



Cincinnati Museum Center Collections Departments and Holdings





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Introduction

Dear Friends,

There's a whole world behind our museums. Cincinnati Museum Center collections contain one of the most significant regional history collections in the United States. Excavated artifacts, over a million photographs and video recordings, the largest collection of Upper Ordovician fossils in the world, extinct animal specimens and so much more — these constitute the heart and soul of our operation.

The items we pull from our history and science collections help populate our award-winning exhibits and educational programs, but they also have an obscured purpose. They preserve our region's history and culture using a variety of precise tools and procedures, from acid-free boxes, to digitized paper disks. Many of these items would have been destroyed, lost or scattered without help from generations of librarians, archivists and curators.

Once our collection items are painstakingly numbered, registered and stored, they become a global resource. Like any library, items in our collection are “checked out” and used in exciting research by archaeologists, historians and researchers of all stripes. Indeed, all of CMC's two-dimensional collections — photographs, manuscripts, printed works and more — are available to the public and used every day. The collections do double duty — they preserve our material culture in a tangible way for future generations and they enhance our understanding of the ancient and not-so-ancient past.

We are committed to promoting a greater understanding of our past, inspiring research that will inform our future and providing educational opportunities for the present. That means we're dedicated to enabling researchers and educators to use our extensive collections. Whether you're searching for genealogical materials, hunting for that perfect historical photo or embarking on a new project altogether, we hope you'll find this catalog informative.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Pierce, President and CEO



Scott Gampfer, Associate Vice President for Collections & Preservation

Archaeological Collections

Departmental Mission

The Archaeology Department of Cincinnati Museum Center furthers scientific and historical knowledge and understanding of past human societies. Its primary focus is the Eastern woodlands of the United States and the rich archaeological legacy of the central Ohio River Valley. The department acquires and preserves scientifically and historically significant collections of well-documented artifacts and preserves the archaeological record for the benefit of research scholars and the public. The department conducts original research to develop new knowledge of the archaeological record and of past human societies. The department disseminates knowledge through scholarly publications, presentations and exhibits that describe and interpret the archaeological record.

Departmental Description

Archaeological collections that document the prehistory and history of the central Ohio River Valley region form the core of the Archaeology Department's collections.

Cincinnati Museum Center (and its antecedents, the Cincinnati Society of Natural History and the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History) has served as a repository of archaeological materials for nearly 130 years. Since the formation of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History in 1870, CMC has acquired a vast assemblage of artifacts from the Midwest and other areas, but principally from the Cincinnati and tri-state region. The archaeological collection includes prehistoric and historic materials from CMC's own excavation and survey investigations; private and institutional collections; amateur excavations and surveys; and federally mandated public archaeology projects. Approximately two million archaeological specimens are presently curated at CMC's Geier Collections and Research Center.

Collection History

Cincinnati Museum Center's archaeological collections had their beginnings in the 1870s with the establishment of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, although there is evidence that some collection items date to earlier incarnations of Cincinnati museums, particularly the Western Museum (ca. 1818-1823). After World War II, the Society began to conduct major excavations at local prehistoric sites, a process that continues today. The following is a brief synopsis of major collection and research activities:

1946-1949, 1960s, early 1980 – excavations at the Turpin Site (Late Prehistoric [ca. AD 1000-1650])

1957 – excavation of Saylor Park Mound (Adena [ca. 1000 BC to BC/AD boundary])

1970s – Ohio Historic Preservation Office regional surveys of Southern Ohio

1984 – establishment of Curator of Archaeology position

Mid-1980s through early 1990s – in-house excavations of Late Prehistoric sites in southwest Ohio

Early 1990s – salvage excavation of Woodland Period (ca. 1000 BC to AD 400) mounds in Southwest Ohio

1990 – acquisition of archaeological materials and records from Cincinnati Preservation Association; includes more than 50,000 artifacts from urban privy excavations

1990 – acquisition of prehistoric materials from Cincinnati Art Museum; includes both local and regional materials

1998-2001 – excavations at Hopewell Age (ca. BC/AD boundary to AD 400) Stubbs and Fort Ancient sites

1998, 2000 and 2007 – excavations at the John P. Parker House in Ripley, Ohio

2003 – George Rieveschl Curator of Archaeology chair permanently endowed

2008-present – excavations at the Late Prehistoric Hahn Site in Anderson Township

Collection Components

For prehistory, the Archaeology Department focuses on the collection and preservation of archaeological materials from the Ohio Valley, particularly material from the tri-state region of Southern Ohio, Northern Kentucky and Southeastern Indiana. The focus for the collection and preservation of historic archaeological materials is generally restricted to the Greater Cincinnati and Southwestern Ohio region.

Three general categories of holdings may be distinguished:

- 1) Artifacts and ecofacts recovered from well-documented excavations of good-context archaeological deposits.
- 2) Artifacts and ecofacts recovered from well-documented regional surface surveys.
- 3) Artifacts and ecofacts recovered by poorly documented or undocumented excavations and surveys of archaeological sites or where the depositional contexts are unknown.

Collection Strengths

Excavated Site Collections

Archaeological collections from well-excavated sites tend to combine the properties of complete assemblages of behaviorally associated artifacts and ecofacts with the most complete documentation of depositional contexts and spatial association. Such collections have great research value. One of the greatest strengths of CMC's archaeological collections lies in its extensive suite of excavated Late Prehistoric sites. Fourteen excavated site collections cover the entire temporal range of Late Prehistoric cultures (A.D. 1000-1625) in the central Ohio River Valley.

Nineteenth-century urban historical archaeology is well represented by strong collections from the Betts Longworth Historic District in downtown Cincinnati. Additional, but smaller, collections from Cincinnati urban privy excavations, were acquired from consultant testing of outhouse shafts in Over-the-Rhine and Findlay Market

Regional Survey Collections

CMC's holdings include the collections and records of extensive site surveys conducted by regionally-based and federally-funded archaeological preservation offices from the early 1970s through 1981. These collections and records represent 12 counties in South-Central and Southwestern Ohio. These collections have significant research value for regional-scale land use studies.

Synoptic Collections

CMC's holdings include comparative collections of numerous material types, but are strongest in lithic and ceramic objects. Synoptic collections serve important functions as typological reference collections, as excellent sources of exhibit materials and for education.

Ethnology Collection

Departmental Mission

The Ethnology Department of Cincinnati Museum Center furthers cultural and historical knowledge by preserving objects from a worldwide range of cultures, insuring that the objects and associated information are available to Cincinnati Museum Center's staff, interested researchers and scholars by request and to the public by exhibit.

