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# The Darwin Census

## A Census of the Extant Copies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of Darwin's On the Origin of Species

**On the Origin of Species** by Charles Darwin is widely regarded as one of the most important books ever written. Indeed, there is scarcely an area of human endeavour that has not been impacted by Darwin's theory, the terms Darwinism and Darwinian now an integral part of the modern lexicon. Because of the importance of the **Origin** a census of the surviving copies of the 1st edition is being undertaken in association with the Darwin Online project at the University of Cambridge.

The **Origin** was first published in 1859. The publisher, John Murray, recorded a first printing of 1,250 copies. It went on sale to the trade on November 24, and sold out. Today, many copies of the 1st edition are in public and academic libraries, but many are also in private hands or in the trade. It is the objective of this census to record as many copies as possible regardless of their current status, and to provide a mechanism for keeping track of registered copies in the future.

The first printing was relatively straightforward but there are slight variations which need to be recorded and a Guide to the Census is provided.

If we might suggest the following steps:

1. Print the guide, including the blank Census Form at the end.
2. Have the **Origin** in hand and step through the guide, completing the form manually.
3. Fax the completed form to Daniel Lewis at the Darwin Census: 626-449-5720 or email to [dlewis@huntington.org](mailto:dlewis@huntington.org)

The objectives of this census are many. Three primary objectives include: (1) to establish the frequency of the known variants; (2) to identify any unknown variants; and (3) to locate missing presentation copies. The first and second objectives will hopefully shed light on the printing history of the book; the third may identify copies with relevant annotations by Darwin's contemporaries and help scholars better understand the initial reception of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection.

An additional benefit will come from a database that includes a detailed description of each copy, providing a way to identify lost or stolen copies.

The results of the Census will be published by Darwin Online and will be available online for all to see and use. All information gathered will be published with the exception of ownership details that owners specifically request be kept confidential.

We thank you in advance for participating in this important project. If you have any questions, please email us at [darwin.census@gmail.com](mailto:darwin.census@gmail.com).

**Daniel Lewis**  
Darwin Census Project Manager

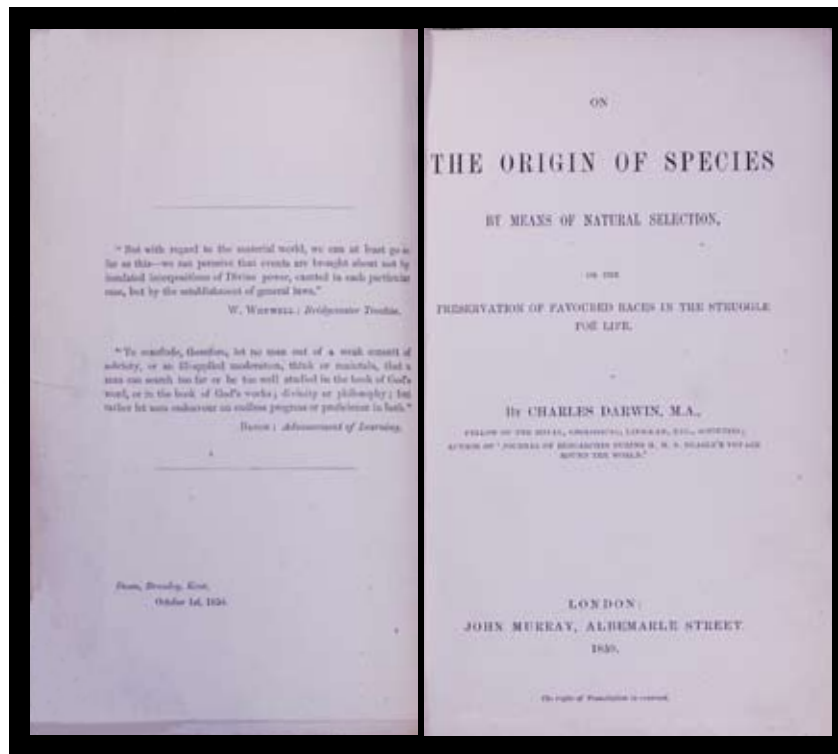
**Dr John van Wyhe**  
Director, Darwin Online

# Census Guide

This guide is designed to help identify and record specific features of a 1st edition Origin. For questions, please email: [darwin.census@gmail.com](mailto:darwin.census@gmail.com).

## 1. Identifying the 1st Edition

The simplest way to identify the 1st edition is to look at the title page. If it is dated 1859, it is almost certainly a 1st (there being but a few copies of the 2nd dated 1859—possibly made-up). Any doubt can be removed by looking at the facing page (verso of the half-title), which will have two quotations only (all subsequent editions had three, including the reported 2nd editions dated 1859).



The 1st American edition has two quotations, but it is dated 1860 (M.DCCC.LX.), and in any case is published by D. Appleton and Company, New York, not John Murray, London.

