

# HISTORY THAT THE LIBRARIES COUNT: THE PARTICULAR LIBRARY PROFESSOR OSNI DE MEDEIROS REGIS

HISTÓRIAS QUE AS BIBLIOTECAS CONTAM: A BIBLIOTECA PARTICULAR PROFESSOR OSNI DE MEDEIROS REGIS

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**ABSTRACT**

This article presents the history of the Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library, located at Av. Mauro Ramos, n.1344, in the city of Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. The study reports the history of the library, describing the creation processes, the construction of the physical space, the composition of the collection and the creation of the foundation to maintain the library and provide access to the public. Establishing an analysis of the importance of the library to the florianopolitan community, and describing the types of services the library provides to the community at large. The methodological procedures that guided the construction of the article were bibliographic research, documental research and interviews, enabling to verify the importance of the library for the community and fr the area of library science.

**KEYWORDS**

Library Law. Library science. History of Libraries.

**RESUMO**

Apresenta-se, neste artigo, a história da Biblioteca Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis, situada à Avenida Mauro Ramos, n.1344, na cidade de Florianópolis, SC. Objetiva se neste estudo relatar a história da biblioteca, descrevendo os processos de criação, a construção do espaço físico, a composição do acervo e a criação da fundação para manter a biblioteca e disponibilizar acesso para o público. Estabelecendo uma análise da importância da biblioteca para a comunidade florianopolitana, e descrevendo os tipos de serviços que a biblioteca disponibiliza para a comunidade em geral. Os procedimentos metodológicos que nortearam a construção do artigo foram pesquisa bibliográfica, pesquisa documental e entrevistas, possibilitando verificar a importância da biblioteca para a comunidade e para a área de biblioteconomia.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Biblioteca privada. Biblioteconomia. História da Biblioteca. Estudo histórico.

## 1 Introduction

This article addresses the history of the *Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library*, found on *Mauro Ramos Avenue*, n.1344, in Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. Characterized as a private library, the institution contributes to the community by disseminating juridical, political, educational e artistic information. The library possesses a collection of classical works, both foreign and national literature, and several fields of knowledge.

Osni de Medeiros Regis was a lawyer, teacher and a politician. Before acting in Law, Medeiros Regis was a technician's assistant in the *State Department of Statistics of Santa Catarina*, in Florianópolis. From 1942 to 1949 worked as Sociology, Philosophy and History of Education teacher in the *Lages' Institute of Education's* regular school, where he later acted as principal. Acted as Lages' mayor between 1950 and 1954, State Deputy from 1955 to 1962 and Federal Deputy from 1963 to 1971. In 1961/62 acted as the secretary of education in the State. Parallel to his political life, followed an academic career teaching Law in the *Federal University of Santa Catarina* (UFSC). The Center of Juridical Sciences' library and the Legislative Assembly of Santa Catarina's plenary were named after Osni de Medeiros Regis, in honor of his passage through these institutions. (REGIS, 2018)

Among the functions attributed to libraries along history, to maintain a collection that registers part of the written memory of social group can be named as one. In this sense, the library analyzed by this article preserves the bibliographic patrimony of Osni de Medeiros Regis, acquired along his trajectories in both professional and personal life.

The library's preservation, with the original collection formed by professor Medeiros Regis, is in the interests of the family as a legacy for future generations. The opening of the library, by the heirs, aims to continue to allow the socialization of its books and their content. Both professor Medeiros Regis and his wife, professor Maria Helena Camargo Regis, had always granted their students and acquaintances access to their collection for consultation and loan. This grant gains special relevancy due to the fact how poor were the university libraries in Florianópolis between 1950 and 1980. The acquisition of part of the books had in mind the consultation by students, not personal-use only. Some others were acquired in multiples, predicting loans and inevitable losses by no return. From these, the library is classified as a private library open to the public (REGIS, 2018).