Departmental Description

The Ethnology Collection, numbering approximately 7,000 catalogued objects and at least 2,000 related photographs, document diverse material cultures from around the world and form an important ancillary collection of Cincinnati Museum Center's Anthropology Department. The Ethnology Collection is limited in size and research potential relative to the department's archaeological collections.

Originally part of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, these collections have grown over many years, primarily through donations from Cincinnati-area residents. The geographical range of the collection has been dictated by these donors' travel inclinations, and documentation is sometimes minimal or nonexistent. Nevertheless, important objects and collections are present.

Collection History

Cincinnati Museum Center's collection of ethnological artifacts began with the formation of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History in 1870. Most objects and collections were donated to the Society by world-traveling Cincinnati residents or their heirs. By about 1900, the collection had outgrown the museum's space and was loaned to the Cincinnati Art Museum, where it remained until approximately 1930. Even recently, a few objects have been discovered and returned by the Art Museum. Most of the large components of the present collection were acquired after that period. Record keeping was inconsistent and minimal (or worse) until systematic cataloguing of ethnological materials was initiated by the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History in 1979. At that time, the collection was sorted, researched and catalogued by a graduate student (later to become curator) devoted solely to these collections, working part-time from 1979 to 1985, and full-time from 1985 until 1992. Since 1992, the Ethnology Collection has been under the charge of curators whose expertise has been in archaeology, with routine care, storage, cataloguing and record keeping conducted by a volunteer Adjunct Curatorial Assistant. There is currently no full-time, paid staff member responsible exclusively for the Ethnology Collection.

Collection Components

A variety of significant ethnological collections have been donated to CMC over the years. In summary, these include the:

Julius and Dorette Fleischmann Collection

Oceania, especially Melanesia. Approx. 800 objects and 1,530 photographs. Comprises a wide range of pre-WWII material culture collected in 1931-1932. Includes 41 painted tapas from Irian Jaya, perhaps the world's best collection of such decorated tapa.

Lewis Cotlow Collection

Worldwide – Africa, South America, Melanesia, Arctic, Orient. Approx. 500 objects, plus a large assortment of photographs ranging from the mid-1900s. Material culture, decorative objects. The collection is much enhanced by the books, films, photographs and a great deal of personal memorabilia of this professional explorer, author and filmmaker.

Adair Collection

South America – Amazonia. Approx. 620 objects collected in the 1980s. Body ornaments and clothing, mostly ceremonial, weapons and miscellaneous objects. Much of this collection consists of spectacular featherwork and is valuable as colorful exhibit material and for research.

Enno Meyer Collection

Plains Indian. Approx. 55 objects, 75 photographs, 8 letters. The photographs and letters record visits to Cincinnati of traveling groups of Montana Cree in 1895 and Brule Sioux in 1896. The collection has exhibit and research value, particularly for the Cree and Sioux visits of 1895 and 1896.

Adams Collection

Africa, especially Cameroon. Approx. 200 objects. Material culture of Cameroon collected by a missionary family in the early and mid 1900s. This material has been used for exhibit, particularly for CMC's African Culture Fest.

Southwest USA – Various Sources

Southwest Indian, various tribes. Approx. 430 objects. Basketry, pottery, kachinas, textiles, etc., mostly from the early and mid-1900s. This is visually appealing exhibit material.

Plains USA – Various Sources

Plains Indian, various tribes. Approx. 350 objects. Approx. 1900. Plains material, plus a complete traditional Sioux war suit commissioned for an exhibit in the 1990s. This is also visually appealing exhibit material.

Other areas represented in smaller and often-undocumented ways are Indonesia, other parts of North, Middle, and South America, Sarawak and India.

Collection Strengths and Deficiencies

The strengths of the collection are predominantly in pre-World War II Oceanic material culture collected in 1931-1932 by a prominent Cincinnati family, including a fine group of decorated tapa cloths from New Guinea. The expedition was documented through 1,530 photos made by professional photographer Amos Burg. American Plains Indian objects numbering around 400, and dating from approximately 1900, document the visits to the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden by traveling Cree and Sioux groups in the late 1890s. More than 100 images by Cincinnati photographer Enno Meyer complement the Plains Indian collection. Augmenting this material, a complete traditional Sioux war suit made in 1990s is a superb exhibit and instructional piece. Amazonian native featherwork and other objects collected in 1980s are rare in United States museums and the Ethnology Collection's are of superb exhibit quality. An eclectic assortment of Southwest Indian items, including basketry, pottery, kachinas, jewelry, textiles, etc. of various tribes is of interest for exhibit and education.

The major deficiency of the collection is of American Eastern Woodland cultural artifacts. This is, however, typical of all museums as most such materials were already lost to posterity prior to the establishment of museums in North America.

History Objects and Fine Art Collections

Departmental Mission

The Cincinnati History Department of Cincinnati Museum Center actively collects, preserves and interprets objects and fine art pertaining to the social, cultural, economic and political history of Greater Cincinnati and the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. In the past 20 years the collection has grown to more than 45,000 objects and works of art. Specific collections include personal and household artifacts, architecture, items from Cincinnati business and industry, communications, science and technology and transportation, as well as education, religion, recreation and fine art.

Departmental Description

Although CMC has only actively collected objects since the 1980s, a significant collection has been assembled. CMC is the only regional repository for the material culture of Greater Cincinnati and the tri-state region. The focus of the collection has gradually evolved to reflect a broad social history of Cincinnati and to accurately mirror the diverse nature of the city and region's audiences. The department endeavors to collect historic artifacts and fine art that represent local businesses and industry, ethnic and cultural minorities, reform organizations, sports clubs and other civic organizations. The collections are gradually becoming broad-based and reflective of the community at large.

Collection History

A notable aspect of the History Objects Collection is that the department was only recently established. Although the Cincinnati Historical Society component of Cincinnati Museum Center has been in existence since 1831, its collection primarily focused on printed and archival materials, including historic books, letters and documents. A concerted effort to collect the material culture of the greater Cincinnati region began when plans were made to establish a history museum at Cincinnati Union Terminal in 1986. In 2001 the History Objects Collection was moved from Union Terminal to the new Geier Collections and Research Center, a 70,000 square foot storage facility, located near Cincinnati Museum Center. Small history objects and fine art were arranged in a 5,063 square foot second-floor storeroom. Large industrial objects and vehicles were stored in a 4,039 square foot space on the building's lower level. In 2016 a mobile compact storage system was installed on the second floor of the Geier Collections Center for the storage of the large history object collections. Additional storage racks were also installed for the fine art collection. The History Objects Collection has grown from a relatively modest collection of approximately 10,000 artifacts and works of art in 1989 to more than 45,000 artifacts and works of art.

