

Collectors of Pleistocene Vertebrates in Early Texas. I. William P. Huff (1811-86)

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Vertebrate paleontologists know several classic localities for Pleistocene mammals in Texas. We have become conscious of them through the work of the late Dr. Mark Francis, of Texas A. & M. College. During the last decades of his life, this scientist (for many years Dean of the school of veterinary medicine of the college), collected widely over the southern half of Texas, and amassed the noteworthy collection now housed at College Station. Of course, he was not the first collector of Pleistocene mammals in Texas. Indeed, the first collections made in the State antedate by many years the establishment of our first state geological survey.

Our first State Geologist, Dr. B. F. Shumard,¹ made (1860) at Hidalgo Falls on the Brazos, in Washington County, collections of extinct species of proboscideans, ground-sloths, horses, and other vertebrates. These specimens went duly into the "cabinet" of the Texas Geological Survey. Many of the specimens were lost in the troublous years of 1861 to 1866; and such specimens as survived Reconstruction days were lost in the capitol fire of November 9, 1881. S. B. Buckley,² in his 1874 report as State Geologist of Texas, states that about 1860, at this same locality, "bones of the mastodon, mammoth, and other large quadrupeds were found . . . in great abundance. A large collection of these was made by Doctors [B. F.] Rucker and [W. T.] LeGrand," of the town of Washington. Other classic localities were Pitt's Bridge (on the old T. F. McKinney league on the Brazos west of Bryan, Brazos County); San Felipe, and the bed and banks of the Brazos River between that town and the rapids of the Brazos, four miles below; Wallis's station in Austin County; the Lagow sand pits in south Dallas; Sour Lake, in Hardin County; and Rock Creek in Briscoe County

¹B. F. Shumard (*Trans. St. Louis Acad. Sci.*, v. 2, p. 141, 1863 (?)) reported remains of *Megalonyx*, together with *Mastodon*, *Elephas columbi*, *Equus*, *Crocodylus* (prob. *Alligator*), and *Testudo*.

²S. B. Buckley, *First Annual Report of the Geological and Agricultural Survey of Texas*, 1874, pp. 64-65.

on the Llano Estacado. Much of the work of exploration for Pleistocene vertebrates has been done in the last sixty years; but some was done at a period as remote as the first days of the Republic of Texas.³

William P. Huff, merchant of San Felipe, in the summer of 1837 found proboscidean and other remains at the shoals of the Brazos, a few miles below San Felipe. He built up a collection. Part of this was sold to Dr. Hugh Falconer of the British Museum; and part (1855) to Dr. Charles Martin, of the U.S. Coast Survey. Dr. Frédéric LeClerc (1840)⁴ published briefly on Huff's early collection. Dr. W. M. Carpenter, of Centenary College, Jackson, Louisiana (1846), gave an excellent brief account of Huff's collection (then being exhibited by Huff in New Orleans) in Silliman's *Journal*.⁵ Stimulated by these San Felipe finds (and other fossils which Huff found in stream-terraces from the Brazos to the Colorado—in Austin, Fort Bend, and Wharton counties), countrymen on the Colorado River unearthed (1840) in a ravine two miles below Bastrop⁶ a large collection (since lost?) of the molars, tusks, and bones of elephants. This collection was gathered by General Denyse Denyse of Bastrop County. Twenty years later, in late 1860, a German well-digger unearthed a large proboscidean skeleton on the outskirts of the village of New Braunfels in Comal County.⁷ All of these finds sooner or later came into the literature, as later will appear, in order.

³Oliver P. Hay, in his great work on the Pleistocene geology and vertebrate paleontology of the middle portion of the United States and Canada (*Publication No. 322A*, 1924, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington) has given an excellent account (*v. Index*) of vertebrate "finds" in Texas.

