

The Director Emeritus of Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Dr. M. Graham Netting, continues to serve the museum in a very special way, as curator of a growing collection of nature portraits and memorabilia related to the museum. He details here the origins and present status of this interesting archival resource, which has been named the "M. Graham Netting Animal Portraiture Collection" in his honor.

I have long expected that anthropologists would find in some cavern frequented by early man a mysterious assemblage of objects tucked away in a stygian niche. These would be categorized according to standard procedure, as ceremonial objects, the catchall designation for all artifacts whose true function evades explanation. I can even forecast some of the items that would be represented in the horde, with exact composition somewhat varied by location — a piece of veined quartz, a concretion, several sea shells, an iron nodule, perhaps a gold nugget or piece of amber. And being ancient enough to remember traveler's curiosa in corner whatnots in Victorian parlors, I can second-guess young anthropologists and assert that early man, like his descendants ever since, suffered from pack-ratting.

The collecting urge is most catholic and unrestrained in childhood. In many persons it becomes submerged during school years and pursuit of a living. Some individuals achieve wealth and then begin to amass the great personal collections of art, books, or whatever that eventually enhance entire galleries in great museums; others, less affluent, specialize in inexpensive or yet unappreciated materials — the rubbish collector who salvaged Toby jugs, the visionaries who saved samples of barbed wire, the much traveled scientist who saved air-sickness bags — intriguing examples could be multiplied geometrically. Finally, there is a much smaller group so infected by the collecting urge that they jump from childhood into professional collecting with scant concern for their future — they become curators, or keepers of collections, and eschew both high salaries and the chance of selling personally assembled collections at greatly appreciated values.

Curators, however, and some advanced amateurs,

An element of greatness
at Carnegie Museum of Natural History



Animal Portraits

Bobcat in winter
by Ned Smith, acquired
with an Allegheny
Foundation grant.



for whom collections are the prime focus of daily life, rather than an off-hours hobby, have the rewarding satisfaction of utilizing collections for a variety of scholarly and research purposes of inestimable value to society. Any large grouping of related but dissimilar objects, either products of nature or works of man, may impress the eye, but no collection achieves its ultimate potential until it is studied and interpreted by successive generations of scholars.

For many years I had the personal delight of adding to the herpetological collections of Carnegie Museum of Natural History, and studying and publishing upon some aspects of these collections. Then I had the administrative responsibility for the museum as a whole and the new challenge of finding support for the orderly growth of all the collections and their utilization for research, exhibition, and education.

Now I am engaged as a volunteer in assembling a relatively new collection and also in preserving some remnants of the museum's history. Unlike other collections of the museum, vast in scope and internationally recognized, both the collection of nature portraits and the archival materials have only incipient greatness. They have already proved useful in many ways — for public exhibitions here and in other institutions, for illustrations in publications, and as source material for articles and lectures. They will not become truly significant, however, until artists and illustrators feel that they must contribute examples of their work in order to be represented, and until donors give or bequeath paintings, photographs, or memorabilia that cry for the long-term custody and scholarly utilization that only a museum can provide.

History, Nature Portraits

A few years ago it became evident that a number of trustees shared my keen interest in developing a collection of animal pictures. Over the years the museum had accumulated some illustrations of plants and animals executed by staff artists and a limited number of additional items had been acquired by gift or purchase. Such holdings were uncatalogued, stored in diverse places, and in need of matting and conservation care. In spite of such limitations the small collection had proved useful for current publication needs and some exhibit purposes.

Impetus for the development of an organized collection came in 1972 when the Allegheny Foundation made a welcome grant to enable Carnegie Museum of Natural History to acquire five superb water colors of birds and mammals by Ned Smith, well known to Pennsylvania sportsmen for *Pennsylvania Game News* illustrations and covers. Shortly thereafter a proposal was made to the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts for active development of a collection. This proposal received favorable consideration and in late 1973 a generous grant of \$25,000 was received and it was stipulated that the collection be named the M. Graham Netting Animal Portraiture Collection. I was deeply touched by this action and, since my retirement in March, 1975, have enjoyed devoting considerable effort to the building of an illustrative resource that will serve the educational, exhibit and publication needs of the museum in various fashions. Further development of the collection was greatly advanced by a second grant from the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts in 1976.