Collection Components & Strengths

Fine Art

This collection contains more than 1,000 original oil paintings, watercolors, engravings, etchings, sculpture, carvings and limited edition prints, which document the history of the city and region. Subject matter includes landscapes, cityscapes, historic buildings and structures, special events and portraits of Cincinnatians.

Nature Art

This collection is dominated by the work of local artists and documents their influence on the culture of Greater Cincinnati. The subject matter may or may not be local but always represents nature and natural history themes. The collection had its origin in the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History.

Historic Clothing

High fashion and everyday dress of the past 175 years is represented in the CMC Historic Clothing Collection. The collection consists of women's and men's formal attire, wedding dresses, military uniforms, fashion accessories and everyday clothing.

Furniture

Southwest Ohio was home to a number of furniture manufacturers throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Early Cincinnati manufacturers often specialized in a particular type of furniture, and several manufacturers and styles of furniture are represented in the collection.

Industrial Objects

From a few machine shops and foundries in 1840, Cincinnati grew to become the world leader in the production of machine tools by 1910. Early machine tool companies often specialized in a particular type of machine, and many of these companies and their machines are represented in the CMC collection.

Science & Technology

The medical collection consists of hundreds of 20th century instruments, surgical kits, microscopes, testing devices, dental instruments and accessories. Science and technology artifacts also include surveying and navigation instruments (compasses, timepieces, surveyor's levels and sextants), measuring devices, a variety of scales and balances, as well as experimental scientific pieces.

Brewing Industry

Brewing, like other food service-related industries, is represented through a number of artifacts in several classifications. Several hundred beer bottles in the collection reflect the various periods of production and the more than 100 breweries that operated in Cincinnati in the past.

The collection also contains beer barrels, brewery and tavern glassware, advertising trays, decorative signs, lithograph illustrations as well as brewing and testing equipment.

Communications

A broad artifact category, including all forms of sound communication, photography, written communication and printing, communications is one of the largest and most diverse collections in the History Objects Department.

Curatorial Status

Because the object collection is relatively young, there is not a significant backlog of uncatalogued collection material. The cataloging of artifacts and fine art is an ongoing project within the History Objects Department, and the majority of the collection has been cataloged. The addition of the KE EMu database system to the Collections and Research Division will increase the accessibility and dissemination of electronically catalogued information. Data entry into KE EMu will be a priority for the department going forward.

During the past few years more than 5,000 objects and works of art, or approximately 15% of the history collection, has been photographed for use within the catalogue database. This will be an ongoing project.

Archives and Manuscripts Department

Department Mission

The Archives and Manuscripts Department documents the history of Cincinnati, Hamilton County and the surrounding region by collecting unpublished paper-based items created by its people, organizations and businesses. Because the Cincinnati Historical Society formed before the Ohio Historical Society, we also have a very good collection documenting what was known as the Old Northwest Territory (land northwest of the Ohio River prior to statehood).

Collection Description

The Archives & Manuscripts Collection contains approximately 11,300 collections consisting of the papers of individuals and families and the records of organizations and businesses. The collections extend from the late 18th century to the early 21st century and document the cultural, social, political, military, scientific, religious, educational and economic development of the area. Collections are acquired mainly through donation. Our records show that manuscripts were collected as early as 1855 and grew steadily through the 1970s when both the size and amount of collections increased dramatically. The archives and manuscript collections acquired before 1970 totaled an estimated 2,000 cubic feet, while those acquired since 1970 are an estimated 7,000 cubic feet in size.

Collection Components & Strengths

Though not exhaustive, these are our most well-documented areas:

Early Cincinnati History – Fort Washington and early settlers

Civil War – Many collections of personal letters and orders, Great Western Sanitary Fair

Cincinnati Clubs – Women's clubs, professional clubs, literary and recreational clubs

Cincinnati Organizations – NAACP, Urban League, Red Cross, orphanages, benevolent groups

Cincinnati Churches – Many German Protestant, no Catholic records

Cincinnati Families – Taft, Torrence, Hickenlooper, Kemper, Lyford, Rowe, Gano, Harrison, Nast, etc.

Cincinnati Industry – Cincinnati Union Stockyards Co., machine tool companies

Cincinnati Businesses – Rookwood Pottery, Cincinnati Stock Exchange, John Robinson Circus, banks and insurance companies

Cincinnati Politics – Charter Party, William Howard Taft, Theodore Berry, Salmon P. Chase, Marian Spencer, William Mallory, Joseph B. Foraker

Cincinnati Union Terminal – Cincinnati Union Terminal Co., architectural drawings, campaigns to save Union Terminal

The Archives & Manuscript Department also collects architectural drawings and records from major Cincinnati architects and architectural firms. The 170 architectural drawing collections contain an estimated 60,000 drawings depicting local businesses, landscapes, homes and churches.

Desired Collection Growth

Some areas where we would like to increase our documentation include:

Wars after World War II

Certain immigrant/ethnic groups (early Irish, Latino, Indian, Asian, Middle Eastern, post-WWII European, Appalachian)

Average African American families

Minority-owned businesses

Brewery industry

Local political and social movements

Family life in the mid- and late-20th century

CMC Archives

The CMC Archives was established in 1996 as the official repository for the records of enduring historic value created by Cincinnati Museum Center and its predecessor institutions, which include the Western Academy of Science, the Western Museum, the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, the Cincinnati Historical Society, the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, the Museum Center Foundation, the Children's Museum of Cincinnati, the Helen Steiner Rice Foundation and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Collection Care

All paper items should be kept in a stable environment with minimal light and stable temperature and relative humidity. Fluctuations of temperature and humidity can cause the fibers of the paper to expand and contract which can cause brittleness and breakage. This is exacerbated if any item is folded, which is why we ideally keep all items flat or rolled if too large to store flat. If the humidity is too high, mold can grow and damage the paper. Documents are kept in acid-free folders and boxes, which protect them from light and from further deterioration from common acidic boxes and folders.

