



Newsletter of the **FRIENDS**
OF THE
FARLOW

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G. Lewis-Gentry, Interim Editor
J. Tocci, Volunteer Assistant Editor

**Mycological stamps from around the world now at the
Farlow Library**

Keiko Nishimoto, Library Assistant

Earlier this year, Friends of the Farlow founding member and first president, Moselio Schaechter generously donated his collection of mushroom stamps to the Farlow Library. Assembled over the course of three and a half decades beginning in the 1970s, the collection includes more than 2,000 fungus-themed stamps, postcards, and envelopes from over 160 countries and territories.

Stamp collecting has been a popular pastime almost since the first postage stamps were issued in Great Britain in the 1840s. Images of fungi began appearing on stamps a little over a century later. Stamp catalogues indicate that the earliest of these was a mid-1958 release of 10 stamps in Romania, followed by a 5-stamp set in Czechoslovakia later the same year, and a 7-stamp release in Poland in 1959. Remarkably, Schaechter's collection includes complete sets of each of these beautiful releases.

Though countries continued to release mushroom stamps – often depicting edible and poisonous mushrooms – throughout the 1960s and '70s, it was during the 1980s that mushroom



République Centrafricaine's *Lycoperdon echinatum* stamp. Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany

stamp releases became much more frequent and started to feature more local and unique varieties of mushrooms (Moss and Dunkley, 1988). Many of these stamps were highlighted in a series of articles by Moss and Dunkley in the *Bulletin of the British Mycological Society*, and in several follow-up articles in the journal *Mycologist*. Releases of mushroom stamps continued to be quite popular through the 1990s and over half

FoF Annual Meeting!
Saturday November 9, 2013. See page 7.

of Schaechter's collection comes from these two decades. Although there are stamps with illustrations of prominent mycologists and other types of fungi, the collection was specifically focused on portraits of mushrooms.

Schaechter says he was initially drawn to collecting mushroom stamps as a "window into ethnomycology – which mushrooms are appreciated as food, feared as poisons, emblematic of the local biota." Reflecting on whether stamp collecting was a successful strategy for this study, he found that amongst wealthier, developed countries, the stamps often provide insight into what people find interesting. In developing countries, however, the quality of the stamps is less consistent, making them more difficult to study. Subjects are sometimes selected at random and can be mislabeled or unlabeled. Some countries borrow from their past, like Burkina Faso's reissue of a 6-stamp set after the country changed its name from the Republic of Haute-Volta and a set from the Republic of Guinea reissued with new values. Other countries seem to borrow from each other, like sets from Angola, Dominica, and the Maldives featuring similar images of mushrooms with insects.

Looking through the collection, it is apparent that certain species are interesting to countries everywhere, regardless of whether they are indigenous. Species of *Amanita*, *Boletus*, and *Coprinus* are some of the most commonly portrayed.



Guiné-Bissau's *Morchella* stamp. Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

Unsurprisingly, the most popular mushroom is the fly agaric, *Amanita muscaria*. Extremely common in pop culture, this white-spotted red mushroom is depicted on dozens of stamps in the collection. The chanterelle, *Cantharellus cibarius*, is perhaps the most commonly portrayed edible mushroom in the collection. The shaggy mane, *Coprinus comatus*, and various morels, *Morchella* sp., are also quite popular.

Mushroom stamps have been issued by countries all over the globe, and if Schaechter's collection is any indication, some of the countries which are particularly fond of mushroom stamps include Bhutan, the former Czechoslovakia, Guinea, Russia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



San Marino's mushroom stamps. Photos courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

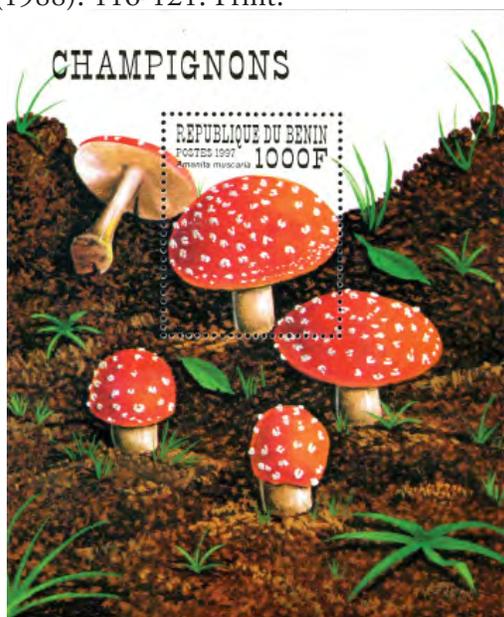
Schaechter collected 38 sets comprising 235 stamps from Russia alone! On the other hand, while building his collection, he noted that the United States seems to have largely ignored the popularity of mushroom stamps in other countries. The collection does include one set of stamps from the U.S., but the two images of mushrooms are part of an overall “Northeast Deciduous Forest”-themed sheet and are not especially prominent.

