



## BASIS OF RESTORATION

Complementing Department of Zoology's new exhibit is this actual skeleton of *Mesembriornis incertus* in the Department of Geology's Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38). The skeleton formed the factual and scientific basis for Mr. Pray's life-like reproduction. In making the restoration, Mr. Pray first synthesized a skeleton modeled after this as a framework. Shown here also is the skeleton of a golden eagle to provide a comparison in size with *Mesembriornis*.

bird's superficial anatomy. Then when this surface was dry, the plumage was modeled over it, partly just with the casein paint composition, partly with balsa-wood feathers imbedded into it. The balsa-wood feather

forms were made by sawing the wood in curved planes on a hand saw and then splitting and whittling them into individual shapes.

The feet and claws were carved from tulip-

tree wood (commercially known as Carolina poplar) because it is strong and tough and does not split. Eyes always present a problem and are subject to never-ending experiment. Mr. Pray thinks that the eyes of this reconstruction are the best he has ever made. They were carved from thick plexiglas, sanded down smooth, and then glazed with clear liquid plexiglas. The iris was colored with tube oil colors mixed into fluid plexiglas.

The cariamia of present-day Brazil and Argentina, with its marked tendency toward ground-dwelling habits, its insectivorous-carnivorous diet, and its weak powers of flight, is the closest living relative of *Mesembriornis*. It is from the cariamia that the clues for coloration and feather formation in Mr. Pray's model are derived. The life-like result obtained makes one wonder whether to regret never having seen this wonderful bird in action ten to eleven million years ago or to be glad that there is no possibility of meeting it face to face.

## Bird Collecting in Mexico

About July 1, Mr. Melvin Traylor, Jr., Associate, Division of Birds, will leave for a two-month collecting trip in southern Mexico. He expects to establish his headquarters near Cordoba, Vera Cruz, and to collect at various elevations on the eastern slope of Mt. Orizaba. This is probably the best known historical collecting site in Mexico, and fresh ornithological material from the region will be a welcome addition to the Museum's research collection. The collection will also afford an opportunity to study the vertical distribution of many species of birds that are known only from the general area, since in a distance of only thirty miles Mt. Orizaba rises from an elevation of less than 2,000 feet in the tropics to 18,000 feet and perpetual snow.

## GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM

Following is a list of some of the principal gifts received during the past month:

## Department of Anthropology:

From: Mrs. Alice H. Gregory, Chicago—four costumed dolls and groups of dolls, Guatemala.

## Department of Botany:

From Prof. M. M. Lacás, Laredo, Texas—56 phanerogams and 38 cryptogams, Texas; Luis Augusto Grandvaux Barbosa, Lourenco Marques, Africa—28 herbarium specimens, Mozambique, Africa; Jens E. Nielsen, Chicago—31 diatoms; Dr. T. A. Stephenson, Aberystwyth, Wales—15 specimens of algae, Florida and California; Colin C. Sanborn, Chicago—20 cryptogams, Arkansas; Dr. Eula Whitehouse, Dallas, Texas—27 specimens of algae, Texas.

## Department of Geology:

From: Eagle Picher Research Laboratory,

Joplin, Mo.—8 by-products of lead and zinc, Missouri.

## Department of Zoology:

Dr. Henry van der Schalie, Ann Arbor, Mich.—567 specimens of land and fresh-water shells, Puerto Rico and Michigan; Chicago Zoological Society, Brookfield, Ill.—a Philippine tarsier and a python; Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Greeley, Madison, Wis.—2 snakes and 2 land shells, Wisconsin and Point Pelee Island, Lake Erie; Major Howard T. Wright, U. S. Army—3 lots of isopods, 6 fresh-water crabs, and 262 lizards, salamanders, frogs, tadpoles, and a snake, Japan; Loren P. Woods, Washington, D. C.—9 frogs, Maryland; Lawrence Curtis, Dallas, Texas—7 copperheads, Texas; J. C. Dickinson, Jr., Gainesville, Fla.—a coral snake and 5 blind lizards, Florida; Paul Springer, La Grange, Ill.—3 salamanders and 2 frogs, Illinois; Prof. E. McCallan, St. Augustine, Trinidad, B. W. I.—4 lizards, Trinidad; Roger Conant, Philadelphia—9 frogs, Maryland and Delaware; Dr. D. S.

Bullock, Angol, Chile—18 bats (*Myotis chiloensis*), Chile; Dr. Arthur D. Hasler, Madison, Wis.—11 fresh-water fishes, Wisconsin; Ross Tarrant, Wilmette, Ill.—7 fishes, Walker Key, B. W. I.; Dr. Henry Field, Washington, D. C.—100 fresh-water shells, Egypt; Mrs. Lucile B. Harris, St. Petersburg, Fla.—one amphisbaenid (lizard), Florida; Charles M. Miller, Los Angeles—3 limbless lizards (*Anniella*), California; Brother Niceforo Maria, Bogotá, Colombia—3 bats, Colombia.

## Library:

From: Mafalda Brugger, Basel, Switzerland; Col. Clifford C. Gregg, Valparaiso, Ind.; and Miss Marie Wilson, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

## Division of Motion Pictures:

From: Mr. Rudyerd Boulton, Washington, D. C.—film taken on numerous expeditions to Panama and Africa: expedition activity, birds, mammals, insects, native industry, dances, and other scenes.





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