According to Leibnitz (2017, p. 10),

The human being has a variety of motives to hold on to objects. Accumulating books and forming a private library is one of these. A person may form a collection by their need to support an activity to be performed or simply by fruition, for literature or arts, for example. This library may assist the performance of a work activity or serve as a gathering place. These private bibliographic collections represent part of their owner's life, for the selection of works show their preferences, the constructions of their thinking through their contents, a part of how the owner interacted with the world. Besides, personal libraries many times collect important works not easily found in other libraries of public access, by being old

editions, sold outs, or simply too expensive, therefore, in many cases, editions considered special. (Our translation)

This article intends to contribute with a study about the history of *Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis' Library*, describing the process of creation, the construction of the physical space, collection composition and the creation of the Foundation to maintain the library and allow for public access. Therefore, the main theme is the history of the libraries and in specific the private libraries. The problem that guided this research came from the question: How is the history of the *Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis' Library*, situated in the core of Florianopolis, contributes to the reflection about the importance of private libraries in Librarianship?

As the main goal, this work analyzed the importance of the private library of *Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis* and their interconnections with Librarianship under the theme of “history of private libraries”. Its specific goals aimed to investigate the library’s history; to present the organizational structure and the structure of its customer service; perform a survey on the Library’s collection; and research the library’s insertion in the city’s cultural policies.

The librarian as a professional and disseminator of information has an important role in the marketing of libraries. According to Leipnitz (2017, p.12), “Private libraries may possess collections of unimaginable quality and potentially useful for the academic community [...]”. Therefore, these libraries must be known, publicized and have greater attention from the field’s experts.

This research has been motivated by observing the importance of the libraries as means of preserving and propagation of history. Ergo, it is necessary to contextualize and present the history of Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Private Library to contribute and divulge and to better use its collection made of extremely important works to the history of the Law and related fields’ knowledge organization in Santa Catarina. In this way, it may contribute to researches in the Information Sciences and other fields of knowledge.

## 2 Methodology

The article is an applied and descriptive research because it exposes the characteristics of the researched elements in a specific study. As observed by Gil (2010, p.28, our translation) The researches of this kind has as primal objective the description of the characteristics that determines population or phenomena or establishes relations between variables.” Still according to Gil (2010, p. 28): “[...] among the descriptive researches stands out those that aim to study the characteristics of a group [...]”. Besides, this research is characterized as qualitative which, as said by Silva and Menezes (2005, p.20): “Does not require the use and method of statistical techniques. The natural environment is the direct source of data gathering, and the researcher is the key instrument.

According to Lakatos and Marconi (2003), no one utilizes only one method or research technique, in general, not even those known by them, but those most appropriate to that study. And, most times, a combination of two or more simultaneously. Both the methods and techniques must adequate to the study to be done, to the problems aroused and to the type of informants that the researcher must get in touch

This way, the methodological procedures that guided this study and allowed the gathering of data were:

1) Bibliographic research: utilized mainly to gather information related to libraries and their history. It had been gathered publications about the Library and Information Sciences in books and articles, the former had been gathered from the university libraries from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). While the articles were accessed from the database: Base de Dados Referenciais de Artigos e Periodicos em Ciencia da Informação (BRAPCI) and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO) and the search terms were “Bibliotecas”, “Bibliotecas Particulares” and “Bibliotecas Publicas”.

2) Documental research: served as documental source of local newspapers articles about the library, specially the Estatuto da Fundação which serves as a juridical shelter.

3) Interviews: procedure characterized by the gathering of subjective data, not published and that brought data about the history and how the library functions. This procedure guided by the oral history methodology and had participation from the employees and one the heads of the Foundation, Mrs. Isabel Regis, Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis’ daughter.

The empirical part included visitations *in loco*, with intentions of getting to know the location, its collection and access policies. The interviews with Isabel Regis happened on three afternoons, all within the library, where she spoke freely from a script of questions, which the answers were recorded with the interviewee’s consent. These interviews followed the methodological parameters from “oral history” and mixed a life history interview with a thematic interview. According to Karpinski and Montysuma (2009, p.66),

The thematic interviews are those that traverse primarily on the participation of the interviewee with the chosen theme, while life history focus on the interviewee’s interest on the history, including their trajectories from youth to the present moment, in which the person speaks about the various events conjectures the person lived through

In the interviews regarding this study, the selected theme intertwined with her life’s history, since she accompanied the historic process of her father’s library. In her effort of reconstructing the narrative from memory, the facts related to the theme interconnected themselves almost naturally to her life’s trajectories and past experiences with her father and the library. This happens because, as said Karpinski and Montysuma (2009, p. 66), “[...] the life history interview contains, intrinsically, various thematic interviews, since, throughout a narrative of one’s life, the relevant themes for the study are deepened.”

