

College Station, Texas
August 24, 1938

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

Dear Stenzel:

In answer to your request for information concerning the museum at A. and M. College, the following facts outline briefly the situation.

One of the distinguished professorships, involving a biennial stipend of ten thousand dollars was set aside to cover my work. One half goes for my salary for two years and the other half is to be spent on the Mark Francis Collection of Fossil Vertebrates. As you know the Francis collection, the O. M. Ball collection of fossil plants, and the Tracy herbarium were moved into the small building, formerly occupied by the serum laboratory. Our quarters are not large, but surprisingly enough they do make a fairly good museum. There is sufficient office space and a good laboratory for vertebrate preparation. The herbarium has one large room with the storage cases, another well lighted work room and a small store room. For the fossil plants there is a small exhibition room and a laboratory. The larger part of the display room is, of course, given over to the vertebrates. Our greatest need, at present, is storage facilities of the proper kind. Our collection is exhibited in forty-two cases of all types, some good but mostly old show cases discarded by other departments.

Our present exhibits are poor, there is little order or arrangement to them. Labels, charts, and diagrams are needed everywhere. There is sufficient material to make several worth while teaching exhibits, a task which I hope to accomplish. My aim is toward a small museum whose exhibits shall be of value to the school, with enough spectacular material to appeal to the layman.

I have been surprised at the number of visitors that we have had. During the short courses in the summer as high as 500 people a day come through, and for the month of July 10,000 people saw our museum. At the close of the last school term I lectured to classes in Biology, Animal Husbandry, Veterinary Anatomy, etc., talking to over 400 students. As far as visitors are concerned, and interest on the part of the teaching staff this is by far the most successful museum I was ever connected with.

What plans are in mind for future of this museum, I do not know. My own idea would be the development of an agricultural museum, along the lines of a modern natural history museum. Here would be natural habitat groups of domestic stock, exhibits of plant pathology, historical geology, etc. In other words a useable museum for the type of school this is.

I hope this information answers your requirements and that it may be of value to you.

Respectfully,

Curtis J. Hesse
Curtis J. Hesse

CJH:mss