

MAKING EVERY PENNY COUNT: BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS TROUT AND SALMONID COLLECTION ON A SMALL BUDGET

James Thull

Montana State University Libraries
P.O.Box 173320
Bozeman, MT 59717 USA

*7th IAMS LIC Conference
Zanzibar, Tanzania, October 16-20, 2011*

Abstract: This paper will describe the collection development methods, strategies and tools used to develop a 10,000+ item trout and salmonid collection at the Montana State University-Bozeman Library (MSU). The Trout and Salmonid subject collection at MSU was created to satisfy the information needs of faculty, staff, students and non-university affiliated researchers. The overall goal is to build the world's most dynamic collection of books, grey literature, and manuscripts devoted to trout and salmon. The scope of the collection is broad and includes material on biology, ecology, angling, politics, economics, culinary arts, spiritual, literary and philosophical works. We actively collect a wide array of materials including books, periodicals, government publications, scientific reports, diaries, theses and dissertations, DVD's and audio materials. The paper addresses several methods used to build the collection using Internet based retailers and the benefits, trials, and problems involved. The importance of courting donors and soliciting donations will be examined, both in terms of value for the collection and the potential for building relationships with benefactors. There is also an overview on how to find relevant material published by small and local presses; print copies of dissertations and theses; and government documents, as well as the benefits of collecting periodicals and collecting the manuscript collections of researchers. The paper also discusses strategies for getting the best value for collection development funds and several of the tools used to locate materials and determine their informational value, such as works cited lists, bibliographies, specialty book dealer catalogs and utilizing the knowledge of experts in various disciplines.

Keywords: Trout-- North America, salmon—North America, libraries, collection development. □

The Trout and Salmonid subject collection at Montana State University Library was created in 1999 to satisfy the information needs of faculty, staff, students and non-university affiliated researchers. The overall goal is to build the world's most dynamic collection of books, grey literature, and manuscripts devoted to trout and salmon. The scope of the collection is broad and includes material on biology, ecology, angling, politics, economics, culinary arts, spiritual, literary and philosophical works. We actively collect a wide array of materials including books, periodicals, government publications, scientific reports, diaries, theses and dissertations, DVD's and audio materials. When I give my tours I often describe our collection development strategy as the "six-degrees of trout & salmon". Basically if we can connect it back to trout and salmon we will, in theory, collect it. So we have material on insects, water pollution, cooking, sustainable fishing methods, works of fiction, children's books, rod building, invasive species, etc.

The collection was the brain child of our former dean, Bruce Morton and Bud Lilly, who is a well-known conversationalist and angler. The original material came from a large 10,000 plus donation of material valued at \$238,000. Of this around half of the material ended up in the collection. This was because there was a wealth of material that could not be connected back to trout or salmon in any reasonable way. We received hundreds of rare antiquarian books, multiple journal runs and generally a wide smattering of material on dozens of subjects that fell within our collection development scope. At the same time we began seeking financial donations to fund endowments for collection development and a lecture series. Our location, in Bozeman, Montana, has helped our collection development efforts tremendously and makes us a good fit for this type of material. We are located within driving distance of several blue ribbon trout fishing rivers including the Big Hole, Madison, Gallatin, Yellowstone, Blackfoot and Boulder. Angling opportunities for Bull, Yellowstone Cutthroat, Brooke, Brown, Rainbow, Golden and Westslope Cutthroat exist in the state as do opportunities for Grayling, Chinook and Kokanee Salmon. Our proximity to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks is also a plus for us. We have prolific anglers and angling

writers visit the area and our collection regularly. Bud Lilly often drops in with guests for tours and our current scholar in residence is Dr. Paul Schullery.

Amazon

In my collection development role I have used traditional and nontraditional methods to purchase items including on-line retailers like Amazon. Amazon is one of the largest booksellers in the world. Initially the company sold only books but has since expanded to sell nearly everything imaginable. You can now buy everything from groceries to table saws on Amazon. Currently they also sell both new and used books and allow individuals to sell their personal collections on their site, for a fee. I use Amazon as a collection development resource regularly for both new and used items. While there are always risks involved with buying used books, in my opinion, the savings, which allow me to purchase a greater volume of material for the same amount of money, make the risks worthwhile. And we can mitigate the risks by doing a few simple things before we place that order. Always check the sellers rating. While this is not a surefire guarantee it can be generally assumed that a better rating equals a better seller. Verify the sellers return policy to make sure if the item is in a condition that is less than it was described as or if the item is simply not what was expected based on the sellers' description that it can be easily returned. I have purchased hundreds of books this way and have returned only three. The savings can be significant. I can often buy used books and DVD's for literally pennies on dollar.

Ebay

Ebay was founded in 1995 by Pierre Omidyar as a website to buy and sell used goods. Like Amazon Ebay has exploded in popularity. You can find some great and unique items on Ebay often at very low prices I often describe it to people as a worldwide rummage sale. It has also been described as a "suckers market". Meaning you can find things vastly under priced and vastly overpriced. So beware and try not to let that competitive streak get away from you in those last few minutes and end up bidding more than you intended and more than the item maybe worth. In addition to the traditional auctions, where the highest bidder wins, Ebay also gives sellers the option of selling items using their Buy It Now option in which they list a price they will accept and buyers can purchase things for that set price without the hassle of an auction. Ebay can be a great place to find books. Most are used but new are also available to a lesser extent.