All of these factors – light, temperature, humidity – are the reason that most paper items should never be on permanent display and should be exhibited minimally. The only thing that poses a more dire threat to paper items is poor handling. Items should be handled as little as possible and with the utmost care to avoid tears. Most volumes should be placed in a book cradle when read or held open gently with the spine supported. One should avoid touching any ink or pencil writing on the paper since the oils on fingers can cause damage. For best handling one should have dry, clean hands with no lotion on them and no nail polish.

Moving Image and Sound Recordings Collection

Departmental Mission

The mission of the Moving Image Section of the Audiovisual Department is to collect, preserve and make available select moving image and sound recordings that document local and regional history, including the history of local television and radio broadcasting.

Departmental Description

The Moving Image Section is part of the Audiovisual Department, which consists of the photograph collections, prints and posters, postcards, moving image and sound recording collections.

Collection History

Beginnings

Prior to 1983, the Cincinnati History Library & Archives (formerly Cincinnati Historical Society Library) passively acquired moving image material mostly in the form of 8mm and 16mm films that came with donations to the Archives and Manuscripts Department. At the time, there was not enough of this material to constitute a separate collection area nor were there the resources or technical expertise to adequately process and preserve the material.

In 1983, an agreement was negotiated between WLWT and the Historical Society for the transfer of historical moving image material produced by the television station. The acceptance of WLWT's 7,200 16mm film cans and numerous videotapes, in practical terms, marks the beginning of the Moving Image and Sound Recordings Collection and the Broadcast Archives.

Collection Components

Moving Images – Film

The collection today consists of approximately 6 million feet of 8mm, 16mm and 35mm motion picture film, and approximately 3,000 videotapes. The bulk of the collection is news footage shot between 1959 and 1980 from local television stations, including WLW-TV, WKRC-TV, WCPO-TV, WXIX and the local educational station CET. About half of the footage is black and white, and about half color. Also in the collection are television kinescopes, newsreels, documentaries, public affairs programming, television commercials, amateur, industrial, promotional, propaganda and educational and training films. A few short, commercially produced feature films, cartoons and a much smaller collection of 8mm film, mostly home movies, are also part of the collection.

Moving Images – Video

The bulk of the approximately 3,000 video recordings in the collection are local television programming dating from the 1960s to the present. Various formats are represented including 2" quad, ¾" U-matic, 1", S-VHS, Betacam, VHS and laser disks.

Sound Recordings

The collection consists of about 4,000 recordings, the bulk of which are 16" radio transcription disks from the 1930s and 1940s. There are also other formats, ranging from 45 and 33 1/3 rpm records and 1/4" magnetic analog tape, to modern digital audiotape and compact disks. There are no recordings on earlier sound recording formats, such as tinfoil and wax cylinders, except as artifacts in the History Objects Collection. There are no wire recordings in the collection, but there are a small number of paper disks recorded on home equipment in the 1930s and 1940s.

Most of the recordings are of radio programming that was collected in the 1980s and 1990s. There are also approximately 200 oral histories, 200 recorded speeches and numerous commercial recordings (music, documentaries and sound effects) and home recordings.

It is highly recommended that this material be digitized and that future additions to the collection be in a digital format.

Collections Strengths and Deficiencies

Sound Recordings

The processed sound recording collection is strong in radio programming from the 1930s to the 1980s, including musical programming, entertainment and news. The bulk of this material is local, although many network programs from NBC and ABC Radio are in the collection. There are also many recordings relating to local politics, particularly the Charter Party, as well as World War II programs and oral interviews. The local programming comes mainly from WLW, WSAI, WGUC, WCKY and WKRC. The processed collections essentially end at the mid-1990s and very little current programming has been added to the collection. There are many sound recordings in backlog, some transferred from the Archives and Manuscripts Department that might fill in gaps in coverage.

Moving Images

The collection is strongest in local Cincinnati television news programming from the 1960s and 1970s. The collection of raw, unaired news footage, raw documentary footage and documentaries, public affairs and entertainment programming and television commercials from this same time period may also be considered a strength. Following the general industry switch to videotape, and subsequently digital formats, few broadcast images have been made available to the collection.

Curatorial Status

There is a severe shortage of storage space for the moving image collections. No refinement of the collection can occur without a major, and resource intensive, effort at backlog reduction, and this should be part of any larger, long-range planning process. Managing and caring for an audiovisual collection is perhaps the most complicated because of the variety of formats, especially video, that has been introduced since 1956 and various conservation issues such as chemical and physical deterioration of the information container. A dedicated Moving Image Archivist would go a long way in ensuring the collection is managed to its fullest extent.

Photograph and Print Collection

Departmental Mission

The mission of the Photograph and Print Section of the Audiovisual Department of Cincinnati Museum Center is to collect, preserve, organize and describe photographs and prints that document the cultural, social, political, scientific, religious, educational and economic development of the Greater Cincinnati area, and to make them available to the public for research and reproduction.

Departmental Description

Photographs, prints, postcards and posters are part of the Audiovisual Department, which also includes moving images and sound recordings. The department also has its own digital scanning operation.

Collection History

The Cincinnati History Library & Archives (formerly Cincinnati Historical Society) had the nucleus of a photo collection in its early days. The first recorded accession of photographs was in 1870. Small numbers of photographs were added each year. These, as well as magazine and newspaper clippings, prints and lithographs became the "picture collection." Groups of photographs were divided into general subject classifications. Library patrons could check out items from the collection for classroom or personal use.

In 1936 there were less than 10,000 photos in the collection. A quote from the annual report of that year said, "to catalog this collection is a task for the future." This is still true today.

Collection Components

Photographs

As of 2019, the collection consists of approximately 800,000+ unique items. The earliest photographs include about 500 unique, cased daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and ferrotypes dating back to the 1840s. These are followed by thousands of albumen cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards of various sizes, stereographs, about 50 cyanotypes and a few salt paper prints. The remaining 75% of the paper prints comprise more modern processes. Less than 1% of the prints are in color. There are over 6,000 trade and real-photo postcards. The bulk of the photographs in the collection date from the 19th and early 20th century, documenting the people, places and events of Greater Cincinnati. The collection includes good documentation of major events, transportation, buildings, parks, street scenes, businesses, industry, restaurants, the arts, sports and other leisure activities.

Transparent images include over 100,000 35mm slides, 200 4x5 transparencies, 8,500 glass lantern slides and 3,500 glass plate negatives (8x10, 5x7 and 4x5). Film negatives include 7,500 4x5 and 1,500 8x10 copy negatives and thousands of original negatives of various formats too numerous to count.

