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Department of Mollusks: Curator's Report 1888 - 1889

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Curator Reports
Mollusks
1888-1889
Annual Report

Report on the Department of Mollusks (including Tertiary fossils and recent shells) in the U.S. National Museum, 1889.

By Wm. H. Dall, Honorary Curator.

The force of the Department of Mollusks for the period reported on has consisted in addition to the Curator of —

Dr. R. E. C. Stearns, Assistant Curator

Mr. Pierre Louis Jouy, aid.

Assistance in the work on the fossils collected by the Geological Survey and other donors, has been rendered from time to time by Messrs. Frank Burns and Chas. B. Greene of the U.S. Geological Survey, by the permission of the Director of the Survey.

The need of the department for a person who might be entitled to the designation of an elegant penman, to write labels for exhibition and other purposes increases annually. The clerical force of the Department is wholly inadequate

to conquer the arrears of labelling and registration, a fact which will not seem extraordinary when it is realized that the collection contains at least twice as many specimens as any other department of the Museum, that of these not exceeding one half are registered and labelled according to the Museum requirements and that at any time we are liable to receive an accession large enough to employ our entire time for a whole year. I would earnestly recommend that an additional aid or at least a competent clerk be assigned to this department until arrears are made up.

Much annoyance has been suffered during the past year, and the work for several weeks interrupted, by the repairs to the walls of the building and the clatter of the carpenters on the floor of the main hall below the gallery.

These things in the ordinary course of events will come to an end, sooner or later, and the relief which a cessation of these extraordinary noises will afford can hardly be appreciated by any one who has not attempted to work in the midst of them day after day.

General Operations.

Work performed.

The work, as in previous years, has consisted largely of the labelling determination and registration of new and old material. This branch of our work owing to greater demands on our time from other directions has not progressed as far as in the previous year. Still under the circumstances I believe as much has been done as our opportunities would allow and it has been done in a thorough and efficient manner.

A considerable amount of time has been spent in putting in order the Lea collection of Unionidae for exhibition. Seven cases have been arranged but the

work has been brought to a temporary cessation pending the substitution of new and more presentable cases for those hitherto in use. It is hoped that early in the present summer there may be far enough advanced to permit of arranging the whole of this unequalled collection of fresh-water mussels of the world.

Good progress has also been made in cleaning and assorting the fossils contained in the Sea collection, mostly fine specimens from the European Tertiary, but which we received in a dirty and largely unlabelled state.

Accessions during the year.

The total number of accessions during the year is 46, a number somewhat less than the preceding year. The amount of material received under the head of these accessions is also less. It would have been wonderful had it been otherwise, since last year's list included the sixty-three boxes of the Sea collection.

The most important accession of the year was the collection of Mollusca and Tertiary fossils made by the U.S. Fish Commission party on the Albatross during the voyage from Chesapeake Bay, through the Western Atlantic, the Strait of Magellan and the eastern Pacific to the Galapagos Islands.

and San Francisco, California. This contains a small but precious collection of deep-sea forms, and a large number of shallow-water species of the coasts visited. The latter were particularly important on the eastern coast of South America where the distribution of the Mollusca is little known. The Albatross collections show that some of the Patagonian species reach as far north as the Amazon and that some of the Antillean species extend southward to Rio Janeiro and even further south. A special report on this collection is being prepared for the U.S. Commissioner of Fisheries.

The accession next in importance was received from Messrs F.B. and J.D. McGuire of Washington.

who presented on behalf of the heirs of the late J. C. Mc. Guire of Washington, a collection estimated by Dr. Stearns, who examined it, to comprise about two thousand species and perhaps five thousand specimens of shells, marine and terrestrial, from various parts of the world. This generous donation has been retained temporarily in the packages in which it was received, until the material now in hand shall have been administered upon; but, when time shall favor, it will doubtless add materially to our series.

A valuable faunal collection was received from the Auckland Museum, Auckland, New Zealand, and contains about three hundred

species with exact labels of locality mostly named. These with the very full collection received in former years from the Otago Museum, and other material derived directly or indirectly from private collectors makes the New Zealand collection of our Department extremely full and nearly exhaustive for the marine forms. Our chief deficiencies from a faunal standpoint are, and have for some years been among the African and Chinese forms, and those of southern Japan.