Betterworld Books

Betterworld Books is another option for purchasing new and used books and DVD's. They were founded in 2002 and market themselves as a bookstore with a soul. This is because they use a percentage of their profits to fund literacy initiatives worldwide. According to their website "so far, the company has converted more than 53 million books into over \$8.6 million in funding for literacy and education. ...also diverting more than 26,000 tons of books from landfills." They state that they have over 8 million books available at any given time.

AbeBooks

Abebooks is an on-line marketplace for booksellers, particularly those specializing in rare books. It was founded in 1995 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. In 2008 it was purchased by Amazon and although it remains a stand-alone operation many of the items listed on Abebooks are also listed on Amazon. This can be a great place to find rare, antiquarian, out of print and non-English books. Nearly every rare title that I have ever searched for on Abebooks I have been able to locate. They describe their material well, know what edition of the book they are selling and are accurate when stating the condition of an item. I have also had luck with locating items and booksellers on Abebooks, and then for higher priced items, calling the bookseller directly and negotiating a better price.

Reprints v Originals

As I have stated earlier our collection is a research collection and not a rare book collection. And while we of course have rare books, will take them as donations and have purchased them they are not the focus of what we collect. Reprints, while not available for all titles, are available for an ever increasing number of rare antiquarian books and offer the same informational value at a significant savings. We collect reprints whenever they are available in addition to the cost savings they are easily replaceable and arrive in new condition.

Government Documents

Government documents can be great sources of information. While I have used Ebay and Amazon to purchase government documents I have also found that many can be had simply by requesting them from the government agency that produces them. Every two years I contact the Departments of Natural Resources in each state that has

trout or salmon in its waters and request copies of their fishing regulations and any other materials they may have related to trout and salmon. In addition to DNR's I have contacted fish hatcheries and federal agencies that oversee game and wildlife. An area that is often overlooked but can provide unique pieces of information are fish and game agencies on Native American Reservations, which have distinct rules regarding the harvesting of fish. These can be a bit more difficult to reach and sometimes will charge a nominal fee but I have usually been able to get information on their fishing regulations when I have sought it.

DVD's and Media

DVD's and other visual forms of media are sometimes overlooked in collection development efforts. I have been active in collecting this material for the collection at my institution. Generally these are not scientific in nature but I feel they still have significant value for researchers. Video images offer a glimpse of waterways as they are or were. While most of these focus on angling the additional information included such as the type of fish caught, their size, other wildlife seen, the water flow on the river, housing and other development along the waterways, etc. offer value today and for future researchers. In addition to videos on angling I have purchased materials on rod building, insects, the reclaiming of streams, commercial fishing, predators such as salmon sharks and on a variety of other topics.

Donations

Donations are great and we rely on them heavily. We have had great luck courting and attracting donors and have received some incredible donations. Recently we received a large donation of several thousand periodicals from the local Federation of Fly Fishers, which added new titles to our collection and helped fill in gaps in many of our existing runs. This was a bit of a complicated donation as we only used about 10-20% of what was donated but they needed to get rid of the material and we essentially agreed to take it with the caveat that it was then ours to do with as we pleased.

With donations we may need or want only a small percentage of the material that is being offered. So what do you do? Most times donors simply want to get rid of the material and do not want someone coming in and cherry picking the best items and leaving the rest. My personal opinion is that you should take it all as long as you can get the donor to agree that the items are now yours and unneeded items will be disposed of through various methods. I usually sell this as we will take the items we do not wish to add and disseminate them to other libraries or sell them to provide additional funds to purchase items we do need. So your donation is going to be used by researchers beyond our libraries walls and will provide our researchers with material beyond what you have donated. An added benefit is that we often get material that is popular in nature, within our collection development scope but not the type of material we would go out and purchase. For instance we received a donation of about 800 books from a local collector which was focused on fly tying. There were some other great items in there including an early edition of the *Complete Angler* but the bulk of material was on flies, imitating natural insects and tying flies. While this is not the focus of what we collect we added the majority of the titles and they have been very popular with local anglers and have increased the overall usage of our collection.

Courting and attracting donors is of course a key aspect to receiving donations. I am lucky because we have many anglers who come through the area and have several local guides and authors who tout our material and often bring people in for tours. I have received several donations of material and monies after people have been given a tour of our collection. Because we have so many blue ribbon rivers in the area we get a fair number of wealthy anglers who come to the area to fish and occasionally we are able to hook them as well. Demonstrating to them that the material they donate will be well cared for and well used is of vital importance. I show how we use archival grade Mylar covers, keep the room secure and control temperature and humidity. I let them know that our goal is to have this material available for future generations so that their grandchildren's grandchildren can come in and look at a book, diary or papers that they donate to us. With manuscript material in particular this is often a great selling point.

Using expert local and donor knowledge.

Beyond using dealer catalogs, random searches, and published bibliographies I also rely heavily on local researchers, professors and students to do collection development. I regularly ask them if they are aware of sources that we should have or that would be useful to them in their fields of research. Our scholar in residence, Paul Schullery has been a tremendous help in this area.

In closing I have found that my ideas about collection development change and what I have learned is that trying a new idea is usually worth it. If it doesn't work out you simply try something else.