Major Special Collections

African American Photographer J. P. Ball (300+ images) (ca. 1850-1870)

Paul Briol (6,000+ 8x10 negatives and prints) commercial and landscape work (ca. 1930-1950)

Daniel Ransohoff (30,000 prints and negatives) social conditions in Cincinnati and their dedicated relief agencies (ca. 1930s-1980s)

George Rosenthal (5,500+ photographs) West End buildings and other views

Betz/Marsh Commercial Photo Studio (150,000+ prints and negatives) Cincinnati businesses, organizations and individuals (the bulk in backlog). (1937-1975)

Other Significant Processed Collections

Felix J. Koch, Landise/Hannaford, Neiderlehner, Rombach and Groene

Prints

The collection consists of several major donations and a number of individual items totaling approximately 5,000. Major components are the Hennegan Collection of 956 theater posters, the Strobridge Lithograph Collection of 825 circus, theater and event posters and 333 World War I and II posters, as well as prints by E. T. Hurley and Caroline Williams. The first three of these major collections have been inventoried. The remainder of the collection consists of other prints by the major Cincinnati lithographers and printing companies. The bulk is from the turn of the 20th century, but recent posters such as the Mini-Marathon, Summerfair, etc. are collected.

Curatorial Status

Current staff resources allow little time to actively pursue collections but donations commonly appear and are evaluated.

Regarding the care and processing of collection items, a very large backlog exists that will require new resources for its elimination. A plan for dealing with backlog in an incremental manner is under development. A further storage capacity issue developed in 2009 with the acquisition of the *Cincinnati Post* photographic archives, currently housed in off-site rented space and inaccessible to staff. Additional permanent storage space needs to be identified.

An important departmental need is to develop a method to track the number of people who come to CMC to look at photograph collections. This should be done to allow documentation of the collection's use.

Active digitization of original photographs and their installation online via the Cincinnati History Library & Archives electronic catalog is an ongoing project and section priority. Currently, there are approximately 3,000 digital images available through our online catalog.

Printed Works Collection

Departmental Mission

The purpose of the Printed Works Collection is to document the history of Cincinnati and the surrounding region through the acquisition and preservation of books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps and other printed materials relating to everyday life in the area.

Departmental Description

The Printed Works Collection is a compilation of CMC's paper-based history collections that are mass-produced, i.e., printed. The collection dates to the founding of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio in 1831. The original objective of the organization was to document "the civil and natural history of the state and of the several counties thereof, especially of the early settlements." The collecting objective was later narrowed to historical material pertaining to the Miami Purchase, southwestern Ohio and the Ohio River Valley. The library has had a portion of its catalog available online since 2001.

Collection History

The Printed Works Collection began to be viewed as a distinct collection/department when active collecting was focused on the establishment of a history museum in the late 1980s. Prior to that it was considered part of the general library collections with no specific curatorial control. These general library collections date back to the organization's founding.

Collection Components

Book Collection

The book collection (approximately 40,000 titles) is segregated into "rare" and "general" categories. The Rare Book Collection contains books published primarily before 1860. It includes nearly all the early histories of the city of Cincinnati as well as early American travel journals and publications for the Northwest Territory.

The general collection contains books published in the latter part of the 19th century, as well as the 20th and 21st centuries. It includes general histories of Cincinnati; general histories of the old Northwest Territory, and the states that comprised the old Northwest Territory, town histories for the New England states and Pennsylvania; general histories of Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia; histories of Cincinnati institutions; local business histories and catalogs; local church and denominational histories and proceedings; biographies; works on area artists; community planning documents; regional poetry and literature; Civil War histories; family genealogies; genealogical indices; natural history of Greater Cincinnati; annual reports of regional railroads and canals; and Ohio River material. The focus of the general collection is primarily regional.

Special Collections

The Cornelius J. Hauck Botanical Collection is a collection containing approximately 4,000 titles, the earliest of which is from 1471.

The Harrison Collection concerning the life and times of William Henry Harrison was compiled by James Albert Green and contains 475 titles.

The Thomson Collection of approximately 800 titles focuses on Ohio and the Northwest Territory.

Broadside Collection

This approximately 900-item collection contains advertisements for businesses, institutions and events.

Ephemera Collection

This collection contains items such as greeting cards, menus, tickets, sample ballots, invitations, a significant theater program collection, etc.

Genealogy Collection

The emphasis of this collection is on material of local interest. This includes indexes of baptisms, birth and death notices, marriages, churches, burials, cemeteries, military and fraternal rosters and publications from a variety of organizations. Items from the general collection such as deed books, insurance maps, city directories and vintage phone books can be used to find information about where families lived and the property they owned. Also helpful are the newspaper clipping files, family histories, genealogy charts and biographies.

Map Collection

This collection, numbering 2,500 items, contains early maps of the United States and North America, maps of American Civil War campaigns, maps focusing on Cincinnati and southwest Ohio, maps of the State of Ohio and maps of the Northwest Territory.

Newspaper Collection

The library has a strong collection of early and mid-19th century newspapers in hardcopy (140 titles). Titles are from Cincinnati and southwest Ohio. The collection includes the first newspaper of the Northwest Territory, the *Centinel of the Northwest Territory*.

Pamphlet Collection

The collection contains approximately 2,000 rare pamphlets, published before 1860, and 30,000 regular pamphlets. The topics for these small booklets or leaflets include material on early Cincinnati, politics, speeches, education, religion and churches, anti-slavery issues, seed catalogs, Cincinnati-made fire engines, medical literature, exhibit and business catalogs, the Roebling Suspension Bridge, almanacs, railroad reports, etc.

Serials

The library collects serials that have historical or genealogical value to researchers or support the work of CMC staff. The library subscribes to approximately 50 serials and receives 40 on an exchange basis with other institutions.

Sheet Music Collection

The collection includes songs about Cincinnati and/or Cincinnati subjects as well as a representative sample of Cincinnati publishers.

Theses

Doctoral and master theses concerning local subjects have been collected since the mid-20th century. The collection contains 250 titles.

Edge of Appalachia Collections

Departmental Mission

The mission of The Richard & Lucile Edge of Appalachia Preserve System (EOA, or the Edge) is to protect and steward the land and ecosystems in its care and to gain and share knowledge by instilling respect for, and teaching proper stewardship of, the natural world through conservation activities, education and research.

Departmental Description

The Edge of Appalachia Collections of Cincinnati Museum Center are maintained to document the biodiversity of The Richard & Lucile Durrell Edge of Appalachia Preserve System, voucher research specimens from visiting researcher studies and to advance the mission of Cincinnati Museum Center.