Among the smaller collections received which are worthy of particular remark are, a small

collection from our constant friend and correspondant, Henry Hemphill, representing a picked series of certain Californian species; a small lot containing some very nice things from Cape Sable, Florida, from Lieut J. F. Moser, U. S. N.; and two series each from Messrs G. W. Webster and J. J. White, collected in southeastern Florida and materially enlarging our knowledge of the geographical distribution of many southern species heretofore only known from the Antilles and the Keys.

Among fossils, the largest contributor, as usual, has been the U. S. Geological Survey, closely followed

by Mr. Joseph Willcox of Philadelphia, whose energy in exploring the fossiliferous deposits of Florida has been most untiring.

Routine Work during the year.

The routine work of the past year has been largely devoted to the collection representing the fauna of the south-eastern shores of the United States and adjacent waters.

This part of the collection is now wholly registered and fully labelled and arranged systematically.

A check-list of this fauna is now in the process of printing and when completed will serve as an index to this part of our Molluscan Collection. From a rough estimate this fauna may be regarded as

represented in our collection by about fifteen thousand specimens divided among some two thousand nominal species. This is probably the fullest and best exhibit of these forms brought together anywhere in the world, though the very completeness of the arrangement shows that it is not without its deficiencies.

Dr Stearns reports that his time has been largely devoted to the land and fresh water shells, especially of North America, and to the revision and labelling of material heretofore not administered upon. The collection of North American land and fresh-water shells is in complete order for reference, and the forms belonging to the South American and Antillean fauna

are to a great extent available also.

The material in both these sections of the collection as well as in the matter of exotic land shells, will be largely augmented when the Lea collection shall be administered upon and in a state for study.

Constant small additions are being made by correspondents of the Museum in different parts of the country.

As soon as storage room in the new cases is available, a large proportion of the material now piled up for want of space to put it away, will be provided for, and work on the remaining arrears be greatly facilitated. A proper series for exhibition purposes will be available

at the same time, and for the first time in its history, the Department of Mollusks will be able to bear its proper share in interesting the public by the contents of suitable table cases.

Information or assistance of more or less importance, chiefly in the identification of specimens, or supplying data for investigators has been furnished to the following persons, among others, the work often requiring in a single instance the available part of several days of labor and the writing of several letters.

The recipients of this assistance are scattered over the whole country, but as might be expected are chiefly in those parts of it where libraries and collections are least accessible.

Prof. Alex. Agassiz,
S. Arnheim,
H. G. Askev,
W. B. Barrows,
Dr. Stephen Bowers,
Theo. D. A. Cockerell,
Dr. A. K. Fisher,
S. S. Greeley,
Gen. A. W. Greeley,
Dr. W. B. Hartman,
Henry Hemphill,
Capt. E. P. Herendeen,
Prof. A. Heilprin,
C. S. Hill,
Dr. W. Kobelt,
Geo. F. Kunz,
J. B. La Penotiere,

Col. M. McDonald,
W. G. Mazzyck,
Thos. Morgan,
Lieut. J. F. Moser,
Hon. J. B. Moore,
C. R. Orcutt,
Prof. A. S. Packard, jr.,
F. M. Phillips,
H. A. Pilsbry,
G. H. Ragsdale,
W. J. Raymond,
J. M. Rogers,
D. C. Russell,
Prof. A. S. Shaler,
Dr. R. W. Shufeldt,
C. T. Simpson,
E. A. Smith,
Dr. V. Sterki,

Geo. J. Streater,
 M. A. Suchetet,
 Prof. J. B. Tilton,
 G. W. Webster,
 W. W. Westgate,
 J. J. White,
 Prof. R. P. Whitfield,
 Joseph Wilcox.

A total of forty-three individuals.

Special Researches.

The limited time for research afforded by other duties has been employed by the curator partly in concluding the investigation of the Mollusca of the expedition on the U. S. S. Blake under the supervision of Prof. Agassiz in the Gulf

of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. The second and concluding part of this Report, including the Gastropoda and Scaphopoda is now printed and forms a volume of about 800 pages with thirtyone plates. Work has also been done on the dredgings of the U.S. Fish Commission in the same region and on the voyage of the Albatross to California, a report on which is nearly finished. A new systematic arrangement of the Bivalve Shells, or Pelecypoda has occupied the Curator's attention, and the correlation of the Tertiary especially the Pliocene fossils of our southeastern Atlantic coast with the recent fauna of that coast is in progress with a prospect of publication during

The coming year. Dr. Stearns has prepared for publication a paper which is now in press on shell money, Prehistoric and Historic, a subject upon which he has made long continued investigations.