⁴F. Leclerc, "Le Texas et sa Révolution" (*Revue de deux Mondes*, v. 21, pp. 605-39 v. 22, pp. 220-50, 1840); it also appeared in book-form, the same year, in Paris; and was translated into English in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, v. 7, pp. 398-421, 1841. The above account is given in *SLM* at pages 420-21. As the next paper in the present series on "Collectors of Pleistocene Vertebrates in Early Texas" deals with Dr. LeClerc, I omit here further discussion of his observations, which are based on Huff's collections. (*infra*.)

⁵W. M. Carpenter, "Remarks on some fossil bones recently brought to New Orleans from Tennessee and from Texas," (*Amer. Jour. Sci. & Arts*, (II), v. 1, pp. 244-50, 1846.) [Carpenter's paper was abstracted in Leonhard & Bronn's *Jahrbuch*, 1848, pp. 127-28, 1848. This had been copied directly from the abstract printed in *L'Institut*, v. 14, p. 396, 1846; for the German text is an exact translation of the French abstract. Owing to undecipherable writing, the French printer transmogrified the name, "W. Huff," discoverer of the San Felipe vertebrates, into "W. Stuff" of the French abstract; and this error has been copied into the German journal.]

⁶An excellent account of General Denyse's find at Bastrop is given in the April 15, 1840 issue of the *Houston Telegraph & Register*; and the statement is made that Denyse planned to send the (nearly complete) skeleton to New York. The article also refers in detail to Huff's San Felipe collections. A. B. Lawrence (*Texas in 1840*, 1840, pp. 55-56) has an account of the Bastrop finds, and reproduces a letter from General Denyse; George W. Bonnell (*Topographical Description of Texas*, . . ., 1840, p. 62) and William Kennedy (*Texas: the Rise, Progress, and Prospects of the Republic of Texas*, 2d ed., 1841, Book I, Chap. 5) also give contemporary accounts of the San Felipe and Bastrop collections. An account of Denyse will be given in a future paper of this series.

⁷George E. Roberts, "The occurrence of a large elephantine beast in Texas, at the junction of the rivers Guadalupe and Comal." (*The Geologist*, v. 4, p. 162, 1861.)

The *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register* (Sept. 9, 1837) gives the first information of Huff's discovery of several large bones "in the bed of the Brazos River, a few miles below San Felipe. They are supposed to be mammoth bones. One of them is a tooth, which weighs twenty-two pounds." Some two years later (Sept. 18, 1839), the *Houston Morning Star* recorded his discovery, and stated that Huff was considering the possibility of opening a museum at San Felipe, in which were to be exhibited "the remains of the *Mastodon*, which were taken from the waters of the Brazos and Colorado." The *Star* suggested that Huff bring his collection to



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Houston for exhibit. The next year (April 15, 1840), the *Houston Telegraph* published a further note on Huff's "large collection" of Pleistocene mammalian bones; and the editor, Dr. Francis Moore, jr., gave an excellent account of the minute structure of the teeth.

William Bollaert (1807-76), British geographer and naturalist (who resided in Texas from 1840 to 1844), visited San Felipe in this period, with a view to examining Huff's collection. Owing to ill-timing of his visit, he was "much disappointed in not being able to examine it." Later, he ob-

tained a specimen of the teeth, and "was assured that large quantities of such teeth and bones [some of them very large] had been discovered, as well as a fossil horn [proboscidean tusk] 8 feet in length, and three feet [*sic*] in circumference at the thickest part. The fossil tooth which came into my possession appears to be of the Mastodon." This tooth was probably sent to Dr. Hugh Falconer of the British Museum.⁸