The collections supplement CMC's Zoological Collections and serves as a repository for both staff and visiting researchers. The collections document the region's high biodiversity and serve as an educational tool for both children and adults alike. The collection is housed in CMC's Eulett Center facility, located in Adams County, Ohio, 75 miles away from CMC's downtown Cincinnati location.

The collection is drawn primarily from the preserve's 19,000 acres, which are co-owned and co-managed with the international conservation organization The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Collection History

The preserve system was created in 1959 with a small parcel of land (Lynx Prairie) and has grown to approximately 19,000 acres since that time. However, a concerted collecting effort by CMC did not begin until 1990. The Edge of Appalachia Reference Herbarium was the first organized effort (1990) to document the preserve's diversity and was initiated by CMC's Preserve Manager, Peter Whan (1987-1992). The herbarium is housed at the Eulett Center on the preserve in Adams County, Ohio, and currently consists of 1,395 specimens.

The preserve's first faunal collections began in 2000. Freshwater mussels (Unionidae), moths (Lepidoptera) and dragonflies/damselflies (Odonata) were the first groups collected by EOA staff. The freshwater mussel collection was subsequently moved to the Geier Collection and Research Center in 2003. In 2004, Edge staff added lichens (Cryptogamae), ants and bees (Hymenoptera), spiders (Arachnida), beetles (Coleoptera) and land snails (Gastropoda) to their collecting efforts with the assistance of visiting researchers from regional colleges and universities.

Since 2004, Edge staffers have focused on continuing collections for the above taxa, but have also begun collecting mosses (Bryophyta), earthworms (Annelida) and flower flies (Diptera) in 2009, crayfish (Decapoda) in 2008 and grasshoppers (Orthoptera) in 2007 with the help of visiting scientists. Visiting researchers from Eastern Illinois University, the Smithsonian Institution, The Ohio State University, Ohio University, Otterbein University, Marietta College, Miami University, the University of Connecticut, New York Botanical Gardens, Xavier University, the University of Kansas, Kent State University and private consultants have provided expertise and specimens to the Edge of Appalachia Collections since 2000.

Collection Components

The Edge of Appalachia Collections consist of flora and fauna representing the biodiversity of Southern Ohio with a focus on The Richard & Lucile Durrell Edge of Appalachia Preserve System lands jointly owned and operated by Cincinnati Museum Center and The Nature Conservatory. Collections include plants (including mosses and ferns), crayfish, macrolichens, microlichens, spiders, earthworms, land snails, aquatic snails, isopods, fish, harvestmen, millipedes, centipedes and insects from most orders. Vertebrate specimens, when occasionally acquired, are transferred to the Zoological Collections at the Geier Collections and Research Center.

Collection Strengths and Deficiencies

The collection strengths of the Edge of Appalachia Collections are in its holdings of vascular plants, macrolichens, insects and mollusks. The vascular plants have an associated, unpublished catalog – *The Vascular Flora of The Edge of Appalachia Preserve*, by Rick Gardner and Dave Minney. For insects, dragonflies/damselflies are best represented in the collection. An estimated 95% of the insect species of the preserve have been vouchered, along with 85% of the ant and orthopteran species and 85% of the butterflies. Land snails and freshwater mussels are also well represented, with over 95% of the species of the preserve represented.

Taxonomic deficiencies of the collection include holdings of the following groups: moths (40%), spiders (50%), beetles (35%), fish (30%), stream invertebrates (35%), bees (60%), wasps (35%), flies (10%), freshwater snails (30%), micro-lichens (25%), algae (0%), nematodes (0%), fungi (0%). Quoted percentages represent the number of species in the collections relative to the projected total species thought to be present on the preserve.

Invertebrate Paleontology Collection

Departmental Mission

The Department of Invertebrate Paleontology of Cincinnati Museum Center furthers its scientific and educational programs by conducting collections-based research on the fossil taxa of the “type Cincinnati” series of the tri-state region, by maintaining research and educational collections of these fossil taxa and by acting as an educational resource on invertebrate fossils to CMC and the community and organizations of the Ohio Valley region. The department furthers scientific knowledge of the region’s rich geological history, its fossil faunas and its paleobiological and paleoecological past life.

Departmental Description

The Invertebrate Paleontology collections of CMC are maintained to supplement and complement the major invertebrate fossil collections in North American museums and universities. The department exists primarily for the purpose of making these materials available for scientific research and educational endeavors. On national and international levels, CMC houses one of the best collections of Upper Ordovician fossils, which emphasizes the uniqueness of the Cincinnati paleogeographic area. To serve the broader needs of local/regional users, the department cares for additional invertebrate fossil collections that focus on other geologic time periods from the American mid-continent/Ohio Valley, particularly the tri-state region.

Collection History

Cincinnati Museum Center paleontological collections represent the combined efforts of numerous predecessor and partner institutions in the Cincinnati area. These include the Western Museum Society (1818), the Western Academy of Natural Sciences (1835), the Cincinnati Society of Natural History (1870), the University of Cincinnati (1870) and the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History (1957). The collections were begun under the guidance of prominent Cincinnati physician Daniel Drake in 1818 and continued by other members of the Western Academy of Sciences. Samuel A. Miller was the first Curator of Paleontology of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History (1871-1874), followed by John W. Hall, Jr. (1874-1877), Edward O. Ulrich (1877-1880), John Mickelborough (1880-1884), Edward M. Cooper (1884-1885) and Charles L. Faber (1885-1886). Ulrich served as Custodian (Collections Manager) of the Scientific Department beginning in 1873. The University of Cincinnati Geology Museum paleontology collection was founded in 1907 and transferred to Cincinnati Museum Center in 1998. The University of Minnesota paleontology research collection, founded in 1872, was transferred to Cincinnati Museum Center in 2018.

Collection Components

Permanent Collection - focuses on fossil invertebrate taxa occurring in the Ohio Valley, with particular emphasis on the tri-state region. This region is defined as encompassing a concentration of faunas from formations outcropping in the region in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio, and stratigraphically encompassing geologic time from the Middle Ordovician (~470 million years ago) through Upper Carboniferous (~290 million years ago) as well as Quaternary sequences. The addition of the University of Minnesota collection has expanded our regional collection to include the Upper Midwest region of the United States.

Type and Figured Collection - consisting of approximately 5,000 type specimens, but with the recent addition of approximately 2,000 types from the University of Minnesota collection, the type collection could be over 7,000.

