

THE MUSEUM

The Linnean Association formed early in Bethany's history was an important adjunct to the museum. In accordance with a request made at an early meeting that a report be made of the collections in the museum, Johan August Udden, corresponding secretary of the Linnean Association (1883-1884), prepared an extensive listing he called "A Partial Listing of Specimens of Animals and Plants Preserved in Cabinets." About three-fourths of the plants in the list were collected by Udden in Minnesota and Kansas. The other fourth, comprised of grasses, sedges and other plants, was collected and presented to the museum by Dr. John Rundström. The mammals were all collected around Lindsborg. By appropriations the previous year, the Board of Trustees secured the collection of birds placed in the museum. Cornelius Larson was engaged as taxidermist and did part of the collecting. Other collectors were Professor Lindholm, Otto Hawkinson, George Solberg, Luther Dahlsten, A. Agrelius, Oscar Hubbard, Luther Swenson, Hugo Jacobson, David Björn, J. A. Anderson and others. Reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrates were also collected. Ethnological collections were made on Paint Creek. Dr. Udden also made a report on the collection in the mineralogical cabinet.

Professor Udden was the founder of Bethany's natural history museum in 1882, and he served as its first curator. Much of the material it contained had been collected by him.

From the time of its origin, the collections increased with each new year. This material was valuable for study in zoology, botany, geology and mineralogy. During the early years of the museum, a series of fossils, mostly from the Paleozoic rock of Illinois, were used for instruction in geology. The herbarium collection increased and was systematically arranged for convenient examination by students and visitors.

The numismatic collection, as early as 1890, already contained 400 specimens of silver, copper and bronze coins, old paper money and Confederate currency. The greater part of this collection was contributed by John A. Swenson of Lindsborg.

Professor Udden left Lindsborg during the summer of 1888 and returned to Rock Island, Illinois, to join the faculty of Augustana College, where he previously had obtained his B.A. degree. He still collected around Lindsborg whenever he had the opportunity to return to this area.

Professor Jacob Westlund became the second curator of the Bethany College museum. He taught natural history, mathematics, physics and chemistry, and also served as secretary of the faculty. Professor John Eric Welin, who joined the faculty in 1891, became the museum's third curator. He held this position until 1908, at which time this duty was assumed by Professor E. O. Deere, who had joined the faculty in 1904. He held this official position until his death in

1966, which was about eleven years after he had become Professor Emeritus.

The museum had grown from a small collection in the early 1880s to over 6,000 items, consisting of specimens of natural history, archaeology, and anthropology. The Paint Creek collection still remains in the museum now part of the McPherson County Old Mill Museum, but it is no longer complete as prepared by Udden. The next large archaeological find was secured from ancient cliff dwellings in northwestern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona, and consisted of 140 items of ancient pottery and 100 or more articles of more recent pottery. This has been stored in the Sandzen Memorial Art Gallery, and recently much of it has been put on display in the newly-built addition of the college library. The large coin collection, reworked by the late Dr. Pelham Greenough, is now stored in the Farmers State Bank in Lindsborg. Many of the articles obtained could not be displayed at the college museum due to limited space. In addition to the scientific collection, the pioneer and historic cultural collection became fairly extensive.

Among the pioneer and more recent cultural collections displayed were: the first patented adding machine, invented by a Bethany professor in 1886; a collection of coffee grinders; a variety of agricultural implements and tools; musical instruments, including organs; phonographs; household utensils; looms; ox yokes and many other items from pioneer

days. In 1939, one of Professor Deere's students, Leon Lungstrom, mounted a Hambletonian horse, 29 years of age, that had been used as a buggy horse. It was attached with harness to a very attractive buggy donated by George Lungstrom. Leon Lungstrom, student taxidermist, was granted an excuse from classes for one week in December 1939 for the purpose of obtaining from the government bison located in the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma. These animals--a bull, cow and calf--were mounted and placed in a diorama which displayed them in a native prairie setting. This work was completed by Lungstrom and other students employed on the N.Y.A. student work program. The painted natural background was completed by Donald Musick, who was one of the members of the museum work team. This diorama was destroyed when Old Main was demolished in 1968. The bison and the horse and buggy were saved; both are now on display in the Old Mill Museum. The preparatory work on these two projects was accomplished in the narrow fourth-floor room on the west side of the chapel archway. This room is where nearly all the taxidermy work was done during this period.

One day Lungstrom obtained a skunk to be mounted and exhibited in the museum. Instead of skinning it in the taxidermy room--the normal procedure--it was taken to the mechanical drawing room on the fifth floor for this purpose. A mishap during the procedure caused the scent gland to be punctured. The odor almost immediately penetrated to nearly

all areas of the Old Main building. Dr. Thomsen, one of the biology professors, came in and directed Lungstrom to go home, take a bath, and not come back until he smelled better. Classes were let out for the day. The students rejoiced, but the faculty did not share this enthusiasm.

On a Saturday during 1938, Lungstrom had finished a long day working at the museum and had started walking home when Professor Deere drove by, stopped him, and asked if he would mind returning to prepare some specimens just received. Lungstrom returned and Professor Deere explained that two men from Falun had mistakenly shot two pelicans, thinking that they were geese. When removing them from the burlap sack into which they had been placed, it was noticed that they were covered extensively with dried blood. The cleaning process to remove the blood from the white feathers took many hours. Skinning the birds in preparation for the taxidermy process was completed at 4:00 a.m., when a tired student finally went home to sleep.