Schaechter went so far as to write a letter to the U.S. Postal Service about this. Unfortunately, as he put it, his letter “went nowhere.”

To see the collection, e-mail Lisa DeCesare, Head of Public Services and Archives at botref@oeb.harvard.edu.

References:

Moss, M.O. and Dunkley, I.P. “Recent issues of postage stamps depicting fungi.” *Mycologist*, 2.3 (1988): 116-121. Print.



Benin's *Amanita muscaria* stamp. Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.



Cambodia's *Coprinus comatus* stamp. Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

Reid Bryophytes Update

We are still processing the bryophyte collections given to us by Anna (Nancy) Reid, but with the help of Sarah Verhaeghen, great strides forward are being made. Soon there will be repackaging of specimens, new labels being glued, sorting being done, and then filing. If any of that sounds like something you or someone you know who lives near the Farlow would like to come and help with, please email Michaela Schmull (mschmull@oeb.harvard.edu). (If there are other things you would like to help with, you can email her about those, too!)

News from the Farlow

This October **Rosanne Healy** has joined the Farlow for a 1-year post-doc appointment. She will be writing up her revision of the *Pachyphloides/Scabropezia* lineage for publication, and doing some ultrastructural investigations of *Orbilina* species. These investigations will include spore body development and ascospore wall structure of the ascospores in xerophytic and mesic *Orbilina* species. Rosanne visited the Farlow in 2009 on a FoF student fellowship during her Ph.D work at the University of Minnesota and we are all glad to have her back again.

In September a new Radcliffe Institute for Advance Study Fellow arrived, and we have been lucky to see her quite a bit. **Meredith Blackwell**, Boyd Professor at Louisiana State University, is a fellow at Radcliffe for one year while she works on revising the *Introductory Mycology* textbook. The resources of the Farlow staff and library are at her disposal and the lunch table is quite the lively place for mycological discussions with her here. Meredith is also our FoF annual meeting speaker. See page 7 for details.

The Lichen & Bryophyte (“Digitization TCN

Collaborative Research: North American Lichens and Bryophytes: Sensitive Indicators of Environmental Quality and Change”) and the Macrofungi Project (“The Macrofungi Collection Consortium: Unlocking a Biodiversity Resource for Understanding Biotic Interactions, Nutrient Cycling and Human Affairs”) digitization processes are still moving along at great speed. **Hannah Kusnitz** is now the lead for the Lichen & Bryophyte project and is being assisted by student employee **Amelia Cook**. **Davita Moyer** is now the lead for the Macrofungi project and is being assisted by student employee **Kyle Herbert**. Both Hannah and Davita come to the Farlow from the vascular side of the herbarium where they worked on imaging for the Global Plants Initiative project. We are very happy to have them aboard.

At the end of this summer **Don Pfister** stepped down as Dean of the Harvard Summer School and started his new role as Interim Dean of Harvard College.

We have been fortunate to have a good number of visitors to the Farlow in these past several months. In May we had **Leif Ryvarden** from the University of Oslo visit to work with **Teresa Iturriaga** on Venezuelan fungi. In June we had former graduate student **David Hewitt** of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia visit and look into historic moss flora of the Philadelphia area. We also had **Doug Strongman** of Saint Mary’s University in Halifax visit to work on the *Trichomyces* slide collection at the Farlow, leaving us with many images of the specimens. Our third June visitor was **Serena Zhao**, who came to work *Laboulbeniales* on the Boston Harbor Island insect collections from the Harvard MCZ with **Danny Haelewaters**, graduate student in OEB.

