

# B R E V I O R A

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### A COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS OF FISHES ASCRIBED TO J. P. KIRTLAND (1793-1877), IN THE LIBRARY OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE

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During the latter part of 1956, a pamphlet box removed from the shelves of the Bowdoin College Library was found to contain 61 uncatalogued drawings of fishes, nearly all bearing the signature "J. P. Kirtland, del." Of the drawings, all of which are in good condition, 57 appear to be originals of various of the illustrations accompanying a series of articles by Jared Potter Kirtland on the fishes of Ohio, which appeared in the *Boston Journal of Natural History* from 1840 to 1846. Most of the drawings are in pencil; a few are finished in watercolors; all appear to have been drawn by the same hand. Of the 69 figures accompanying Kirtland's articles, corresponding drawings are lacking for but 11 which constituted 4 of the 26 plates and 2 of the 3 figures of a fifth plate. Various bits of evidence indicate that these drawings were executed by Kirtland for his article. How might they have come to Bowdoin College? Probably through Dr. D. H. Storer.

David Humphreys Storer (1804-1891) and Jared Potter Kirtland had much in common: New Englanders by birth, educated for the medical profession, eminent teachers and practitioners of medicine, among the founders of medical schools and active civic leaders, prolific authors in diverse fields, both had a lifelong interest in natural history and especially in ichthyology. Storer was a native of Maine and a graduate in 1822 of Bowdoin College;



he moved to Boston to begin his medical education at Harvard University where he later taught for many years. Kirtland moved to Ohio in 1823 from New Haven where he had graduated from Yale Medical School in 1815.

Gehr's (1952) biography of Kirtland states that he was a member of the first class to matriculate in the medical school of Yale University, and that he pursued a long career as a physician and teacher of medicine. He was a founder of, and a proponent of legislative action which established the medical school of Western Reserve University. He was for most of his life a contributing student of natural history — of mollusks, insects, fishes and birds. He was the author of many publications and articles on subjects as diverse as medicine and horticulture. He was a correspondent of Professor Louis Agassiz and collected Ohio fishes for him. He was a frequent lecturer in many areas of knowledge, and included the duties of an editorship among his other responsibilities. He was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society at the age of 82. Legislator, teacher, physician, biologist, noted naturalist, Jared Potter Kirtland led a full and most productive life.

Indicative of their stature as naturalists is the fact that Kirtland and Storer were each appointed in 1837 by the government of their respective states (Storer by Massachusetts and Kirtland by Ohio) to assume an important role in natural history surveys of those states. Storer's report on the fishes and reptiles of Massachusetts was published in 1839 by the Commissioners on the Zoological and Botanical Survey of the State. Of his report, Storer wrote to Nehemiah Cleaveland of Bowdoin College probably sometime between 1855 and 1867, in a letter preserved by the College, "In 1837, Commissioners were appointed by the Governor and Council to prosecute the Botanical and Zoological Survey of the Commonwealth. The departments of ichthyology and herpetology were entrusted to me. I concluded my report in 1839 . . . In 1842, Dr. DeKay published his 'Zoology of the State of New York.' You will excuse me for copying from that report the following: 'In 1839, Dr. D. H. Storer, who had previously furnished several valuable papers on ichthyology in the Boston Journal of Natural History, published a masterly report on the fishes of Massachusetts. In this report, the author has enumerated one hundred and nine species, of which one hundred and four



are accompanied by original and carefully drawn up descriptions. This report is an invaluable document to the American ichthyologist and in every way worthy of its eminent author."

The Ohio survey was abandoned in 1839, after submission of the second annual report to the legislature. This report, which contained Kirtland's descriptions of the fishes of Ohio, was not published by the legislature.

Storer had been an active member of the Boston Society of Natural History for nearly a decade when the Journal of that Society began in 1840 the publication of Kirtland's (1840, 1841, 1842a, b, 1843, 1845a, b, 1846) descriptions of Ohio fishes. It was perhaps during the period of publication from 1840 to 1846 that Kirtland and Storer became acquainted; their friendship is indicated by Kirtland's (1845a, p. 32) description of *Leuciscus Storerianus*: "It affords me pleasure to dedicate it to my friend, D. Humphreys Storer, M. D., to whom I am indebted for essential aid, and many important suggestions, in arranging and describing our western fishes."

Storer's connection with the Boston Society of Natural History, and his own interest in fishes, would certainly have made him cognizant of Kirtland's work on the fishes of Ohio, and possibly it was through an earlier acquaintance with Storer that Kirtland decided to publish in the Journal of the Society. Kirtland's figures would presumably have accompanied his manuscripts to Boston, where Storer might well have received them, after publication, as a gift from Dr. Kirtland. Gehr (1952, p. 17) indicates that Kirtland's figures for the Ohio report were drawn by himself, and indeed that he learned to draw for the express purpose of illustrating his work on fishes.

Dr. Storer maintained a lifelong interest in Bowdoin College. As late as the year of his death in 1891 he contributed money and pamphlets to the College, and at various times submitted information requested for alumni records of the College. After his death in 1891, his daughter sent to the College several items in the form of books, journals and miscellaneous pamphlets which had been in her father's library. The box in which the drawings were found contained several pamphlets inscribed to Dr. Storer by various authors. It is not improbable that the drawings executed by Kirtland came to Bowdoin College with material donated after Dr. Storer's death.



In view of their historical significance, I have felt it worthwhile to inform ichthyologists of the location of drawings which I ascribe to Dr. Jared Potter Kirtland, early describer of the fishes of Ohio.

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