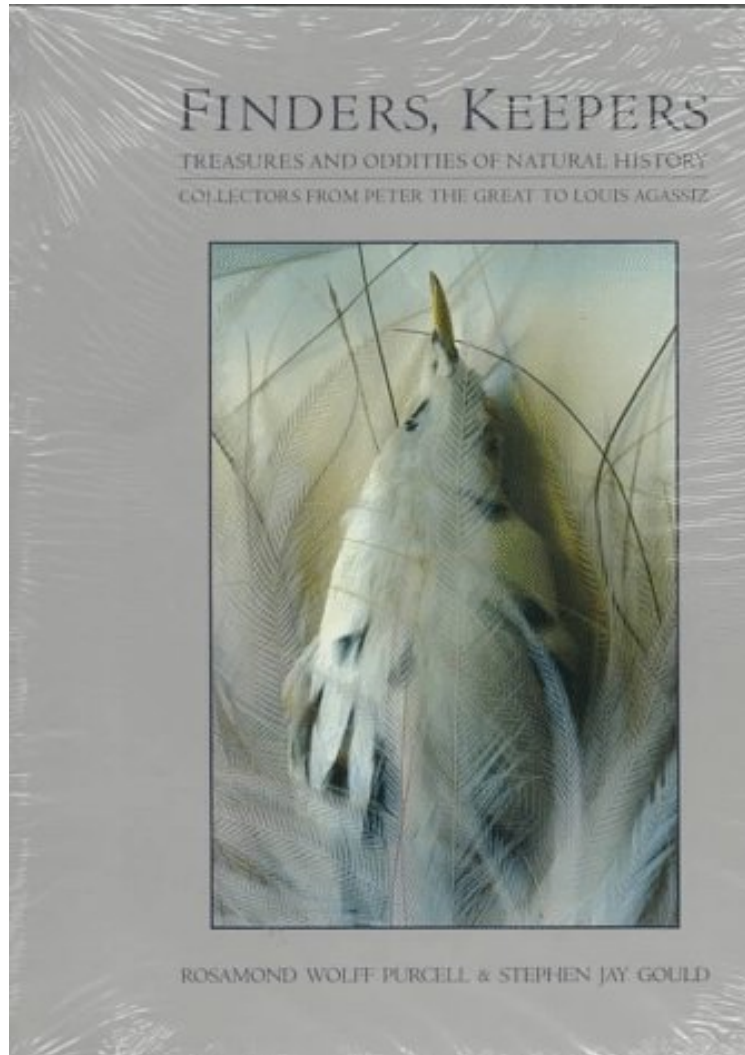


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Finders, Keepers: Treasures and Oddities of Natural History

Stephen Jay Gould, Rosamond Purcell

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Stephen Jay Gould, Rosamond Purcell : Finders, Keepers: Treasures and Oddities of Natural History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Finders, Keepers: Treasures and Oddities of Natural History:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Study nature, not books" Louis Agassiz By Jerry Guild I have a personal collection of over 1200 books on Natural History. A large number of my books are about Birds and I have been an avid Birdwatcher for over 20 years. I have also assembled a collection of Minerals and Fossils. Therefore, books of exquisite photographs and descriptions of museum collections and writings about the great pioneers in the study of Natural History are something with which I am quite familiar. When I picked this book up, I did so after only

quickly flipping the pages. The high quality of the paper, printing and photography was immediately obvious. As a bit of a collector myself, I never hesitate to acquire a book about collecting, collectors and even museums. As I started reading this book, I was immediately impressed with it. As much as I have read about famous personalities in Natural History, there were big surprises in store for me. The first impression of this book quickly changed for me, and I found it really got to the heart and soul of the great Naturalists and Collectors. As an avid Birder, I am very aware of the ongoing debate as to whether Photographs or Illustrations or Drawings are better when trying to describe the various species. Until the development of computer enhancement of photographs, generally the preference has been for illustrations. It was very interesting to see how this issue was so well discussed and demonstrated with fossils. The same points come up when discussing the merits of various Bird Field Guides available today. The book also shows the wide range of personality traits these great Naturalists had, as well as touching on the rivalries that occurred among them. The photography in the book is simply awesome, and as one would expect, the text and knowledge that is always with Gould's writing makes this book something spectacular. After finishing my first read, I was convinced it is a book that will be read again. Impressed as I was with the book, I decided to see what it was selling for, particularly on the used book sites. It didn't surprise that it is commanding prices several times its original published price. I suggest that anyone who appreciates excellent Natural History and the excellent books that have been published about it, seriously think about acquiring this book.

Most of us collect things, but seldom have entire collections been preserved. A few that did survive have fallen, figuratively, into the clutches of two of America's most innovative minds: photographer Rosamond Wolff Purcell and paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould. What these collections say about the collectors, and about human beings in general, is the subject of this strangely beautiful and rich compendium. Here are Purcell's wonderfully exotic photographs of teeth and other human artifacts from the collection of Peter the Great; moles, pigs, and dogs from van Heurn's many boxes of perfectly preserved skins; and all manner of preserved life from Rothschild's Birds of Paradise to the fish of Agassiz. Here also is Gould at his best, delighting in the unusual and making connections to our own history and evolution that only the most fertile and whimsical mind could imagine - and that few will be able to resist. This is a book for those with a craving for beauty, knowledge, and a fascination with the unusual.

From Publishers Weekly Purcell's color photographs of historic collections of taxidermy, fossils and other exotic artifacts are accompanied by an essay by Gould. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Stephen Jay Gould (1941-2002) was the Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology and Professor of Geology at Harvard University. He published over twenty books, received the National Book and National Book Critics Circle Awards, and a MacArthur Fellowship. Rosamond Purcell is the author of *Bookworm* and *Owls Head*. She lives in Medford, Massachusetts.