In August **Teresa Iturriaga** headed home to Venezuela, but was back at the Farlow for 6 weeks starting in September. She is back in Venezuela again, but we all have a feeling we will see her

again soon as she continues her work on the historic Venezuelan fungus collections.

In September we had a surprise visit from former curatorial assistant **Ursula Metzger Li** and her husband **Dr. Jack Li**. The Li’s visited from Delaware and shared stories of the Farlow Herbarium and of collecting with Dr. Lamb in the 1960s, and we showed them all the work we have done in the collections since then.

Most recently, we had **Valter Rossi**, noted mycologist from University of L’Aquila, Coppito, Italy, visit us from October 9-16. Valter worked with **Danny Haelewaters** on research of Thaxter’s *Laboulbeniales*.

Fun Finds at the Farlow

As part of the Macrofungi Project (“The Macrofungi Collection Consortium: Unlocking a Biodiversity Resource for Understanding Biotic Interactions, Nutrient Cycling and Human Affairs”), we are undergoing the process of checking to make sure that the names specimens are filed under are actually published names, then entering the names into our collections database. Throughout this undertaking, we sometimes see some interesting things in the collections.

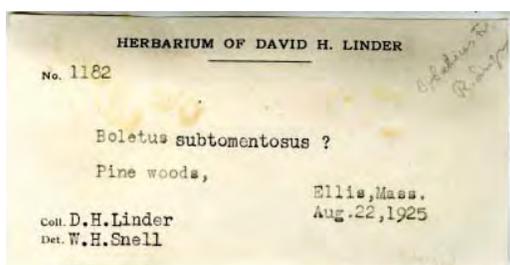
I made one such discovery while checking the *Xerocomus* specimens, which included some extra notes and illustrations to supplement determinations made by Walter H. Snell of specimens collected by David H. Linder. The specimen of *Xerocomus badius* (originally determined to be a *Boletus*) is an excellent example of what I found. There is a specimen collected by Linder, determined by Snell, and then re-determined lightly in pencil by Singer. It includes a note from Snell about the specimen, describing how, at the time, he was uncertain about what species the *Boletus* (now *Xerocomus*) actually was. Lastly, and perhaps most striking, there is a painting of the specimen from when it was freshly collected, with a note



Painting of *Xercomus badius*. Photo courtesy of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

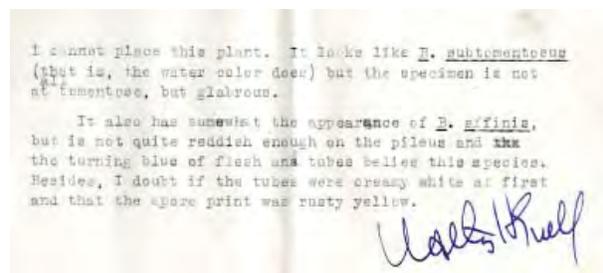
in pencil so light it is almost illegible: “*Pileus* frequently uniformly color of bruised spot.” On the back in pencil is a note that says, “perhaps *B. subtomentosus* (WHS),” which I think clearly indicates that Snell is the painter here.

This alone is a fun find, but what makes it more interesting in current context is that W. H. Snell was not your average mycologist. Before



Specimen label of *Xercomus badius*. Photo courtesy of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

becoming a mycologist and a professor of natural history at Brown University, he had a small stint as a Major League Baseball player. Specifically, he played for one season on the Boston Red Sox, our very own hometown team, who just won the 2013 World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals. Nothing like an original painting packaged with



Note from W. H. Snell about specimen 1182. Photo courtesy of the Farlow Library and Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany.

a herbarium specimen to kindle excitement about local sports!

Reference:

McLaughlin, David J. “Walter Henry Snell, 1889-1980.” *Mycologia*, 75.6 (1983): 941-948. Print

Transforming the “Ugly Room” of the Farlow Herbarium

Genevieve Lewis-Gentry, Curatorial Assistant

In the basement of the Farlow Herbarium is room B-4 – a room we all avoided, and finally nicknamed the “Ugly Room.” The room had built-in wooden herbarium cabinets full of specimens waiting to be processed, the Faull collection, old chemicals, and herbarium supplies. Over time it started to accumulate other things as well, and eventually had bags of concrete, several tables, and a guillotine paper cutter from the 1800s.