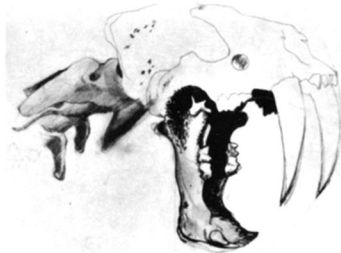
Staff members of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, especially John Brindle, have been particularly helpful in offering guidance on matting materials, quick-change frames, and archival matters. This advice was especially pertinent since it is hoped that the collection of animal portraits may eventually parallel to some extent the plant portraits at the Hunt Institute.

With the movement of Museum of Art operations into the splendid Sarah Scaife Gallery the basement storeroom previously occupied by Decorative Arts became available. The temperature and humidity controls already installed in this room made it ideal for the preservation of art work on paper and other materials subject to deterioration under hot, dry conditions. Eight aluminum racks for the storage of framed pictures were installed, ceiling lights over this area were changed to Mazda to limit fading, and a minimal amount of painting and refurbishing was carried out. Storage cases (plan files) for large, unframed pictures and prints were purchased and some old, museum-type base cabinets were adapted for storage of smaller items.

Initially, contemporary prints by leading bird and mammal artists were purchased since these are readily available at reasonable prices when first issued, but escalate rapidly in cost as they go out-

Sketch of the skull of a sabre-tooth cat, by Cliff Morrow, Curator of Exhibitions, Design and Production, CMNH.

Below — Charcoal sketch of a moose by Jay Matternes, once a part-time museum artist while a Carnegie-Mellon University student.



of-print. Guy Coheleach, Charles Fracé, Imogene Farnsworth, Don Eckelberry, Glen Martin Loates, Maynard Reese, Roger Tory Peterson, Arthur Singer, and Gary Swanson are well represented, and numerous other artists by one or more prints. Trustee Richard M. Scaife and Mrs. Scaife and Term Member Mark Rutledge were most helpful in selecting items to be added to the collection and wherever possible selections also passed the intensive scrutiny of museum staff members concerned with the group of animals portrayed.

One most fortuitous development occurred. I quailed at the thought of entrusting fragile works of art to the ministrations of an unskilled part-time worker. Happily, Mrs. Grete Evans, an accomplished artist with years of experience in cutting her own mats and doing art conservation work, agreed to work on a limited part-time basis. Mrs. Evans has catalogued the new acquisitions, cut mats for hundreds of pictures, skillfully cleaned long stored sketches by staff artists, and catalogued and arranged the collections. Her artistic judgment has been invaluable in establishing standard proportions for matting pictures of varying sizes, deciding upon frames, comparing the merits of different pictures, and other operations as well. Her enthusiasm for the collection has been contagious and many gifts from artists and private donors can be attributed solely to her efforts. It is a pleasure to pay tribute to the contribution she has made.

Scope of the Collection

In 1906, Dr. W.J. Holland, who launched the dinosaur collection at Andrew Carnegie's suggestion, and who made Carnegie Museum internationally famous by influencing Carnegie to underwrite the gift of replicas of *Diplodocus* to ten museums in national capitols, received six small preliminary sketches of Pribiloff Island seals from Henry W. Elliott of Cleveland, to guide a taxidermist in mounting a group of fur seals at Carnegie Museum. (Years earlier, in 1872-73, and subsequently, Elliott studied the status of the seal herds, made copious notes and detailed sketches in the field under harsh climatic conditions, and prepared an illustrated report to Congress that initiated conservation measures.) These sketches apparently whetted Dr. Holland's interest for twelve years later he purchased fifty-one Elliott watercolors for the museum. These reposed wrapped and unused in a museum

Butcher Series 1872.
No. 3.



David Hornsby's (Chief).

David Webster (White agent).