In 1845, Huff was encouraged by the activity in scientific matters exhibited in New Orleans, to take his collection of San Felipe fossils to that city. He exhibited them in Mr. G. Cooke's "National Gallery of Paintings" as a loan collection.⁹ Dr. William M. Carpenter (1811-48), professor of natural history in Centenary College, then at Jackson, saw them there, secured permission to study and figure them, and published a paper in Silliman's *Journal* of 1846.¹⁰ Carpenter became interested in Huff, who, Carpenter said, had "been a resident of Texas since his boyhood [1825], and has in the wild region of the western part of that state, acquired an ardent passion for the collection and study of fossils." On his return to Texas, Huff made anew, and augmented, a collection from terraces along all the streams of his region, with the result that specimens of his collecting found their way to the British Museum, the collection of Dr. J. C. Warren¹¹ of Harvard College, and to other students of vertebrate paleontology. Buckley (1874, p. 65) stated that a part, at least of Huff's collection was destroyed by fire in New Orleans. A careful study of the newspapers of that day, for fires, fails to confirm this. Certainly, his collection did not burn in the January 18, 1851 conflagration which involved the St. Charles hotel; moreover, Carpenter (1846) specifically states as a *fait accompli* that the collection exhibited at New

⁸William Bollaert, "Observations on the geography of Texas" (*Jour. Royal Geogr. Soc.*, v. 20, pp. 113-35, 1851). [Quotation at p. 115.] For a brief note on Bollaert see S. W. Geiser, *Texas Geographic Magazine*, v. 7, p. 37, 1943.

⁹G. Cooke, a portrait-painter of New Orleans [*res.*, 1846, 13 St. Charles Street] was director of the "National Gallery of Paintings" (which was maintained by a local society of art-lovers). The society was first housed at 13 St. Charles Street, near Canal; but in 1844 a building was erected, where pictures might be exhibited for prospective sale. It was used, however, principally for loan-collections. (See John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans*, 1922, v. 2, pp. 649-50.)

¹⁰W. M. Carpenter, *Amer. Jour. Sci. & Arts.* (II), v. 1, pp. 244-50, 1846.

¹¹John Collins Warren (1778-1856), from 1846 to 1856, published fourteen papers on American fossil vertebrates, principally proboscideans. None of these papers, however, deals specifically with Texan material.

Orleans found its way to the British Museum. Huff's purpose in exhibiting his fossils—sale of the collection—apparently was achieved in short order.

Falconer¹² found among the British Museum acquisitions, teeth of *Elephas columbi* (and described in detail two of the teeth), and a fragment of the cranium containing an enormous (incomplete) last true molar, containing 20 plates—the tooth being about $18\frac{1}{4}$ inches long (front to back), and about 11 inches high. The following were also in the original collection: part of both jaws of a tapir, with four or five teeth on each jaw; also other remains of elephant, mastodon, *Bison latifrons*, etc. All of the specimens studied by Carpenter (with the exception of the *Tapirus* material), are in the British Museum. Joseph Leidy¹³ examined and reported on the tapir specimens (1849). The *Bison* skull found by Huff went to the British Museum. It was a notable specimen: one uninjured horn-cone was about two feet long, with a basal circumference of 17 inches, and (at a distance of 18 inches from the base) of $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Carpenter believed that the spread of the horns would measure about eleven feet.

In 1849, Huff left Texas in the Gold Rush, for California, and did not return to the State until some years later. He had accumulated a second collection of Pleistocene mammals, which were housed at Richmond, Fort Bend County. In the winter of 1855/6, Dr. Charles Martin, surgeon with the U.S. Coast Survey (then working at the mouth of the Brazos), visited Richmond, and purchased the collection. This was later studied and reported on by Dr. Jeffries Wyman,¹⁴ of the Harvard Medical School. Included in the collection were the symphysis of the lower jaw, upper molar, and femur of an elephant; ulna, and last upper and lower molars of "*Mastodon giganteus*," and the tibia of a "*Megatherium*." Wyman states (following Martin) that these bones were collected in the bed of the Brazos, fifty miles above its mouth, in Fort Bend County, at low-water stage; but I surmise that these may have been a part of an old San Felipe collection. It is probable that at this time (1855), Huff was still in

¹²Cf. Hugh Falconer, *Palaeontological Memoirs* . . . v. 1, p. 227, 1868.

¹³Joseph Leidy, "Tapirus americanus fossilis" (*Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia*, v. 4, pp. 180-82, 1849).