The first interview happened in April 20, 2018, when the interviewee spoke about the library's history. In this type of method, the subject holds the knowledge, the history and the memory, therefore, the interviewer must allow the interviewee speak freely about the subject. And so did Mrs. Regis according to the chronological sequence of her memory. This interview has been recorded and lasted 1h04min32s.

The second interview happened on May 4, 2018, began on 5pm and followed a pre-established question script about the collection and the library's system. Even though the interview had been mostly thematic, the interviewee had the freedom to speak of anything to be believed important and, from the appointed questions, the answers flowed freely, dialogued while having a guided tour. This interview lasted 35 minutes.

The third and last interview took place on May 7, 2018, and began specifically on questions about the library's collection and cultural activities in which the institution participates. The interviewee spoke freely about the subject, explaining all to be thought relevant and necessary, and this interview lasted 1h29min.

All documents originated from the *in loco* research are to be found under the researcher's cares, forming a specific archive that is the basis for the construction of this article. The oral sources archive received the treatments recommended by Alberti (2004, p.139-227) that discourses about "[...] treatment of oral sources" based on interviews under the Oral History methodology.

The interviewee agreed with the citation of her name, along the other terms of this kind of approach and authorized the content of her interview for the construction of this article. In the same way, the researcher compromised to do so with the ethics required by the Oral History methodology broadly discussed by Ferreira and Amado (2006), Portelli (1997), Amado (1997) and Pozzi (2014).

### 3 Theoretical Framework

This research had as the theoretical framework authors that discussed the concepts of the library. Furthermore, important works on the history of libraries have also contributed to the analysis and reflections.

#### 3.1 Libraries: Contextual and Historic Aspects

The Library and Related Sciences' Glossary defines library as "[...] Organisms that has as mission to collect and generate documents to be consulted: they have people tools that assists the retrieval of documents [...]". (ARRUDA; CHAGAS, 2002, p. 40). Another definition of library is Milanesi's (2002, p. 21), for "[...] the most primitive ideia of the library: the result of the almost instinctive desires and necessities of power to use an information multiple times to be made significant.

Castro (2006, p.13) defines libraries as being: “[...] a space of memory and safekeeping of textual materials produced over time in various locations and plays, even with all the technological advances, the role of guardian of knowledge”.

Referring to its history, the library precedes even the book. Martins (2002) narrates on what he named “evolution” of writing, of books and of libraries and, according to himself, the libraries occupied various social representations over its history. Ancient and medieval libraries, for example, represented sacred places with very limited access.

Up until renaissance, the libraries were not available to the profanes: they were more or less sacred organisms, or at the very least, religious, and those with access were part of some equally religious or sacred “order” or “body”. [...] it has been like this, since its first to last days of the medieval age, and its name etymologically means *storage of books* more as the place to hide the books rather than the place to have it circulate and perpetuate it. (MARTINS, 2002, p. 71)

In Brazil, according to Moraes (1979, p. 2) “books were rare in private hands, but numerous in Jesuit colleges and, probably, in other Order’s convents”. Because of this, according to the same author, is noticed in Brazil the existence of many libraries even at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the arrival of the Portuguese court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 the greatest change of this history.

Schwarcz (2002) tells that, while escaping Portugal from Napoleon’s pursuit, D. João brought with him his personal library in three consecutive trips. This collection formed the royal library, that later on, with Brazil’s independence, turned into the National Library.

Suaiden (2000), points out the relevance of the Public Library, once it can become a great center of information dissemination. This because this type of institution acts, mostly, to decrease inequalities existent in society, because public libraries are segmented into a market of products and services according to the communities’ needs.

