing lot-specific data and appending to permanent species tables
• Printing labels from permanent tables
• Placing labels in specimen containers
• Storing lots in the permanent collection range in systematic order
Staff

9,000 hours of constant work on backlog
50 work weeks x 40 hours per week = 2,000 hours per year
9,000 / 2,000 = 4.5 years
Condition of specimens
Condition of specimens
Labels

Santee--Lake Moultrie July 26th, 1954
1 mile East of State Hwy 8
1 mile East of town of Cross

98 Anderson
July 23, 1957

NEUSE RIVER
3 MAY-1966
G.S. #31

ANGCHOA
Ledgers
Field notes & cards
Stabilizing & Sorting
Databasing, labeling, & shelving
Final goal
Global connections
How do we stop this madness?

Help me!
Recommendations

• Involve the administration
• Involve students, volunteers, and interns
• Apply for grants
• Target donations from the community
• Augment specimen driven research