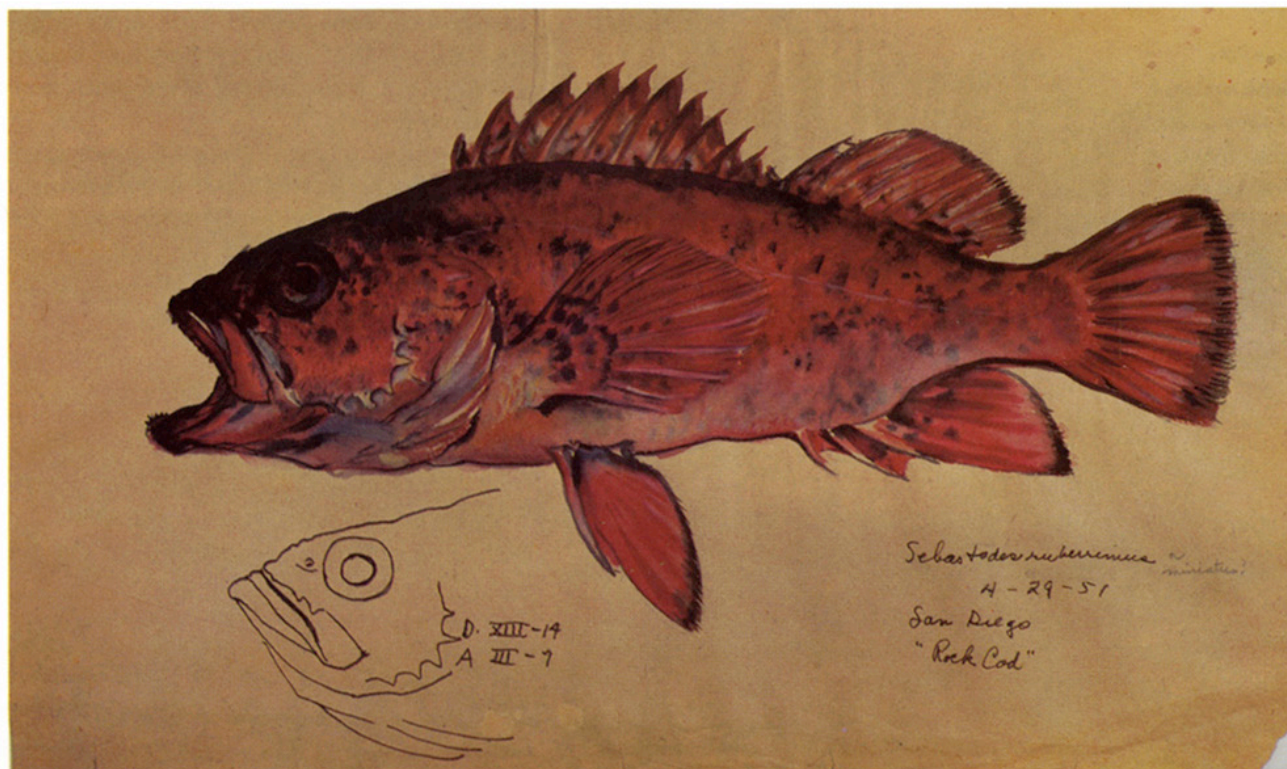
↑
Head of the Lagoon.

Rounding Up.

Bringing the Tolstoi "Drive" down to the Village Killing Grounds, three natives bring over 1000 blubber seals in this drive: 5 hours on the way: 12 AM. July 11, 1872, this drive also includes the English Bay seals. "Rounding the drive up": on the lagoon side; St. Paul Village. In three or four hours this herd will be "raked" and "cooled"; then it will be straightened out, and it will take 25 natives five days of smart work to skin the 1000 seals which will be sketched out of it.

Corralling the drive on the Killing Grounds, St. Paul Island,

Rock Cod, a watercolor painted in San Diego by Janet Roemhild Canning in 1951, and presented in her memory by her husband, John H. Canning, in 1975.



vault until the Portraiture Collection was started. Since then some of these splendid and historic watercolors have been exhibited twice in our Temporary Exhibits Gallery and fifteen have been shown at an international convention on seals at the State Department and at the Smithsonian Institution as well.

Shortly after the collection was started I had the pleasure of visiting William J. Schaldach, illustrator of many classic fishing and sporting books, at his home in Tubac, Arizona. Fortunately, he still had a few examples of his work that we were able to obtain — three pencil drawings of fish and one of a peccary, and three dry-points of woodcock and grouse.

In 1974, John H. Canning permitted me to examine the entire residue of works by his late wife,

Janet Roemhild Canning, and to make unrestricted selection to the extent of over half of the collection. Mr. Canning presented the 29 selected pictures, almost entirely of fish, the next year. Janet Roemhild was for many years the leading illustrator of books on North American fishes, both marine and freshwater, and we are fortunate to have such a fine representation of her work. It is hoped that this gift will set a pattern for other memorial gifts.

An unknown devotee of fishes meticulously skinned many varieties, mounted the skins on paper, and then added life-like colors. This collection came to us by courtesy of Oglebay Park. We also have several examples of ink impressions of fishes, on rice paper in Japanese style.