Paleobotanical Collection - containing approximately 1,800 specimens (CMC PB nos.). Because the collection is dominated by a variety of fossil plant species from Mazon Creek, Illinois, this collection provides a window into the plant communities of the Pennsylvanian.

Education Collection - designed to facilitate educational programming at Cincinnati Museum Center, provide tools for illustration and demonstration and allow children to touch fossils. The education collection consists of specimens that have been donated by amateur collectors, usually as part of a larger donation.

Collection Strengths

The strengths of the collection include Lower to Middle Paleozoic invertebrates of central North America, particularly those of the Cincinnati Arch region (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana). **It is the largest collection of Upper Ordovician fossils in the world.**

The University of Minnesota collection has expanded our focus to include the Midwest region of the United States, with strengths from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. Stratigraphic focus is primarily on the Paleozoic, but there are significant holdings of Jurassic, Cretaceous and Tertiary invertebrates.

The collection is well known for its early echinoderms, edrioasteroids (one of the best collections in the country) and conulariids (one of the best collections in the country).

Other notable components of the collection are:

- Paleozoic echinoderms of the Max J. Kopf Collection

- Budenbach (Hunsrückschiefer) fossils

- Burgess Shale specimens from Charles D. Walcott and Kenneth E. Caster

- Devonian corals from the Falls of the Ohio

- Burlington (Iowa) crinoid types of Samuel A. Miller and William Gurley,

- A collection of South American invertebrate fossils (including types) acquired by Kenneth E. Caster

- The type Ordovician trace fossils of R. G. Osgood, Jr.

- The trilobite ontogenetic series of Hu Chung-hung

- A cast set of European Homalozoa and primitive echinoderm types (notably of Bohemia)

- Casts of Himalayan trilobite types (the only set outside of India)

- Swain's ostracod type and figured collection from around the world

- Sardeson's crinoid specimens, type and figured material for Brower and Veinus (1978)

- Ulrich type and figures specimens of bryozoans, brachiopods, molluscs and trilobites

- Bell's type and figured Cambrian trilobites (Bell et al., 1952)

Ruedemann's graptolite types

Historic Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota collection, including the Winchell collection

Stauffer's conodont and scolecodont collection from the Ordovician and Devonian of Minnesota

Curatorial Status

Currently, the collection is strongest in specimens from the Cincinnati Series and includes more than 80,000 specimen lots, of which 95% are paper and electronically catalogued. The majority of these records are available online in a searchable database on CMC's website, as well as the global database platform iDigBio.

When processed, the University of Minnesota paleontology research collection will add approximately 20,000 additional lots to CMC's collection.

Currently all of the type specimens, plus most of the Cephalopoda, some Brachiopoda and Trilobita, are photographed and ready to be put online.

Mineralogy Collection

Departmental Mission

The Mineralogy Department of Cincinnati Museum Center furthers scientific and historical knowledge by collecting geological specimens for use in exhibit and educational activities, both internal and external to CMC. Its holdings serve as a reference collection for amateur geologists, educators and others, while preserving a part of Earth's natural history heritage.

Departmental Description

The Mineralogy Collection is maintained primarily to provide examples of mineralogical resources of the region (Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky), with additional complementary specimens from around the United States and the world. The collection is used for two purposes: to enhance specimen-based educational floor programs about Earth and its mineral resources, and to complement existing or to develop new exhibits for the Museum of Natural History & Science. Educational specimens are not catalogued and therefore are not considered part of the permanent collection. The acronym prefix for specimen catalog numbers is CMC RM.

One professional staff member (currently the Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology), assisted by experienced museum volunteers and adjunct staff, is charged with the care of the collection. There is no full-time, paid staff member active in the Mineralogy Collection.

Collection History

During the late 1800s, the Cincinnati Society of Natural History maintained a mineralogy collection, and a few objects from this period can be identified yet within the current collection. Major periods of collection building, most notably the early 1900s, the mid-1940s to early 1950s and the 1980s and 1990s, have resulted from the influences of Charles Dury, Ralph Dury and the current Adjunct Curator of Mineralogy, Terry Huizing. Prior to the move to Union Terminal, minerals were a major part of public exhibits in the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, and several generations of Cincinnatians remember the museum from these objects.

Collection Components

The Mineralogy Department collects mineral specimens (including gemstones) and rocks (including meteorites, geological structures and ornamental stones). The emphasis of the collection is on the display and educational potential of material occurring regionally throughout the Central Lowland Province of the United States, with secondary emphasis on other worldwide occurrences.

The Mineralogy Collection also contains geology-related material, for example mining artifacts (tools, lamps, analytical instruments, mining equipment and mining stock certificates). The collection of this material is of secondary importance to the collection of mineralogical specimens but is of use in exhibits, and in the educational interpretation of the collection and of temporary exhibits.

Collection Strengths

CMC has, perhaps, the best public collection of mineral specimens from Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, although several private collections rival these holdings. The collection is organized in several sections: five cabinets containing material “found in collection,” a section containing purchased material, a grouping of donated collections and shelves of miscellaneous materials. The former sections are organized by mineral species. Teaching specimens and “give aways” are housed in bulk in drawers.

Vertebrate Paleontology Collection

Departmental Mission

The Vertebrate Paleontology Department of Cincinnati Museum Center furthers scientific and historical knowledge by conducting an innovative and specimen-based research program of national and international significance, and maintaining through repositing materials a database on global change and biodiversity from the perspective of the vertebrate fossil record. The department develops CMC's vertebrate fossil collection and facilities, preserves for posterity a significant part of earth's natural heritage and makes information on the department's activities and resources available to the widest possible audience, both popular and professional.

Departmental Description

The Vertebrate Paleontology Collection is maintained to supplement and complement the fossil vertebrate collections of the world, and to advance both the mission of CMC and the science of vertebrate paleontology. The collection is the region's largest and most significant and serves as a major research and educational resource. It furthermore preserves a unique natural heritage as part of the public domain. The Vertebrate Paleontology Department uses the collection for research and, in close cooperation with other museum staff, to develop educational programs and exhibits. The collection allows CMC to play an active role in the vertebrate paleontological community by encouraging and facilitating research and exhibitions, and enhances the department's ability to provide professional services to, and scholarly interaction with, colleagues and students.

