Pharmacist's hobby becomes a museum

Hampton Dunn
PHARMACIST’S HOBBY BECOMES A MUSEUM

By HAMPTON DUNN

WINTER PARK --- Dr. James H. Beal collected shells for more than half a century. He started at Key West in 1888, while on a sailboat tour of the Florida islands and continued until his death in 1945 at Fort Walton.

The hobbyist founded Scio College of Pharmacy, which later merged with Pittsburgh College of Pharmacy and still later with the University of Pittsburgh. For many years he was chairman of the board of the United States Pharmacopeia.

His shell collecting expanded until it became world wide. Through personal collecting expeditions, exchanges and purchases the collection kept growing until it became too much of a task to count the thousands upon thousands of unusual shells.

There are many outstanding items in the display, one of the most interesting cameos shows the carving of Aurora (the Dawn). This shell was at one time in the royal collection owned by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

In 1941, Dr. Beal gave his collection to Rollins College here. A long-time friend, Birdsey L. Maltie, founder of Maltie Chemical Co., provided a Spanish-type building to house the collection. Dr. Beal and Mr. Maltie were awarded Rollins’ Decoration of Honor at Founders Day in 1942.

Besides the Beal collection, the Beal-Maltie Shell Museum houses other collections such as those of Dr. Louise Perry of Sanibel, and Mrs. Helen Raines, of Fort Myers.