An unusual item acquired years ago is one of the

*The yellow phase of the
Timber Rattlesnake,
from a large collection
of color slides presented
by Mark L. Rutledge.*



huge copper engravings for Audubon's "The Birds of America." Our plate of the Frigate Pelican (pl. CCLXXI) and a hand-colored, original issue print from it, were shipped to Paris in 1960 for an extensive exhibit of Audubon's works. Many separate colored prints from the original, and later editions — some regrettably faded from too long gallery display in earlier years, are at hand, and one staunch supporter of the museum has promised to bequeath an Audubon elephant folio to the collection.

A London bookseller advertised 30 of the superb original watercolors, by six different artists, used as illustrations in *British Birds* and a telephone call snagged these for the collection, even though the catalogue had come by surface mail.

To our great regret we have no original painting by famed bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes, no late period original by George Miksch Sutton, no Bruno Liljefors and no Peter Scott, but famed wildlife artist Carl Rungius is represented by both oils and etchings and six paintings of hunting scenes by Ogden Pleissner are included.

Illustrations commissioned for use in publications by Carnegie staff scientists have added greatly to the collection: a watercolor restoration of *Archaeopteryx* by the late Rudolph Freund and a watercolor of tropical birds by Don Eckelberry were both utilized in articles by Dr. Parkes; and preliminary sketches and six finished watercolors by Jon Janosik and 30 pen and ink sketches by Carol Rudy were used in Bob Leberman's *Birds of the Ligonier Valley*. Collection treasures of earlier vintage are George M. Sutton's watercolors published in Todd's *Birds of Western Pennsylvania*, and Andrey Avinoff's watercolors of flowers, some 200 of which were reproduced in volume 2 of *Wildflowers of Western Pennsylvania*

and the *Upper Ohio Basin* by Jennings and Avinoff. We have in addition some sixty watercolors by Dr. Avinoff that were not selected for the book and have not been published. Happily, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Dollar Savings Bank have thus far republished in high fidelity twenty-four of the Avinoff watercolors in calendars for 1979 and 1980, thus bringing these flower paintings to the attention of a new generation of nature enthusiasts.

Pennsylvania biologist Dwight E. Sollberger, after popularizing his knowledge of flying squirrels in a charming children's book, *Fluttertail and Feather-tail*, made available Doug Pifer's black and white illustrations for the volume.

The collection is rich in sketches, working drawings and finished art work by staff artists — some now deceased, like Ottmar F. Von Fuehrer and Sidney Prentice; some who began their careers at the museum and then moved on to fame and fortune elsewhere, as Jay Matternes, Charles Ripper, Tom Duran; and some who are current staff members, Clifford Morrow and James Senior. Sketches and studies for habitat group backgrounds or murals represent Jerome Connally and Von Fuehrer. There are also works by scientists who were accomplished artists, such as Dr. Sutton and Dr. Avinoff, already mentioned, and a miscellany of illustrations or field sketches made by scientists Rudyerd Boulton, Bob Leberman, O.E. Jennings, Dorothy Pearth, and even the writer.