Milanesi (1983) also approaches the public library as fundamental to the various social and economic questions about society’s development, for most cities own a library, even though not always overcome all expectations. It is expected that a library provides intellectual, moral and civic growth, while public ones allow for leisure opportunities.

The questions the book and the library fulfill important social factors, insofar as they perform the roles of preservation and propagation of both their memories. The library as an institution of information representation will serve users until end of times, because the library is a space where the human mind is unraveled by knowledge (GALDINO et al, 2011, p.12)

These institutions offer many services for their users, besides access to books and collection matters. As remembered by Milanesi (1983), public libraries do not function only to loan books for those who can’t acquire them, but to open infinite possibilities of access to information.

Given the above, it is believed that the library is a mechanism to promote learning, creativity, information and knowledge sharing. It is known that no library is the same to another and work according to their possibilities and needs, a library may work in benefit of their community by changing their attitudes towards life, promoting and fostering citizenship formation. Therefore, libraries' collections must meet its users' needs with quality and quantity, providing the conditions for effective functioning.

### 3.2 Private Libraries

Regarding the historic process of the libraries' constitution, Martins (2002, p. 343) states that "From the administrative and maintenance point of view, libraries distinguish themselves, evidently, in private and official". Other authors, such as Cunha and Cavalcanti (2008) and Schwarcz (2002) highlights the social role performed by the private libraries that are nothing but institutions kept by an individual or organization destined for their own use

The history of libraries and the dream to accumulate all thinkers, Works and sciences in a delimited space makes part of the western culture. In the name of this utopia, collections were idealized - private, state-owned, princes or ecclesiastical [...]. (SCHWARZ, 2002, p. 120)

According to Labarre (1981, p. 32), "Private collections increased in numbers and relevance along the 15<sup>th</sup> century". Although, as cited by Machado (2007, p.19),

Although not possible to precisely name the date when private libraries were created, since such a measure occurred gradually in private medium, it is widespread that they began to surge during the Christian Era.

Independently of how many private libraries have been created and divulged by their owners, it is noteworthy what is said by Moraes (2005, p.17):

When one studies the history of the great libraries of the world, the great national libraries that make many people proud, it is seen that they have been formed based on a private collection that got richer and richer by acquisition or donation from other private collections.

Therefore, private libraries have an important role in disseminating culture and written memory, whether by enriching the collections of already existing libraries belonging to determined institutions, or by disseminating its collection and making it accessible to the community. Private libraries, according to Leipnitz (2017, p. 49), represent

An important point to be considered in the history of the libraries and in their typology, are that private libraries that had always been a privilege of those wealthy enough to form collections. If in some cases the preference was to form a chamber of curiosities, many formed these private bibliographic collections so it could support the knowledge they sought to dominate.

A private library is a research tool and a source of knowledge. That is because, among other characteristics, the collection of a private library has been formed aiming to supply their



owner's informational needs, professionally and personally. As a public library, the private library aims to fulfill their user needs, even though, initially, that relationship is exclusively through the owner. It is an individual that builds his collection and develops it according to personal and professional interest, fulfilling the needs of its cycle.