¹⁴Jeffries Wyman, "On some fossil bones collected in Texas" (*Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist.*, v. 6, pp. 51-55, 1857).

California, hence the uncertainty and probable error of the collection-data. The time of Huff's return from California is uncertain; some dubious sources state that he did not return until after the Civil War. He was back in Fort Bend County during Reconstruction, for in 1869-71 he was county clerk of Fort Bend County, and in 1872-73, district clerk of the same county.¹⁵ There are indications that at one time he resided at Austin and San Antonio (probably after his return from California), but this I cannot confirm. A very brief obituary notice (*Houston Daily Post*, Nov. 26, 1887) states that he died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Thomas J. Ewing, in Houston.

It has not been possible to secure very ample or satisfactory information of the early life of William P. Huff. He was the son of George Huff, a blacksmith and millwright, who was something of a mechanical genius.¹⁶ With his brother John, George Huff went to Woodville, Miss., in 1817 (from ?Virginia), when William was six years old. Here at Woodville, George and John Huff, with their families, lived for eight years. From Woodville they came to (present) Wharton County, Texas, in 1825, and lived through the strenuous times of early Texas: the fever of 1827, the troubles at Anahuac (1831+), the great overflow, and Cholera of 1833, the Texas uprising at Gonzales and Bexar (1835), and the invasion of Texas by Santa Anna in 1836, and the Runaway Scrape.

In his early years (?1827-28?), William was a pupil in a school taught at ?San Felipe by R. M. Williamson¹⁷ ("Three-Legged Willie"), a famous Texan character. At this time, William's father was living on his head-right on the Bernard and Peach creeks, in eastern Wharton County.¹⁸ About 1835,

¹⁵H. N. Darst, *County Auditor, to SWG, May 26, 1941.*

¹⁶For data on George Huff, see the following: Eugene C. Barker (ed.) *The Austin Papers*. Letters as follows—William Johnson to SFA (2S1824, 2N24), William Anderson to SFA (4S24), Joseph Servison to SFA (20N24), George Huff to SFA (21N24, 24N24, 31O35). See, also, *Lamar Papers*, v. 1, p. 117; and entries in the "Journal of the Permanent Council" (*Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, v. 7, pp. 249-79, of dates as follows: 10O35, 14O35), as well as W. C. Binkley, *Official Correspondence of the Texan Revolution*, v. 1, pp. 22-23, 1936.

¹⁷*Austin Texas Ranger & Lone Star*, Jan. 23, 1855. The fact that R. M. Williamson (1806-59) was a teacher in early Texas, seems to have escaped biographers and historians. (Cf. *Biographical Directory of the Texan Conventions and Congresses, 1832-1845*, [1942], p. 192.)

¹⁸Thomas J. Pilgrim tells how, when he came to Texas in 1828 with Elias R. Wightman, he was, on the Bernard, "hospitably entertained by a Mr. Huff, where I met Josiah H. Bell, on his way to his home in Columbia." (J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, 1923, p. 39.)

William Huff married Mary, daughter of William Morton of (later) Richmond, in Fort Bend County.¹⁹ As a married man, William Huff obtained (Oct. 10, 1835) a grant of a league of land on the Yegua, in present Burleson County. He seems to have been living in San Felipe about this time, where his brother-in-law, Stephen Richardson,²⁰ had a small store. On October 10, 1835, William served as election-clerk at San Felipe. After the Texas Revolution, he continued to live at San Felipe, where he kept a small store and a nondescript "hotel" of the frontier type.²¹ Upon the organization of Austin County (which also included much of present Washington, Fort Bend and Waller counties) in the Republic of Texas, he acted as foreman of the first grand jury in that county. He appears to have moved to Richmond, Fort Bend County, a few years later, and was for a time editor of the Richmond *Recorder*.²²

