

MINERALOGY AND PALEONTOLOGY

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confuse and tire the average visitor rather than entertain and instruct him. This trouble was overcome to some degree by improved arrangement, reduction of the overcrowding, and the addition of dioramas and explanatory labels. It finally became evident that if the collection was to have a proper appeal to the public a further drastic reorganization was



EARLY MINERALOGY EXHIBIT

called for. Plans were prepared for this and a complete reinstallation has now begun. Under the new plan, each subject is illustrated by fewer specimens which demonstrate simply and plainly its essential features. Installations, too, are designed in a far more attractive manner. The multitude of specimens necessary to illustrate fully details that are of great importance to the scientist but of little interest to the average visitor have been transferred to a study collection not open to the general public. There they can be better studied by scientists or others who have real need to consult them, with the additional advantage that they may be handled as they could not if on public exhibition.

Owing to interruptions from the war, the current reinstallation has barely begun, but examples may be seen in the industrial mineral exhibit in Hall 36 and in the vertebrate paleontology collection of Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38) where the rearrangements are well advanced. When normal times return, reinstallation work will be resumed on an intensive scale which, it is hoped, will further improve this department.

FIFTY YEARS OF ZOOLOGY

By KARL P. SCHMIDT

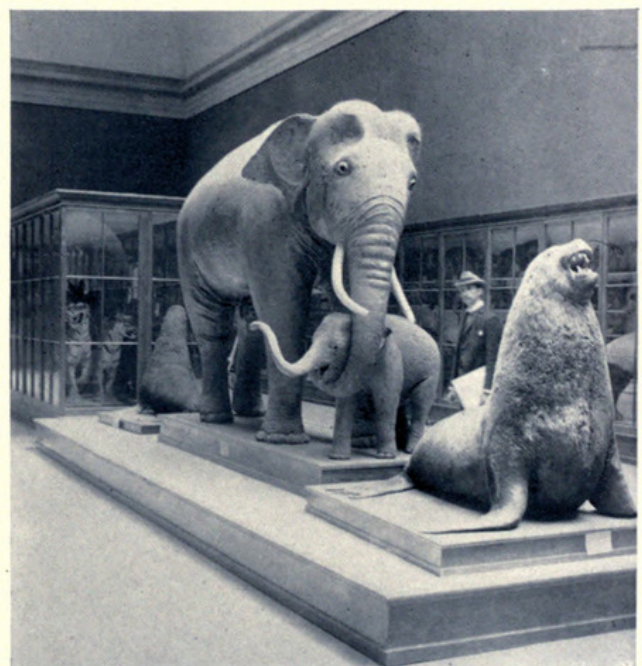
CHIEF CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

The Department of Zoology has grown from an original staff of four to twenty-seven, from limited exhibits of poor quality to a wealth of the finest modern preparations, from a few thousand research specimens to hundreds of thousands, and from Publication No. 1 to shelves of volumes embodying fifty years' research. Ward's Natural Science Establishment collection, valued at \$100,000, after exhibition at the World's Fair of 1893, formed the nucleus of the Museum collections. Included were numerous rare animals, but as the taxidermy was old-fashioned, replacement and remounting was immediately begun. Field Museum took an extremely important part in the development of taxidermy as an art after the arrival (in 1896) of Carl E. Akeley. During Akeley's twelve years of service, he made two expeditions to Africa, and after perfecting his sculptural methods in taxidermy, turned out a whole series of superbly mounted African animals. His contribution to the modern "habitat group" idea, in



Karl P. Schmidt

NO EXHIBITS LIKE THIS TODAY



which animals are shown with a reproduction of the terrain and vegetation in which they naturally live, was of first rate importance. On his departure in 1909 he left a tradition of high standards, trained associates, and most important of all, of experiment and invention.

Other significant contributions to museum techniques have been made by members of the Museum staff—by Julius Friesser for large mammals, by Leon L. Pray especially for fishes, and by Leon L. Walters in the invention and perfection of the celluloid technique for making models of reptiles and hairless mammals. The late Charles A. Corwin's special talent for painting panoramic large-scale landscapes as backgrounds for habitat groups seems to have been discovered by Akeley; Arthur G. Rueckert is his able successor in this department of mural painting. More recently, the trend in the exhibition program has turned to the explanatory and subjective kinds of exhibit, such as evolutionary diagrams, models to show significant anatomical features, and enlarged models of microscopic creatures which can only thus be brought within the scope of vision.

Research in zoology, though often carried on as an independent activity of the Museum, is intimately related to exhibition in a museum large enough to maintain collections and exhibits of world-wide scope. Research began with the appointment of a scientific staff of four—D. G. Elliot as Curator, O. P. Hay as Assistant Curator, and in a separate Department of Ornithology, Charles B. Cory as Cura-

tor and George K. Cherrie as Assistant Curator. The first zoological publication was by Hay, on the anatomy of the remarkable local fish, the bowfin. The first zoological expedition was by Cherrie, to the island of Santo Domingo. The first notable addition to the research collections was the Cory Collection of West Indian birds.