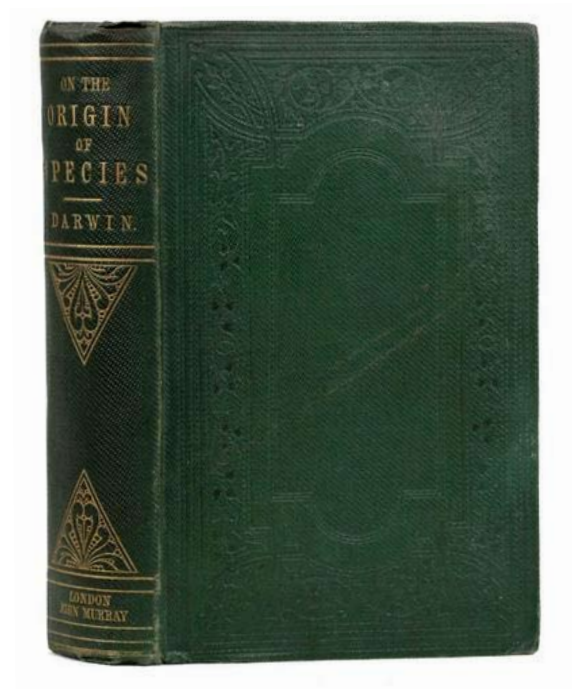
# Census Guide

## 2. Identifying the 1st Edition Binding (Choices: Original binding; Not original binding)

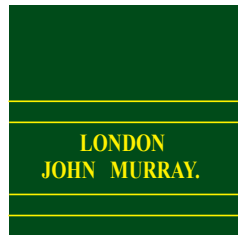
The original binding was green cloth with gilt on the spine and blind-stamped boards front and back (see photo below, courtesy Bernard Shapero).

Unfortunately, the binding is similar to the bindings of the 2nd and 3rd editions, and it is not unknown for a 1st to be re-cased in a later binding (in better condition) and this must be detected and noted if it has occurred. The following points can help identify a later binding:

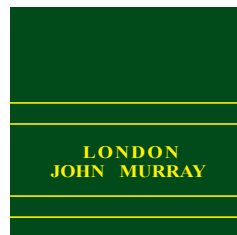
1. If there is a full point after MURRAY at the bottom of the spine, it is a 2nd or 3rd edition binding.
2. If the letters at the bottom of the spine are short and square (as opposed to tall and thin), it is a 2nd edition binding.
3. If the second N in LONDON is slightly lower than the other letters, it is a 3rd edition binding.



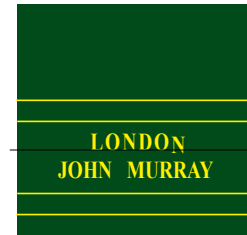
1



2



3



# Census Guide

### 3. Condition of Binding (Choices: see below)

The following definitions are published by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB). Please note there is no relativity to condition: a book is not in 'Very good' condition *for its age*. It is either in 'Very good' condition or it is not.

Please use the guidelines below to evaluate condition (a '+' or '-' may be added to any of the terms to indicate a grade in-between). **The binding and the book internally are evaluated separately.** It is always a good practice when evaluating books to err on the conservative side. Because 1st editions of the **Origin** are now 150 years old, few copies would merit 'Mint' or even 'Fine' gradings.

#### Categories

**Mint** Without faults or defects, unread, in the same immaculate condition in which it was published (Note: very few "new" books qualify for this grade, as many times there will be rubs/scuffs to the dustjackets from shipping, or bumped lower spine ends/corners from shelving).

**Fine** Approaches the above, but not crisp. May have been carefully read and dustjacket may have been slightly rubbed or spine ends slightly bumped from shelving/shipping, but no real defects or faults.

**Very good** A used book showing some small signs of wear on either binding or dustjacket. Any defects/faults must be noted.

**Good** The average used and worn book that has all pages or leaves present. Any defects must be noted.

**Fair** A worn book that has complete text pages (including those with maps or plates) but may lack endpapers, half-title page, etc. (which must be noted). Binding, dustjacket, etc. may also be worn. All defects/faults must be noted.

**Poor** A book that is sufficiently worn that its only merit is the complete text, which must be legible. Any missing maps or plates should still be noted. May be soiled, scuffed, stained, or spotted, and may have loose joints, hinges, pages, etc. Also called a 'Reading copy.'

In addition to the categories above, the Description field should be used to highlight important information. For example:

'Cover worn with a two inch split along edge of spine and front board.'

'Corners bumped, worn through, and turned in.'

'Wear to top and bottom of spine with small losses.'

'Recased with original spine laid down and new endpapers.'

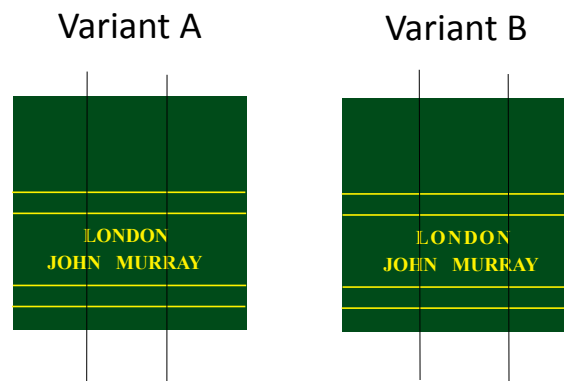
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#### 4. Binding Variant (Choices: Variant A; Variant B; Other; NA - not in original binding)

For original bindings there are two variants, the difference being the width of LONDON. In the first variant, LONDON at the bottom of the spine is 16mm wide; in the second variant, it is 18mm.