In the winter of 2012-2013, an opportunity arose to fix up the room so that it could lose



The “Ugly Room,” Farlow B-4 and the guillotine from the 1800’s.

the title of “Ugly,” as well as give the Farlow some more functional space that it desperately needs. The vascular plant side of the Harvard University Herbaria started the process of moving out all the plants from the 3rd floor, moving out all the herbarium cabinets, and putting in a compactor system. We were able to get 21 new cabinets – well, new to us, at least – because of this dispossession of cabinets. (Many other herbaria all over the world also benefited from the great cabinet purge.) The window of time to get the room ready was small, so everyone lent a hand.

In order to get the room ready, we first had to find someone who wanted the guillotine. Once that was done, we finally had room to actually open cabinets and get to work. All the oversized rock lichens were moved from their temporary storage in the Ugly Room to the geology cabinets purchased to house them. Boxes of boxes, extra tables, and other supplies were all removed from the room, leaving us with only what was left in the cabinets. Many hours were spent by Don, Michaela, and this author going through cubbies to see whether material had been damaged beyond keeping by pests or whether it could be saved. All material that was not disposed of was



Construction crew at work breaking down and removing cases from the vascular collection.

bagged and frozen. We had great help from the curatorial staff of the vascular side of the herbaria, bagging and moving all the material to the freezer. Michaela spent careful hours dealing with the little bottles of chemicals we found from the days of Cap Weston (or before) to make sure they were all disposed of properly.

Once this job was done, the hard work of



Wooden cabinets in B-4 full of rock lichens being stored temporarily.



Rock lichens being filed in their new geology cabinet home.

completely removing everything from the room could begin. All the cabinet doors had to come off, and then the cabinets themselves were demolished. An asbestos abatement team came in to fix the pipes, and we even got some additional light fixtures. After a really good waxing of the floor, the

cabinets were moved in. While all the work was going on, Don planned what would now live in this room: hepatics and the Faull collection. Once the cabinets were in, much time was spent carefully putting the Faull collection away in order and then moving all the general herbarium hepatics as well as the Schiffner hepatics to their new



General herbarium hepatic specimens in their new home.



The "Ugly Room" all cleaned up with new lights, waxed floors, and herbarium cabinets.

home. All new type folders were made, oversized folders were split, and the folders were uncrowded in the cubbies so that they have the proper space they need.

Finally, we can say that the new hepatic room is decidedly Not Ugly. We hope visiting researchers will enjoy it as much as we do.

FoF Annual Meeting

The FoF Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 9th beginning at 3:30 p.m. with a business meeting.

At 4 p.m. our distinguished speaker, Dr. Meredith Blackwell, Boyd Professor at Louisiana State University and Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University for this year, will deliver the talk "Smaller than a Laboul: Thaxter's teeny tinies." We are lucky to have Meredith back to give the annual lecture as she was the speaker at the 4th annual FoF meeting. At the 4th meeting her talk was titled "Slime molds

in the Sonoran Desert" which goes to show how much Meredith likes small fungi.



Left to right: Valter Rossi, Meredith Blackwell, Danny Haelewaters and Don Pfister in the Farlow. Photo courtesy of Valter Rossi.

Parking for Annual Meeting

If you plan to park in the 52 Oxford Street Garage for the Annual Meeting, and you need assistance in obtaining a one-day Visitor Parking Permit, please contact Ingrid McDonough. She will walk you through the procedure you'll need to follow to get one.

e-mail: imcdonou@oeb.harvard.edu
phone: 617-496-3023

Walking Directions to the Herbaria from Harvard Square

Walk into Harvard Yard through Johnston Gate (as you do so you will be facing the statue of John Harvard directly across the quad) and take the walkway that goes off diagonally to your left. Follow this walkway to another gate at the north end of the yard. As you go through this gate you will be facing the Science Center; Memorial Hall will be to your right. Look beyond Memorial Hall for a tall, white building at the corner of Divinity Avenue and Kirkland Street. Walk up Divinity Avenue to the end. The Herbaria will be facing you. Walking time from the subway is about 10 minutes.

Join us!

Receive the FOF Newsletter, notification of the annual book sale, discount on Farlow publications and services, invitations to the annual meeting and other events, and a special welcome when visiting the Farlow.

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