

THE INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITY AND MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS IN THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MAMMALOGISTS

In the early 1900s, C. Hart Merriam had in full gear a well-organized Bureau of Biological Survey, a coterie of young people eager to do field work as well as museum research, a ready source of publishing, and a far-sighted, ambitious Hartley Jackson bent on establishing a society of mammalogists. Added to this scenario was the increased offering at the college level of courses in natural history, especially of the vertebrates, evolution, vertebrate paleontology, and others. Few courses in mammalogy, per se, were being taught at this time, but work with mammals was included in other courses. Also, museum curators were more involved with the public, giving lectures on mammals and related subjects.

Numerous persons in academia were involved. Joseph Grinnell was attracting students with both his enthusiastic instruction and thorough field work. Already at age 26, when he taught at Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena, California, he attracted such young men as Walter P. Taylor, Joseph Dixon, and Charles Camp. His influence was more firmly enhanced when Grinnell, with the financial help of Annie M. Alexander, established the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California in 1908. Already in 1909, Grinnell was giving a series of lectures on vertebrates, some of which were open to the general public, and this led to his special course in Natural History of the Vertebrates. His outstanding publications based on intensive field work attracted graduate students from many parts of the United States. Grinnell did not believe in "arm-chair" biology and his wife Hilda expressed this well when she wrote that "lectures Joseph Grinnell gave before his classes and indoor laboratory exercises he supervised, but it was in the laboratory of the Berkeley Hills that he was happiest, encouraging students to go direct-

ly to Nature for their inspiration" (The Condor, 42:17, 1940). Joseph Grinnell was one of the first to be asked to serve as director of the new American Society of Mammalogists and the only person to hold the presidency for only 1 year. He felt that this position was sufficiently important that it should be shared with numerous individuals, and thus chose a 1-year term.

Wilfred Osgood spent his boyhood in the then pristine beauty of Santa Clara Valley, California. Here he became interested in natural history, especially birds and oology. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Stanford University, but most of his training was under the influence of C. Hart Merriam and the young men of the Biological Survey. Some 10 years before The American Society of Mammalogists was formed, Osgood left the Biological Survey and joined the staff of the Field Museum in Chicago. Between 1909 and his death in 1947, Osgood's research with mammals, especially of North and South America, attracted many persons to visit and work with him. His kindness and gentleness, yet thoroughness, influenced many young mammalogists. Wilfred Osgood served as Vice-president of The American Society of Mammalogists from its beginning until 1924 and as President from 1924 to 1926.

The Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University with its outstanding collections has always attracted mammalogists. In the early 1900s, the curation of the mammals was that of Glover Allen who took over in 1907 at age 28 and continued until his death in 1942. Allen was truly a graduate of Harvard: AB, 1901; AM, 1903; Ph.D., 1904. Not only was Glover keenly interested in the vertebrates, he was skilled in many languages. Many persons who had the opportunity to work with Glover Allen found "he was unfailingly considerate, nev-

er impatient, never faultfinding” (Barbara Lawrence, *Journal of Mammalogy*, 24:300, 1943). He gave courses on both mammals and birds and had great influence on such young students as Oliver Pearson and David Davis. Allen’s advice was sought in the development of The American Society of Mammalogists and he served as Vice-president from 1924 to 1927 and President from 1927 to 1929.

The Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia was at the forefront in the development of biological science in the United States. Witmer Stone, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, served the Museum in various capacities from 1888 to 1939. Although he was interested in all vertebrates, his special interest was with birds. His book entitled *American Animals* influenced many young mammalogists. Witmer was involved with the American Ornithological Union between 1897 and 1923, serving on numerous committees and the Council. This background with the AOU served him well to help with the formation of The American Society of Mammalogists where he was called upon to be Vice-president from 1927 to 1929 and President from 1929 to 1931.

Many other persons in academia were involved in influencing students to work with mammals in the early 1900s. Henry H. Lane at the University of Kansas was one

such person. He served as Recording Secretary of The American Society of Mammalogists from its beginning until 1932. Dr. Lane routed many students to the university’s Museum of Natural History where they came into contact with Charles Bunker. Bunker had great influence on many undergraduate students. Those who prided themselves as being “Bunk’s Boys” included E. R. Hall, Jean Linsdale, R. A. Stirton, R. Kellogg, A. Wetmore, W. H. Burt.

Albert Hazen Wright was teaching at Cornell University when The American Society of Mammalogists was formed. One of his early students was Francis Harper. Alexander G. Ruthven was teaching zoology and directing the museum at the University of Michigan in the early 1900s and was responsible for bringing Lee R. Dice to that university.

By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, the time was ripe for the formation of a society of mammalogists. An eager and willing young H. H. T. Jackson had the foresight for such an organization and the cooperation of colleagues of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey. At the same time, universities were developing courses in mammalogy as well as collections of mammals to complement these courses. These ingredients resulted in The American Society of Mammalogists.

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