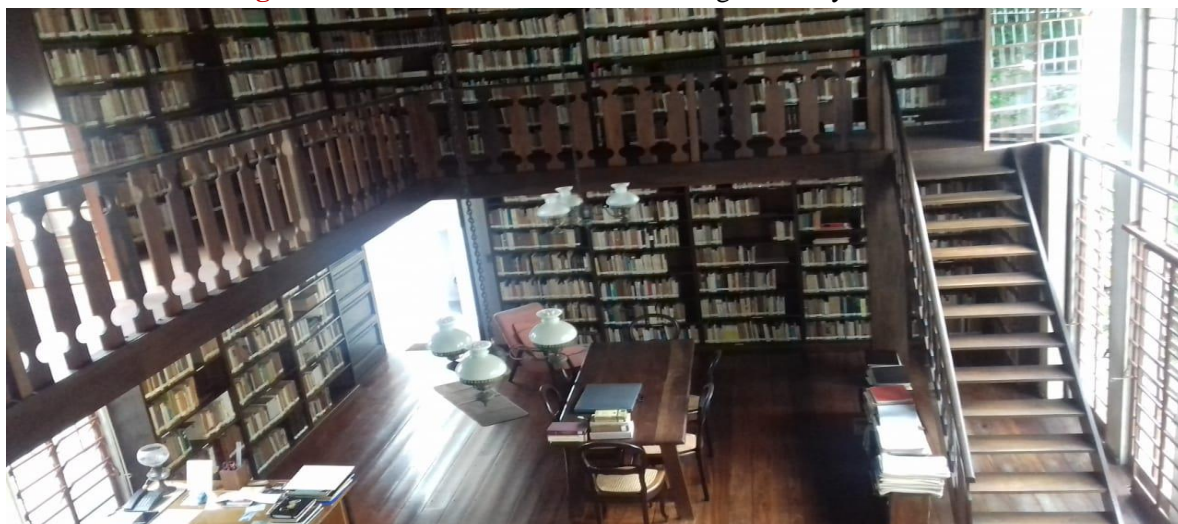
So at first, the users of this kind of library are the owners, their relatives, friends, colleagues and over time, the library's usability could be amplified to the community in which it is inserted. However, independent of quantity and profile of its users, both private and public libraries have the common goal to fulfill the informational demands and contribute to the intellectual and professional formation of citizens.

## 4 Results and Analysis

The Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library, is located in the building attached to the residence, in Mauro Ramos Avenue, 1344, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil. According to Regis (2018), his father was inspired by the library that had been used as setting for the movie musical *My Fair Lady* (1964), creating a replica to solve his problem. Once constructed, the new library gathered his books in a house in the Estreito neighborhood, continental region of Florianópolis. At that moment, the owner could gather all his collection, since he also owned a collection from the eight year in which he lived in Brasília as a congressman (1973/71).

The building with around 200 square meters and almost 7 meters tall, including a mezzanine, had been architected by Boris Tertschitsch and had its license for construction issued in July 26, 1973. Figure 1, below, is a photography taken of its interior and shows in detail the private library analyzed.

**Figure 1.** Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library's Interior



Source: VIDAL (2018)

Figure 1 shows the library's interior, highlighting the mezzanine and the front entrance. It can also be seen in the picture a study desk, reception desk and bookshelves that, altogether, host the 15.000 books that Prof. Regis acquired through his like. The library has sofas and armchairs for reading and preserves the furniture according to how the founder furnished

According to Martins (2002, p. 342), "All libraries are, in general and simultaneously, for 'conservation and for 'consumption'". This statement applies perfectly to Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library, which has as focus on conservation of both its collection and the space created by the owner. Furthermore, it allows for access from the general public, researchers and the community, characterizing itself as a library of conservation and of consumption.

Seven year past prof Regis death the Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Foundation was instituted. According with its statute, this foundation has been instituted in August 21, 1998, by the widow Maria Helena Camargo Regis and her heir children: Jorge Alfredo Camargo Regis; Osni Eduardo Camargo Regis; Maria Isabel Camargo Regis; and Regina Iara Regis Districh. With the creation of Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Foundation it had been possible to establish partnerships and raise funds in order to execute the organization and to classify and catalogue the collection. Two librarians were hired to develop this technical works and later in 2012, the collection can be accessed on digital platforms.

The library has started to serve the public even before the cataloguing and classification its collection, servicing only local consultation. Currently, it has no internal policies for its functioning and for loans, but the loans have the following protocol: the rarity is evaluated; it is consulted the work's price in the website "Estante Virtual" to know its market value of the book requested for loan; if the book is available for sale in "Estante Virtual" it is charged the same amount as a pledge; when the book is returned, so is the pledge. This pledge system, according to Regis (2018), is the means utilized to avoid misplacement of works.

To register oneself to the library and gain access to loans of some works, it is necessary to show a proof of address, identification and telephone number. The register is made manually in a specific book for this end. (REGIS, 2018).