The door to the taxidermy workroom, which was on the same floor level as the fourth-floor dormitory area in Old Main, opened into the central corridor. One morning Lungstrom, coming to the fifth floor for a class, noticed the lock broken on the door. Upon inquiry he learned that the evening before some student pranksters had set a tub of damp straw on fire in the basement and yelled "fire." This caused the students on the fourth floor to suspect that Lungstrom

had a fire in his taxidermy room, and they decided to break the lock and push the door open to investigate. One student living on the fourth floor had become so excited in the confusion created the previous evening that he placed his valuables in a suitcase and threw it out the window, causing considerable damage to both suitcase and contents.

After Lungstrom's graduation in 1940, Earl Gottschalk, who later became a dentist, continued as the museum taxidermist. He had previously helped Lungstrom work on taxidermy projects for the museum.

Professor Deere was very considerate of students working under him as assistants in the classroom and on museum projects. Occasionally he and Mrs. Deere would bring refreshments to the students who worked diligently in the preparatory or taxidermy room. This was especially true when long hours were spent working on the horse and three bison being mounted and prepared for display.

In spite of his busy schedule, Professor Deere continued to find time to care for the museum, adding new collections and performing other museum duties.

During its existence on the Bethany campus, the museum occupied several different locations. Soon after completion of Old Main in 1887, it occupied part of the basement area and was reportedly moved to the fifth floor in 1901. Museum items are reported to have been displayed in the Swedish Pavilion, and certainly the museum collections were located

someplace accessible for classroom use before Old Main was constructed. About 1935, the museum was moved from the fifth floor to the first floor of Old Main, directly under the chapel and above the cafeteria. This room had formerly been occupied by the Commercial Department. The museum remained in this location until the major part of its collections were moved to the McPherson County Old Mill Museum in 1966.

A short time prior to his death, Dr. Deere formed a museum committee composed of Leon Lungstrom, Christian Swenson, Carl Peterson, Jerry Shannon and President Andeen. Later Glenn Bellah became a member of this committee.

At this period, classrooms, faculty offices and other functional operations had been moved to other buildings on the Bethany campus; Old Main was becoming completely vacated. This encouraged vandalism and theft, which continued although the Old Main doors were locked at night. Antique collectors were on the prowl. In one instance someone had spoken for Professor Deere's office chair, and when this man came to get it, a thief had already removed the chair. The continued vandalism prompted immediate attention and action by the museum committee. Professor Bellah and Professor Swenson were asked to take responsibility to inventory and prepare the museum contents for safe removal as soon as possible. Negotiations were at that time in progress with Tib Anderson, Director of the McPherson County Old Mill Museum, to move the bulk of the museum's material to the newly established county

museum. An agreement acceptable to both county and school officials was soon finalized.

Both Bellah and Swenson worked diligently to complete this project during the summer of 1966. They encountered some difficulties. A leaky roof caused rain to penetrate the museum ceiling so that it became necessary to move museum items often and to keep buckets in place to catch the dripping water. Unfortunately for this operation, showers came fairly often at this time. They were also plagued with vandalism and theft at night. Several times while working on this project they experienced theft of items which they had inventoried the day before. Much credit is due these two men in saving this collection which otherwise would have suffered great loss. Also, Dr. Deere displayed splendid foresight in forming a responsible organization that would carry on after his departure.

As already mentioned, the Arizona and New Mexico Indian pottery collection was moved to the Sandzen Memorial Art Gallery for storage and occasional display. An inventory of the collection confirmed it to be of considerable value. The coin collection was sent to Farmers State Bank for storage. Another inventory was made of this collection while it was stored at the bank. An Edison phonograph with cylinder-type records was given to the Bethany College Music Department, and it was later either stolen or lost. With the exception of a small number of items retained in the Nelson Science

Hall for display in showcases, the remainder of the collection was sent to the McPherson County Old Mill Museum to be placed on loan for ten years with the possible opportunity for renewal of the loan agreement. The second renewal agreement did not run the full term before the Bethany College Board of Directors donated the items to the county museum with the stipulation in the contract that if the museum is ever discontinued or moved out of Lindsborg, ownership of the items donated will revert back to Bethany College.

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Tib Anderson, museum director at the Old Mill Museum, together with dedicated volunteer workers, Green Thumbers, as well as with valuable assistance from the Smoky Valley Historical Society, brought about a rapid growth and development of the county museum. Tib Anderson retired during the summer of 1980.

Christian Swenson, Leon Lungstrom and Howard Patrick became co-directors, supposedly on a temporary basis until the right director could be found. They worked remarkably well as a team, because the skills and abiliites of each would complement the abilities and skills of the other two members. These three men continued as co-directors until 1984, with continued progress and development. Jeanne Mogenson, who by this time had achieved valuable experience while serving as secretary and assistant director, became the new full-time director in 1984 and served in this capacity

until her resignation in 1986. She was followed as director by Dorman Lehman, who assumed his duties during the summer of that year. This last transition was carried out with ease because Lenora Lynam, employed by the museum for several years, was well acquainted with the institution's administrative procedure. This was of tremendous help to the new administrator, who was getting acquainted with his new surroundings.

Leon Lungstrom came back on limited duty to take care of trees and weed removal in the picnic area and campground during the summers of 1986 and 1987. At the present time Lungstrom and Swenson are serving on the museum's board of directors.