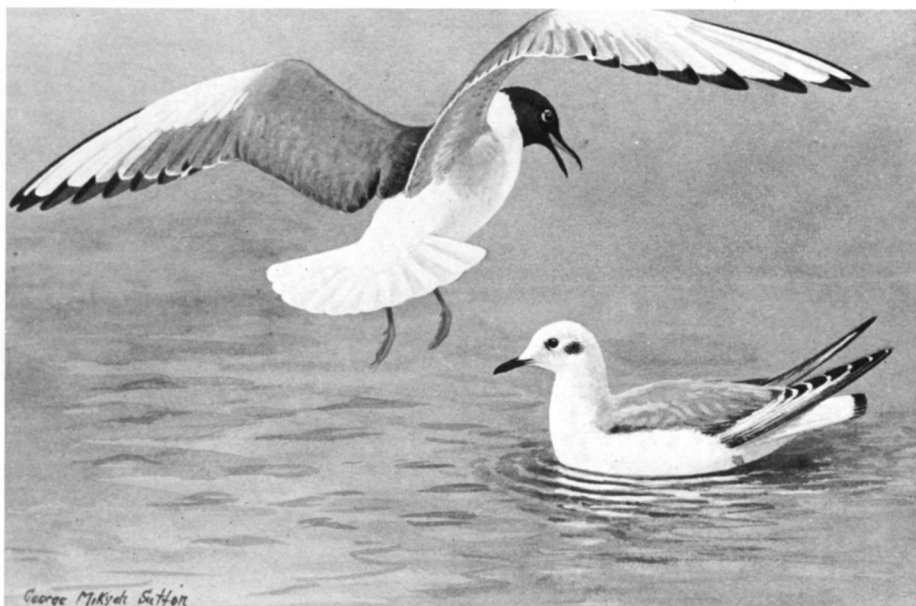
An artist greatly aided by museum ornithologists when he began painting birds, Michael Antonoplos, presented two large framed original watercolors portraying the male and female Ringneck Pheasant, and other examples of his work have been purchased. The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania donated 45 watercolors of local birds painted by George M. Sutton at the very start of his career, and hence of interest in tracing the development of artistic talent. Trustee Emeritus Lawrence C. Woods, Trustee Edward O'Neil and former Term Member Frank M. Preston have each contributed a variety of items to enhance the collection. Mr. and Mrs. Leon Arkus presented 72 hand colored 18th century engravings of insects, Director Craig C. Black added our first rubbing portraying Nepalese birds and mammals and Mrs. Leonard S. Mudge donated a print of a Whooping Crane by Roger Tory Peterson.

Raccoon and snake — sketch
by Jay Matternes.

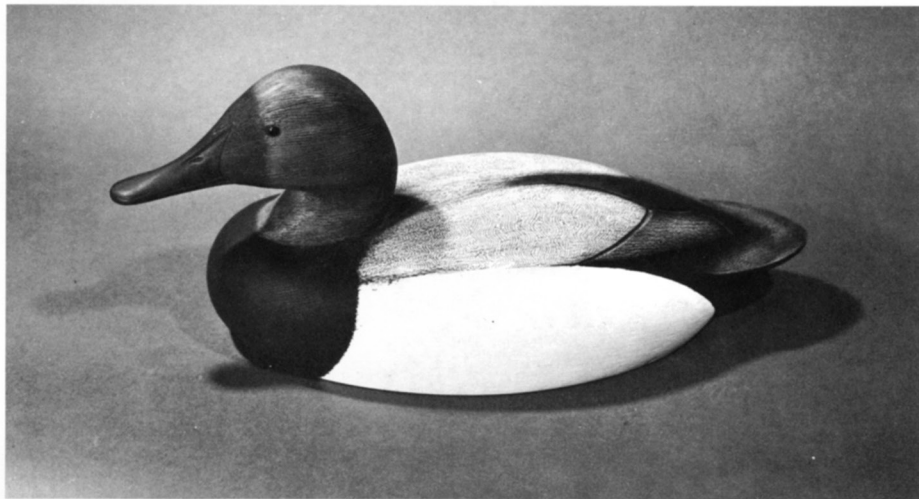


Although the Library of Carnegie Museum of Natural History is rich in the classic monographs of natural history there is a real need to have readily available for comparative purposes copies of volumes illustrated by pictures in the collection and biographies of artists represented. Notable recent additions to this small working library include two copies of *Carl Rungius, Big Game Painter*, by William J. Schaldach (no. 25 of the special edition autographed by both Rungius and Schaldach, and no. 622 of the limited edition) presented by Mrs. Peter E. Burrell, and a set of *Wildflowers of Western Pennsylvania and the Upper Ohio Basin*, given by Mrs. Stanton C. Crawford, which has already demonstrated that the color reproductions made by a local firm for

*A mature Bonaparte's Gull, with
immature on water — from a watercolor
by George M. Sutton published in
Todd's Birds of Western Pennsylvania.*