Huff was, everything considered, an anomalous man on the frontier. From the foregoing, it is to be seen that he was genuinely interested in natural history—particularly in geology. He was notoriously impecunious and "impractical"—Clarence Wharton, who looked upon him with little sympathy, has sufficiently labored this point in his history of Fort Bend County. Huff seems clearly to have been a misfit in early Texas. He had considerable literary ability. His photograph, here reproduced, shows refinement and intellectuality. A large manuscript volume of verses written by him, is in the possession of his grand-daughter, now living in Trinity, Texas. The verses are passable, and written in chirography

¹⁹William Morton, whose league on the Brazos River included the site of present Richmond, secured his title in the summer of 1824. It was he who introduced milk-cattle into the Fort Bend region, before the Texas Revolution.

²⁰Stephen Richardson (with William Harris) erected a primitive grist and saw mill on Chocolate Bayou (present Brazoria County) in 1834, and continued it in operation until 1838. They used a treadmill for power (or, as they put it, "the inclined plane principle"). It was this source of power that George Huff and Joseph Servison planned to employ in their proposed saw- and grist mill on Bernard Creek in Wharton County. (Cf. D. G. Wooten, *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, 1898, v. 1, p. 652; *Austin Papers*, as follows: William Johnson to SFA (2S24, 21N24), Joseph Servison to SFA (20N24), George Huff to SFA (24N24).)

²¹San Felipe at this time was a very desolate place. It had never been to any degree rebuilt after the Revolution, when it had been burned by the fleeing colonists in the Run-away Scrape—allegedly by Sam Houston's orders. Roemer, writing in 1846, says that it was a dismal, deserted place. The town consisted of five or six miserable, dilapidated log and frame buildings, of which one was a combination store and saloon. F. B. Page (*Prairiedom* . . . , 1846, p. 101) speaks of the "solitary publichouse kept there by a Virginia Yankee, a very mean sort of fellow . . . wretched fare and accommodations . . ." Advertisements in the *Houston Telegraph* (1838-46+) show that William P. Huff was a merchant of San Felipe during those years.

²²*Austin Texas Ranger & Lone Star*, Jan. 23, 1855. *Fide* Ike Moore, *Texas Newspapers, 1813-1939*, 1941, The Richmond *Recorder* was a weekly newspaper, which began publication on Jan. 2, 1836. One copy only (Dec. 8, 1852) is in the Texas State Library.

of copper-plate fineness. When we consider the meager educational opportunities offered in the schools of Texas of that day, his achievement in this regard stamps him as possessed of considerable native ability. He amassed a substantial collection of historical materials which were deposited, for safe keeping, in the Fort Bend County court house, at Richmond. There they were destroyed in a fire (January 5, 1887), which burned the building to the ground.

The HesperIIDae (Lepidoptera) of Arkansas

H. A. Freeman

The present list, based on nineteen years' collection and study of the Hesperiidæ of Arkansas, records 49 species and subspecies, in 22 genera, in that State. All, with the possible exception of *Amblyscirtes nysa* Edwards and *Erynnis funeralis* (Scud. & Burg.), are native to Arkansas. One new species (*Amblyscirtes linda* Freeman) and one new subspecies (*Polites verna sequoyah* Freeman) were described from Arkansas specimens; and were found, after considerable collecting, to be rather abundant (during brief periods) in very restricted habitats.

This paper seeks to furnish collection-data to other entomologists who desire to collect some of these species for themselves. Exact data are given only for the rarer species. Unless otherwise indicated, data are given from my own collecting experience.

The taxonomy and arrangement of species and subspecies follow Bell's monograph on the Hesperioidea.¹ The list follows:

Proteides clarus (Cram.) Commonly and widely distributed over the state during the summer months.

Urbanus proteus L. Only a very few individuals of this species were collected in Arkansas, near the Arkansas River at North Little Rock, during July and August.

Achalarus lyciades (Geyer.) Common over the entire state, during spring to early fall.

¹References to cited papers are given *in extenso* in the "Literature" at the end of this paper.