

Bell-Barnes Trilobite Collection Moves to Smithsonian

In April 1972 negotiations were completed between the Smithsonian Institution and Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin, for the permanent transfer of a major collection of fossils from Austin to Washington, D. C. The core of the collection consists of approximately eight-hundred primary types, mostly trilobites, and over five-thousand other lots of fossils from the Moore Hollow Group (Middle Cambrian-lowest Ordovician) of the Llano Uplift region of central Texas.

The type collections include material studied by Palmer (1954, J. Paleo., 28:6), Wilson (1948, J. Paleo., 22:1; 1949, J. Paleo., 23:1), Bell and Ellinwood (1962, J. Paleo., 36:3), Winston and Nicholls (1967, J. Paleo., 41:1), and Longacre (1970, Paleo. Soc., Mem. 4). Also included are the nonprimary-type illustrated specimen from the Arbuckle Mountains which were studied by Stitt (1971, Okla. Geol. Sur. Bull. 110). In addition, the transferred material includes some reference collections from the Ellenburger Group of central Texas; Cambrian-aged fossiliferous boulders from the Marathon Basin, Texas; Cambrian inarticulate brachiopods; some conodonts and fusulinids from several theses at the University of Texas; and, other miscellaneous collections.

The Department of Paleobiology plans to publish a list in the near future of all type specimens showing the old specimen numbers and new National Museum catalogue numbers.

The major portion of the Texas collections was collected under the direction of Dr. Virgil E. Barnes, Bureau of Economic Geology, beginning in 1939 in conjunction with a comprehensive regional study of Cambrian and Ordovician rocks of central Texas. Professor W. Charles Bell became associated with the project during the early 1940's and, in cooperation with Barnes, provided advise on paleontological aspects of the Moore Hollow Group study. For the succeeding thirty years Professor Bell gathered a wealth of knowledge on the paleontology of the Moore Hollow Group through his own studies and through his direction of numerous graduate students who completed dissertations on various parts of the Moore Hollow Group biota. The joint efforts of Barnes and Bell, and the capable supporting work by graduate students, has resulted in the accumulation and integration of stratigraphic and paleontological information for the Cambrian of the Llano Uplift region on a scale that has not been exceeded for any other areas of the United States. In recognition of this achievement and the importance of the Moore Hollow Group fossils as an integrated collection, the material has been officially designated the "Bell-Barnes Trilobite Collection" and will be housed as a separate unit within the Cambrian trilobite collections of the Department of Paleobiology, National Museum of Natural History.

The acquisition of a collection of fossils as large as the Bell-Barnes Collection involves many administrative and logistical problems. The transfer was greatly aided in this respect by the cooperation of the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Texas at Austin; the Texas Memorial Museum; the U. S. Geological Survey; and especially by the individual efforts of Dr. Virgil E. Barnes and Professor W. Charles Bell.

Requests for more information or loans should be directed to the Office of Collection Management, Department of Paleobiology, Room E-206 Natural History Museum Building, Washington, D. C. 20560.

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