#### 4.1 Provided Services

During the interview and the *in loco* research it had been possible to notice the existence of the following services provided by the Professor Osni de Medeiros Régis Library:

- a) Local consultation services: local consultation of the collection, handling of books and magazines;

- b) Home Loan: some works, upon pledge, can be borrowed;
- c) Physical space loan: the physical space of the library is wanted for various cultural activities. However, for the peculiarity of the building's aesthetics it is often used as scenery for photographic essays and to record interviews, movies, series;
- d) Collection exhibition: in 2017, UFSC's Center of Juridical Sciences (CCJ) promote an exhibition of some thematic works existent in the library. It were displayed works about the Russian Revolution, Soviet Law and the *Estado Novo*. This exhibit happened in the dependencies of UFSC's Sectoral Library of Law, which has the same name as the private library here analyzed;
- e) Access to the online catalogue: it is a service provided by the Pensa – B system (Sistema de Automação de Bibliotecas). The library's platform can be accessed from the address: <http://www.pensa-b.com.br/osniregis/servlet/leitor>.
- f) General public service: the library is open from 2pm to 6pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays the opening hours are from 8am to 12pm.

#### 4.2 Profile of users and collection's composition

The library's user profiles are very diverse. In general, they are students of many fields of knowledge, beyond Law, and researches from other cities. These, many times, come in search of books not found on other libraries. There is also the public that go for the cultural activities and the scenic resource. However, even though it is a very diverse audience, it is scarce. There is no record of users in a computerized system, only a book register and visit log.

According with the Professor Osni de Medeiros Régis Foundation (1998), the collection is composed of around 15.000 (fifteen thousand) volumes between books and magazines such as the following:

- a) Classical Greek and Latin Philosophy, History and Literature;
- b) Classics in Law, Sciences, Humanities, Geography and universal literature;
- c) Contemporary authors both national and foreign, in the fields of Law, Humanities, Literature and Philosophy;
- d) Aesthetic theory, history of art and plastic arts;
- e) Collectanea of national and foreign magazines of Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, Humanities and Literature Theory;
- f) Rare books in general.

This collection's composition had been formed throughout Professor Regis' life, reflection his readings, his personal taste and interest throughout his life's trajectories. This

collection is also composed by Maria Helena Camargo Regis' works, in the field of literature. About this subject, Leipnitz (2017, p.10) reminds us,

*This private bibliographic collections represent part of the owner's life, because their choices of works shows their preferences, the construction of their thinking and by the contents, how he interacted with the world.*

*Estes acervos bibliográficos privados representam parte da vida de seus proprietários, pois as escolhas das obras mostram suas preferências, a construção do seu pensamento e através destes conteúdos, uma parte da maneira como interagiu com o mundo.*

The Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library portrays his personal history and his tastes reflect on his professional interests as professor and politician.

## 5 Final Considerations

At the start of this research for the construction of this article, after many changes and adaptations to the thematic, the gathered data pointed to one problem: the hardship in finding works for the subject with the "Private Library" as subject. Much in conceptualized about the various types of libraries, but, from the point of view of Brazilian literature regarding private libraries is very limited, it is not found many sources on this subject.

The study had as focus a specific private library, Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library, and aimed to 'tell' its history, describe its collection and divulge the contributions of private libraries to the Library Sciences. The gathered data points to a contribution as a source of both information and research, since it is a subject relevant to the area.

Therefore, with the objectives for the construction of this article about the Professor Osni de Medeiros Regis Library's history, structure and collection reached, the reflection around private libraries in Library Sciences have been achieved. Besides, the article shows that, even in the singularity of its agency, the library is inserted in cultural activities in the city since it is wanted for events and contributes to the discussion on the missions of libraries. It is concluded that this is a pertinent and required subject for contemporary Librarianship, since private libraries have specialized collections that require to be treated, managed and organized by information professionals.

With all elements already presented through this article it is forcible to affirm that researches like this one should be in the development of other librarians. That is because of the History of Private Libraries still is scenario in construction and shows possibilities of growth and discoveries.

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