**Variant A:** the upright of the L in LONDON is above the space between the H and N of JOHN. The right-hand upright of the last N in LONDON is above the upright of the second R in MURRAY.

**Variant B:** the L of LONDON is above the right-hand upright of the H in JOHN and the right-hand upright of the second N in LONDON is well to the right of the upright of the second R in MURRAY.



If the book is in its original binding, but does not appear to be either of the two known variants, please select Other (it is a drop down list) and describe the new variant in the Description field.

#### 5. Binder's Ticket (Choices: E&R ticket; other ticket; no ticket)

In most copies of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition there is a binder's ticket on the rear pastedown. It is a small, white rectangular sticker. Printed within a border: BOUND BY | EDMONDS & REMNANTS | LONDON, with the EDMONDS & REMNANTS line arched. If Other, please describe.

#### 6. Shelf Mark & Location (write in)

If the book is part of an organized collection, please provide the shelf mark and location (i.e., C.113..c.8, Humanities). If the shelf mark is written on the spine (or on a paper label affixed to the spine), this should be recorded in the Description field as part of the binding description.

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## 7. Completeness (Choices: Complete; Not complete)

One of the most critical features is completeness. Each copy should be examined against the following description:

1. Front free endpaper, chocolate brown recto, white verso..
2. Half-title. Two quotations on verso.
3. Title page. Printer details verso.
4. Table of Contents, v-ix. Instructions to binder verso ix.
5. Pages 1 - 502 (includes index, 491 - 502)
6. Folding table between pages 116 and 117.
7. 32 pages of advertisements follow index.
8. Rear free endpaper, white recto, chocolate brown verso.

If any pages are missing (or have been replaced - i.e., new endpapers), it should be noted in the Description field.

## 8. Condition of the Book Internally (Choices: Mint; Fine; Very good; Good; Fair; Poor)

As with the binding, the book should be evaluated internally and graded according to the same scale. Here, issues like foxing or browning, tears, ex-library marks or owner's signatures or inscriptions should be considered (and noted in the Description field).

## 9. Advertisements (Choices: June 1859, 32 pages; Other; No Advertisements)

At the back of most 1st editions there is a 32 page catalogue of Murray's works. It is almost invariably dated June 1859. At least one copy, however, had an additional 4 page section dated July 1859. If Other, please provide details in the Description field.

## 10. Ad Variants (Choices: Variant 1; Variant 2; Variant 3; New Variant; NA - no ads)

There are three known variants of the advertisements and they can be distinguished thus:

1. The text of each page surrounded by a single ruled line.
2. No ruled line; on page 2 the numeral 4 marks the fourth entry.
3. No ruled line; on page 2 there is no numeral 4.

If there is a new variant, it should be fully described in the Description field.

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## 11. Special Attributes (Choices: Presentation copy; Association copy; Family copy; Other)

In any and all cases, details should be given in the Additional Notes field, as should other relevant information about provenance, annotations, or other special circumstances surrounding this copy. This is also a place to record how and when you acquired your copy.

## Submitting the Form to the Census

Only the **Contact Name** and **email** fields are mandatory, but please complete the entire form if possible so that we can build an accurate picture of the surviving copies.

Once you have completed the Form, please print the form and fax to:

The Darwin Census  
626-449-5720

or email:  
[dlewis@huntington.org](mailto:dlewis@huntington.org)

The Darwin Census/Darwin Online will publish only the ownership details that are authorized by the owner, and will not share email or contact information with any other organization.

Thank you for registering your copy of the **Origin** with the Darwin Census. The results of this project will be posted on *Darwin Online*, <[darwin-online.org.uk](http://darwin-online.org.uk)> for all to use.

# The Darwin Census

A Census of the Extant Copies of the 1st Edition of Darwin's

## On the Origin of Species

**Mandatory field**

**U.S. & Canada Form**

Contact Name

Title

Phone Number

email

◀ Your name and contact information in case we need to clarify details.  
This will NOT be published.

Type

University Library, Public Library, Private Collector, Bookseller, etc.

Org./Name

Address 1

Address 2

City

State

ZIP Code

Country

◀ Ownership Data

Enter one of the following below:

1. Do not publish any data
2. Publish only city/country
3. OK to publish all data

### Binding Information

Binding

Condition

Variant

Binder's Ticket

Shelf mark

Location

Description

◀ There is no limit to the length of the description fields. The form will expand to accommodate your notes.

### Internal Description

Completeness

Condition

Description

Advertisements

Variant

Description

When complete, please print this form for your records, then click SUBMIT to register this copy.

### Special Notes/Provenance

Special Attributes

Additional Notes

Print

Submit

If you have problems submitting the form electronically, fax to: The Darwin Census, (256) 715-1711; or save as a PDF and email to: [darwin.census@gmail.com](mailto:darwin.census@gmail.com)