Collection History

The collection was begun under the guidance of prominent Cincinnati physician Daniel Drake and the Western Museum Society in 1818 and continued by members of the Western Academy of Natural Sciences (1835), the Cincinnati Society of Natural History (1870) and the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History (1957). Each of these institutions was a predecessor and lineal ancestor of Cincinnati Museum Center. Samuel A. Miller was the first Curator of Paleontology of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History (1871-1874), followed by John W. Hall Jr. (1874-1877), Edward O. Ulrich (1877-1880), John Mickelborough (1880-1884), Edward M. Cooper (1884-1885) and Charles L. Faber (1885-1886). A comprehensive Geology Department was established in 1889, but it was not until 1986, with the appointment of the first vertebrate paleontology curator (H. Gregory McDonald), that a separate Department of Vertebrate Paleontology was carved out of the general fossil collection.

In 1942, much of the paleontological collection (excepting primarily items then on exhibit) was temporarily transferred to the University of Cincinnati Geology Museum, founded in 1907. While the original Cincinnati Society of Natural History collection was housed at the University of Cincinnati, a parallel collection grew at the society's successor, the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, through field collection and donations. The university fossil vertebrate collection was deeded to the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History (now part of Cincinnati Museum Center) in 1987. The combined collection was moved to the Geier Collections and Research Center in 2001. The University of Minnesota paleontology research collection, founded in 1872, was transferred to CMC in 2018.

Collection Components

Permanent Collection

Fossil vertebrates, typically the bones and teeth of extinct animals, but also including fossil eggs, footprints and other trace fossils, and some soft tissues. Cast replicas of significant research and/or educational specimens held in other public collections are additionally maintained in the CMC collection. These latter are catalogued in the manner of the actual fossils using a CMC VP number. Where known, the repository and catalog information of the original specimen from which the cast was made is also recorded. Similarly, models of important or representative fossil animals for comparative research, teaching and exhibit purposes are collected.

Type Collection

There are over 250 type, figured and referred specimens in the collection.

Contextual Data

The department also preserves associated contextual data (field notes, maps, photographs, correspondence, preparation history sheets, old exhibit and collection labels and publications containing reference to specimens in the collection) related to the catalogued collection items. Pertinent data, including georeference information and digitized images, subject to security and ethical concerns, are made available in online digital format on an ongoing basis.

Collection Strengths

The collection puts special emphasis on Paleozoic and Pleistocene material from the tri-state area (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana), as dictated by the local geologic framework, but a broad range of comparative and research material from around the world is also maintained.

The collection is particularly strong in:

- Local Pleistocene and Holocene fossils, including material from Big Bone Lick, Kentucky (the birthplace of American vertebrate paleontology)

- Extensive microvertebrate and other remains from the late Wisconsinan Sheriden Pit (Wyandot County, Ohio)

- Devonian vertebrates of the Cleveland Shale and other mid-continent rocks

- Mississippian age vertebrates from the Hancock Site of north-central Kentucky

- Pennsylvanian fossils from the Ohio Diamond Coal Co. mine, Linton, Ohio

- Paleozoic tetrapod ichnofossils and casts, including materials from Donald Baird

- Upper Jurassic Morrison Formation dinosaurs and associated fauna (including the only known associated skeleton of *Torvosaurus tanneri*)

- Cretaceous marine fossils from the Niobrara Chalk of Kansas (including historical specimens from Charles H. Sternberg)

- Significant holdings of Cretaceous/Paleocene microvertebrates, notably from the Hell Creek/Tullock formations of Montana, including Robert Sloan's collections at Bug Creek Anthills

Zoology Collection

Collection Overview

The Zoology Collection includes specimens in several categories, including study skins, skeletons, taxidermy mounts, dried specimens and fluid-preserved specimens. The collection includes mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, insects and marine and freshwater invertebrates. The collection is particularly strong in the areas of ornithology (birds), malacology (marine and freshwater mollusks) and herpetology (amphibians and reptiles). The collection also includes a frozen tissue collection for preservation of genetic material from recently acquired specimens.

Each specimen is catalogued into either the regular collection or the teaching collection. Teaching collection specimens usually have no or poor data associated with them, and are preferred for use in education programs. Regular collection items may be used in education programs; each case will need to be reviewed by the Zoology Curator. In the teaching collection there are a large number of mounted birds and mammals, fluid-preserved herps and a variety of bird body parts (heads, feet, wings, etc.) that are available for educational use. Many, but not all, of these are appropriate for touching. There are also a large number of marine and freshwater invertebrate specimens that do not have any data associated with them and will be made available to other programs. A number of bird nests and eggs have similarly been made available to education staff.

Collection History

The collection began in the late 1800s with the Cincinnati Society of Natural History. Since then the collection has grown thanks to local collectors/donors, research and collecting trips by curators, and donations from educational institutions, such as the University of Cincinnati, Thomas More University, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, etc.

Significant Holdings

Some of the more significant holdings include specimens of several extinct bird species, including passenger pigeon, great auk, Eskimo curlew, and Carolina parakeet. There are also a large number and variety of mammal, bird, amphibian and reptile specimens from the Philippines. We have a very good representation of local fauna in the collection, as well as exotic megafauna like the polar bear that was on exhibit in Union Terminal, Gilbert (our lion) and Old Chief (our Asian elephant).

Deficiencies and Future Goals

The collection is weakest in crustaceans and aquatic fauna in general. However, we do have a small fish collection that well represents local rivers and streams. We do not currently have specific acquisition goals to expand our aquatic collection. There is currently a backlog of specimens awaiting preparation and cataloguing into the collection. Nevertheless, we continue to accept donations of local fauna from citizens, researchers, volunteers, staff and other organizations; we receive exotic specimens from the Cincinnati Zoo and the Newport Aquarium. Additionally, organisms collected and used in curatorial research can be added to the collection as they become available.

Care and Safety Issues

Due to their organic nature, zoology collection specimens are susceptible to rot, mildew and insect infestation. Care should be taken to prevent their exposure to moisture, food or insects. All items are quarantined after use before their return to the collection. Study skins and taxidermy mounts prepared before 1980 are likely to contain arsenic and should be handled with gloves; care should be taken when handling these items due to their delicacy and the potential for release of arsenic powder from the specimen into the air. Fluid-preserved specimens may be preserved with or contain formalin (formaldehyde), which requires use of gloves and proper ventilation (if removed from jars).

Accessibility

Most of the specimens are catalogued by taxonomic group (i.e. birds, mammals, herps, etc.) and by whether they are in the teaching or regular collection. Our paper catalogs are the most complete record at this time, but newer specimen records are available in our digital spreadsheets. In either case, zoology staff or volunteers can assist with locating specimens of the desired species and type.