State of the Collection.

In previous reports I have stated why it is impossible to give the exact number of specimens, species, duplicates etc. contained in the collection. In my last report I estimated that the collection contained 455,000 specimens of all sorts. Since then about 13,000 have been received.

The total number of entries in the Museum Register or Catalogue.

for 1887-88 was 11,803; the number for 1888-89 is 6,323; the discrepancy is entirely accounted for by the interruptions to our work already mentioned. The total number of registrations to date, omitting duplicate entries, and numbers assigned to but not yet reported as used by Prof. Verrill on the Fish Commission collections, is 88,234 which represents about 265,000 specimens administered upon and available for use.

The schedule of registration follows the number of workers requiring the simultaneous use of several registration books.

Museum with your letter of October 22,
have been referred, for examination, to Dr.
C. V. Riley, our honorary curator of insects,
from whose I quote: "Neither of the insects
is injurious to orchard trees. The larger one
is the common Wheel-bug (*Prionidus cristatus*, Lin.)

Schedule of Registration.

Vol.	From	To	Total	Remarks.
XVIII.	87302.	87512.	210.	Volume not filled.
XX.	94585.	97300.	2715.	Volume not filled.
XXI.	98677.	98677.	102,074	Volume not filled
XXI	98677	102,074	3398	
			6323	Total

Appendix.

- A. List of accessions, 1888-9.
- B. List of Publications, 1888-9.

Appendix. A.
List of Accessions.

Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pa.

22155. June 25 1889.

1 sp. *Helix granum* Stuebel. Panama.

2 sp. *Helix caeca* Guppy. Trinidad.

Adams, C. F.

21509. December 21, 1888.

5 species, 16 specimens, of land-shells from
Borneo.

Askew, H. G., Tyler, Texas.

21967. May 14, 1889.

20 specimens, land and fresh-water shells
from Texas

22124. June 13, 1889
Shells. Texas.

Askew, H. G., Tyler, Texas.

(473.) June 24, 1889.

8 specimens of shells for identification.

Texas.

Auckland Museum; Auckland, New Zealand.

J. F. Cheeseman, Curator.

21169. Sept. 19, 1888.

Marine shells, 296 sp.; land shells, 2 sp.; and
freshwater shells, 1 sp. from New Zealand.

Barrows, Walter B., Dept. of Agriculture.

21385. Nov. 17, 1888.

4 sp. land shells.

Argentine Republic, South America.

Biological Association, West Cliff, Custer Co., Col.

Theo. D. A. Cockerell, Secy.

21877. Apr. 12, 1889.

5 sp. land and fresh-water shells from
Colorado.

Burns, Frank; Greenville, Va.

21364. Nov. 9, 1888.

Fossil land and fresh-water shells from
Quaternary marls.

Natural Bridge, Va.

Clarke, S. C., Marietta, Ga.

21465. Dec. 11, 1888.

8 specimens, *Helix albolabris major*, Binney
Marietta, Ga.

Cockerell, T. D. A., West Cliff, Colorado.

21990. May 20, 1889.

Helix costata, Müll (= *Vallonia cyclophorata* Huxey)

West Cliff, Colorado.

Hemphill, H. San Diego, Cal.

21289. Oct. 20, 1888.

22 species and varieties of marine shells,

2 sp. land mollusks. California.

Hitchcock, R., U. S. Nat. Mus.

21631. Jan 30, 1889.

Shells.

Japan.

21649. Feb. 6, 1889.

Helices in alcohol.

Japan.

Indiana State University, Bloomington Ind.
 Through Prof D. S. Jordan.

19889. Dec. 2, 1887.

Fossils from Owen's collection of types.
 Mississippi Valley. (Not received
 in time to go on Report of 1887-8.)

Jouy, P. L., U. S. Nat. Museum.

21290.

Helix peliomphala Pfr. 2 sp.

Japan.

Keyes, C. R. Burlington, Iowa.

20961. July 27, 1888.

Land and fresh-water shells
 Iowa City, Iowa. (In exchange
 for publications.)

McClain, C. S., Ensign, U.S. N. - U.S.S. "Alert."

14766. Aug. 21, 1884.

8 lots marine mollusks, collected during
the Greeley Relief Expedition
Greenland.