The research collections have grown steadily, by accretion from small gifts and purchases, through expeditions to every continent, and by the purchase and presentation to the Museum of notable private collections, such as the Strecker Collection of moths and butterflies in 1908; the Bishop Collection of birds in 1939; the Webb Collection of shells in 1941, and a notable collection of beetles in 1943. Through all sources, the research collections now number approximately 200,000 specimens of lower invertebrates; 400,000 insects and allies; 150,000 fishes; 50,000 amphibians and reptiles; 190,000 birds; and 53,000 mammals (including skeletons).

Expeditions, while often devoted primarily or wholly to collecting for exhibition, have also been planned in the interests of research, resulting in many discoveries and additions to knowledge. The Museum's more important foreign zoological expeditions have been to Africa (six), to Asia and the Pacific Islands (six); Labrador and Greenland (two), and to tropical America (sixteen).

The growth of the staff, with the interesting personalities inevitably assembled in a museum



MODERN HABITAT GROUP—AFRICAN WATERHOLE, AKELEY HALL

of natural history, would form an absorbing chapter in the history of museums in America. C. B. Cory followed Elliot as Chief Curator of the consolidated department in 1906; he was succeeded in 1921 by Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, who had been a member of the staff since 1909. On Dr. Osgood's retirement in 1940, he was followed by the writer, previously the Curator of Reptiles. Through the several regimes of the department, Mr. W. J. Gerhard, Curator of Insects since 1901, has rendered invaluable aid as unofficial assistant to the Chief Curator. The department is now organized into seven divisions, with their respective curators. Since no museum, however wealthy, could maintain specialists for the entire animal kingdom, it is important that Field Museum should turn to amateur and professional research associates for the study of its collections and for advice on problems of exhibition. Such associates now number six.

Building upon the beginnings in our fruitful first fifty years of exhibition, education, and research, there lies before us a great future program for a still more comprehensive presentation of the beauty and significance of the animal kingdom.

SOME NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE HARRIS EXTENSION

By JOHN R. MILLAR

CURATOR, HARRIS EXTENSION

A consideration of earliest beginnings, like the determination of first causes, brings one to the borders of the metaphysical. Whether



John R. Millar

the beginning of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension dates from 1911 when the late Norman Wait Harris gave the fund that made the Extension possible, or from some earlier time when Museum Trustees and President Stanley Field received the idea that an extension service was a proper enter-

prise for Field Museum, or from 1912 when a Curator was appointed, is a moot question of no great consequence.

Whatever date one chooses, a background of experience in similar extension services had already been provided by institutions of other

cities. Early in 1912, a special committee of eight persons (four from the Museum staff and four from the Chicago school system) investigated methods employed elsewhere. The report of the committee, submitted jointly to the Director and Trustees of the Museum, and to the Superintendent of Schools of Chicago, outlined the plan of organization and the broad objectives that have guided operations since.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS CO-OPERATE

With the appointment of the late Stephen C. Simms, then an Assistant Curator in Anthro-



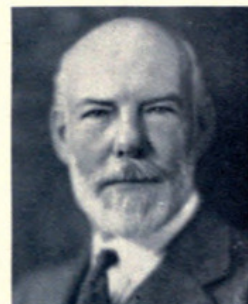
Norman Wait Harris

pology, as Curator of the Extension, a staff was assembled and the work of preparing exhibits soon began. The immediate task was to gather exhibits sufficient to inaugurate the loan service to schools, and to standardize equipment and methods to permit its rapid expansion.

In the solution of the latter problem, Mr. Valerie LeGault, a skillful and resourceful carpenter-preparator in the Department of Geology, must be given chief credit. The portable case he designed is essentially the same as is being used today, and a superior type of case for the purpose is yet to be devised. Similarly, the four scientific departments of the Museum co-operated by furnishing surplus materials and performing numerous services to launch the fledgling Extension.

By the end of 1913 eighty portable exhibits were available, and seven schools had made use of part of the material for two-week periods. During 1914, 207 additional exhibits were prepared, a delivery truck was acquired, and 326 schools were reached. From this point on, there was a gradual increase in the number of exhibits available, and in the number of schools borrowing them.

In its infancy the Harris Extension received considerable aid from other Museum departments, but it soon became self-sufficient. Staff members early began to do their own collecting and preparing of specimens. Some rare and



Albert W. Harris



Schmidt, Karl Patterson. 1943. "Fifty Years of Zoology." *Field Museum news* 14(9), 20–22.

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