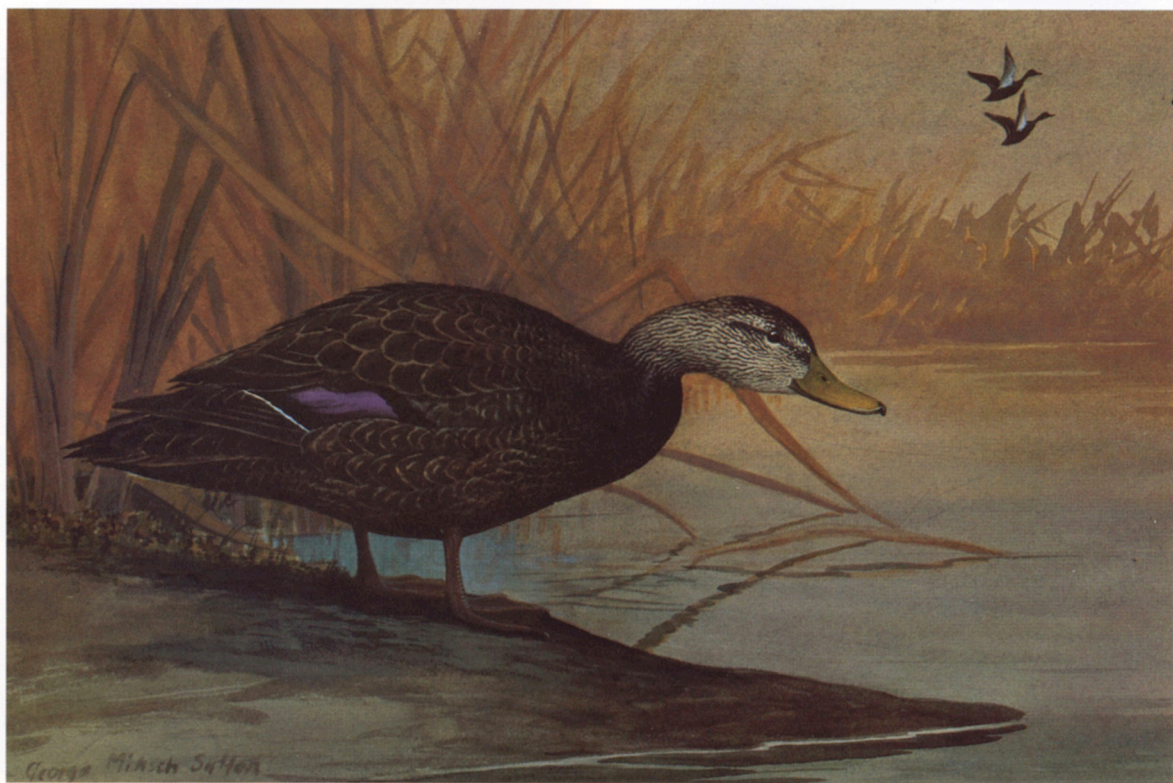
*Canvasback Drake, one of twenty-two splendid duck decoys
by Ken Anger of Ontario, Canada. Presented by Edward O'Neil.*



*Four kinds of pipits,
by H. Grönwold, reproduced
in The British Bird Book
by F.B. Kirkman, 1911-13.*



*Black Duck, by
George M. Sutton,
published in
Birds of Western
Pennsylvania.*



*Smooth Sumac, a black and white copy
of a watercolor by A. Avinoff, not included
in Wildflowers of Western Pennsylvania and
the Upper Ohio Basin.*



*A species of hawk moth, one of
73 hand-colored 18th century
engravings from Donovan's
British Insects, presented by
Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Arkus.*

the Conservancy's calendars equal, and in some cases improve upon the book reproductions.

We are indebted to Glenn A. Bickerstaff for the gift of two of his very fine wood sculptures of birds — a hummingbird and a group of gulls. We have also acquired five additional examples of his work — a killdeer, sparrow hawk, common tern, puffin and mourning dove. A ceramic lion by former staff artist Ottmar Von Fuehrer, a ceramic mountain goat by Robert H. Rockwell, and an otter in crystal by Olle Alberins are the only figures in these media so far. Trustee Edward O'Neil presented a notable collection of contemporary decoys, eleven pairs of ducks by Canadian carver Ken Anger, whose decoys are avidly sought by collectors especially since Mr. Anger ceased production several years ago. Although the quality of the foregoing acquisitions is high, it is apparent that many more three dimensional representations of animals are needed to round out the collection; Eskimo soapstone carvings, Steuben glass, Doty and Boehm birds, mountaineer wood carvings, and many others would be welcome.

Thus far exhibit photographs are few in number, but the potential for expansion is extremely high. Many thousands of negatives, black and white and color, and color transparencies as well, made by various staff members are on hand. Recently Mark Rutledge donated an important collection of splendid medium format transparencies of Pennsylvania plants and wildlife. Some exhibit enlargements have been made from these, and from some of my own transparencies, by the new Cibachrome process which promises improved resistance to fading. The collection does boast several classic photographs by George Shiras III and Norman McClintock, who pioneered night flashlight pictures of deer and other animals, and contemporary prints by Harold Corsini, Kent Armstrong, Paul Wiegman, and others.