McGuire, J. C. (Estate of.) Washington, D. C.

Through F. B. and J. D. McGuire.

21253. Oct. 10, 1888.

About 2000 species, perhaps 5000 specimens

Land, fresh water, and marine.

Merriam, Dr. C. Hart. Dept. of Agriculture, city.

22077. June 4, 1889.

4 sp. fresh-water gastropods. Nevada and
Arizona.

Moser, Lieut. J. F., U.S.N.

21252. Oct. 10, 1888.

Shells in alcohol.

Cape Sable, Florida.

Critt, C. R., San Diego, Cal.

20983. Aug. 1, 1888.

Helix. 1 species, 6 specimens

Rosaria Mesas, Lower Cal.

22156. June 24, 1889.

Fossils, and 1 sp. *Amnicola*,

Colorado Desert.

22166. June 6, 27, 1889.

Murex californicus, Hds.

Tritonidea insignis Ree.

Lower Cal.

Pilsbry, H.A. Acad. Nat. Sci., Phila.

21520. Dec. 27, 1888.

3 species - 11 specimens, shells. Types of description.

From various localities.

22038. May 25, 1889.

3 species - 11 specimens, land and marine shells from various localities.

22106. June 10, 1889.

3 species, land and fresh-water shells.

United States.

Ragsdale, G. H., Gainesville, Texas.

21949. May 8, 1889.

Shells from Royse, Texas.

Raymond, W. J., Oakland, Cal.

20869. July 7, 1888.

2 sp. *Pleurotoma Hemphillii* Steens.

Carpenteria, Cal.

Rivers, J. J., University of California, Berkeley, Cal.

21406. Nov. 22, 1888.

55 specimens *Pisidium occidentale*, Prime.

California.

Skinner, J. E. U. S. Nat. Mus.

21054. Aug. 16, 1888.

Unios, fossils, etc. Windmill Pt., Va.

Spinner, Genl. F. C., Pablo Beach, Fla.

Through R. C. C. Stearns.

21262. Oct. 13, 1888.

Donax variabilis var. say. Pablo Beach, Fla.

State Normal School, Winona, Minn.

Through Jno. M. Holzinger, Cur. of Mus.

21686. Feb. 20, 1889.

Box of Unionidae

Mississippi River near Winona.

Streator, Geo. J., Garrettsville, Ohio.

21812. Apr. 1, 1889.

10 species land and fresh-water shells.

West Indies, Ohio, and Calca.

Swan, Jas. G., Port Townsend, W. Y.

21739. March 12, 1889.

Cypraea annulus, and *Natica* sp. in alcohol.

China Seas.

Tilford, H. J., Louisville, Ky.

21077. Aug. 24, 1888.

Fossil oyster.

Blanco Cañon, Crosby Co., Texas.

United States Fish Commission.

21699. Feb. 28, 1889.

Tertiary fossils collected on the voyage
of the Albatross. 160 (Cerro Id., L. Cala), 161,

166 (St. Peter and Paul Ids., Magellan Str.), 159, 167,

168 (Sandy Pt. Magellan Str.), 170 (San Clemente
Id. Cala.)

22169. June 28, 1889.

Albatross collections of mollusks and
Brachiopods chiefly in alcohol.

Various localities; from Norfolk to
San Francisco, Cala.

United States Geological Survey.

21989. May 21, 1889.

3 boxes of Miocene fossils.

Shiloh, N. J. and vicinity.

Warner, Mrs. E. S., Palma Sola, Fla.

22039. May 24, 1889.

18 specimens *Veritina reclinata*, Say.

Palma Sola, Fla.

Webster, G. W., Lake Helen, Fla.

Through W. H. Dall.

21680. Feb. 19, 1889.

Collection of shells.

Volusia Co., and vicinity.

22001. May 23, 1889.

Collection of Mollusks.

Near Lake Worth Inlet, Fla.

White, Jas. J., Palm Beach, Fla.

21791. Mar. 26, 1889.

49 sp. marine shells, Florida

3 sp. marine shells, Cala.

21968. May 14, 1889.

11 species shells, mostly marine.

Jupiter Inlet, Florida.

Willcox, Joseph, Tampa, Florida.

21619. Jan. 29, 1889.

3 packages Tertiary fossils. Florida.

Willcox, Joseph, Philadelphia Pa.

(453.) June 7, 1889.

2 boxes Florida fossils

(For examination).