

U. S. National Museum
Room 405
Washington 25, D. C.
October 25, 1949

Dr. H. B. Stenzel
Bureau of Economic Geology
Austin, Texas

Dear Dr. Stenzel:

Dr. Knight and I have been cussing and discussing the loose way the authors of books on evolution have been using geologic ranges of mollusk genera. Simpson's *Tempo and Mode of Evolution* is a classical example of what we mean. On page 132 he claims that the "collective genera" Nucula, Leda, Modiola, Avicula (or Pteria), Lima, and Ostrea first appear in the Carboniferous or earlier. What does he mean by collective genera? He considers them as genera on his graphs. How can he draw truthful conclusions from such erroneous data?

Knight and I have been considering putting a note in *Evolution* pointing out these fallacies. What do you think of the idea?

I have one favor to ask? Can you tell me how far back in time the genus Ostrea occurs? I am interested in Ostrea, sensu lato (Ostrea and its various subgenera if any). I have a hunch that Simpson obtained his information from Zittel. The note we hope to publish will be in a nutshell a warning to biologists to be careful about paleontologic data which is out of date.

Any help you can give us will be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Dave