Museum Archives

A very few museums have staff archivists; most have a little visited basement repository where the diverse memorabilia of directors and curators are squirreled away. Our archives are in the latter category although somewhat more accessible because they are housed with the M. Graham Netting Animal Portraiture Collection and collateral material. The museum's general photographic collection, the largest archival component, is an im-

portant resource but chronologically very uneven. The museum had no staff photographer until Leo Sarnacki was hired in 1964. Many staff members were excellent photographers, but their efforts were not subsidized by the museum and when they moved to other institutions their photo files went with them. Our only pictures of some museum galleries in earlier years have had to be copied from old post cards! In recent years some expeditions included photography in their budgets and we have excellent coverage — negatives, transparencies, and even movies, but others are visual vacuums.

The archives include, in addition, clipping books, biographical material on many past and present staff members, including portraits, and memorabilia — scant except in the case of Director W.J. Holland. Even so there are some treasures preserved. Our long-time Curator of Birds, W.E. Clyde Todd, although somewhat testy when his research was interrupted by a visitor with an inconsequential query about birds, nonetheless interrupted the rigors of Arctic travel by dogsled and canoe, by reporting to his colleagues in verse!

"For as I write a misty rain
Is falling, cold and dismal,
As if all Nature were in pain
And suffering abysmal."

(from *The Rubyat of the Labrador*, 1928)

If time and space permitted other anecdotal or historic tidbits could be cited, but I prefer to conclude with an entire, and I believe never before published letter from Andrew Carnegie:

January 11, 1897

'My Dear Mr. Brent: The receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, which I find upon my return from the country, has given me great pleasure, and I am delighted to know "The Andrew Carnegie Naturalists," — (the boy naturalists) — has honored me by giving it my name.

'The Institute has brought many surprises to me, and I think to many of us.

'The Music Hall has resulted in Pittsburgh founding a permanent Orchestra, and has enabled the People to hear Organ Recitals free.

'The Fine Art Gallery has astonished everybody who knows about it in Pittsburgh, and all who have heard of it in other cities.

'From the Library, of course, we expected much,

but it has exceeded our expectations. It is a fountain from which the blessed waters of knowledge will always flow.

'Last, but not least, comes the Museum, from which I confess neither Mrs. Carnegie nor myself expected one tithe of the genuine good which it seems likely to effect. We both think the idea of giving prizes to scholars for the best accounts of a visit to it, one of the best measures ever taken by a Museum; and, as far as we know, Pittsburgh is entitled to the credit of originating it. Your Club, no doubt, is the direct result of the idea, and I cannot tell you how delightful it is to see those who are now boys organizing such a Club as yours, for you are soon to become men, and upon you, and such as you, is to rest the progress and reputation of our country.

'Let me assure you that Mrs. Carnegie and myself can never cease to be interested in The Andrew Carnegie Naturalists Club.

'Wishing all its members a Happy New Year, and with full confidence in its success, I am

Always Sincerely Yours,

Andrew Carnegie'

Years later, Edgar Kaufmann told me that his interest in nature was sparked by his youthful experiences in "The Andrew Carnegie Naturalists Club," which was under the aegis of the museum's first taxidermist, Frederic S. Webster (the father of habitat bird groups.) Mr. Kaufmann also told me that he had tried years later to locate every fellow member of the Club. We can be certain that this experience led him to respond quickly and generously when Charles Chubb and I asked him to enable the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to outbid a developer for Ferncliff Peninsula, the nucleus of today's great Ohiopyle State Park!

I hope that these vignettes of two developing collections — nature portraits and museum archives may accomplish two things — stimulate present staff members of the museum to provide items of personal and professional history, and persuade many friends of the museum that the natural history pictures and representations they have collected and loved should not be dissipated, but should be given or bequeathed to Carnegie Museum of Natural History for the enjoyment of future generations of nature lovers.

—M. Graham Netting

to its members a Happy New Year, and
confidence in its success, I am

Always Sincerely Yours
Andrew Carnegie

Secretary,
The Naturalists Club,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The close of Andrew Carnegie's letter to A.S. Brent about the Andrew Carnegie Naturalists Club.

Grete H. Evans and M. Graham Netting examine a portrait in the collection area.

