

September 23, 1963

Professor Clark Hubbs  
Biology Department  
University of Texas  
Austin, Texas

Dear Clark:

One of my sharp-eyed students of Rice University discovered an unusual fossil last year, while we were on a field trip in connection with the course I am teaching at Rice. The fossil came from the Middle Eocene Weches Formation from a locality in Leon County, <sup>Texas</sup> that has been visited by me frequently. As this fossil is the first of its kind to be found, it is evidently very rare.

After much searching of the literature, it has now been recognized as one of the bony scutes from the lateral row of scutes on the body of Acipenser. Fossil sturgeons are very rare, indeed, and usually represented by one or a few scutes, at best. Nevertheless, they are rather important as a record of the antiquity of the genus. As far as I know, no Eocene Acipenser has been recorded from North America. In England, where meticulous collecting of fossils has been going on for more than 160 years, only a few scutes and a spine have been found in the Eocene (compare White, E. I., 1931, *The Vertebrate Faunas of the English Eocene*: British Museum, v. 1, p. 75-77, figs. 117-120; and Anonymous, 1963, *British Cenozoic fossils*: British Museum, 2nd edition, p. 88, pl. 29, fig. 4). The Texas specimen needs to be described to furnish a fossil record for North America. Incidentally, the specimen came from marine glauconite marl deposited a good distance from the nearest shore.

In connection with this work I would like to ask you several questions: (1) Where can I obtain some lateral bony scutes of Acipenser and Scaphirhynchus? (2) Where can I find in the literature a detailed description of these scutes, so that I can tell which is the anterior and which is the dorsal edge of the scutes? What I have seen of the literature, so far, is rather generalized as to the scutes. (3) Do you happen to know of any fossil North American Acipenser or Scaphirhynchus?

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Professor Clark Hubbs

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It was a pleasure meeting you in Washington. Too bad these congresses are so organized that one can not visit with people for a sufficient time.

Best wishes.

Yours,

H. B. Stenzel

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