Dr. Stovall Gets His Museum

By Larry Stephenson

After living in the ground for millions of years, it probably wouldn’t matter a lot to a fossil if he were stacked in a basement to gather dust for another decade or so. But Dr. J. Willis Stovall, director of the University Museum and professor of paleontology, can’t accept such an indifferent attitude. Some very interesting palaeontological specimens are available for museum visitors, but lack of space has prevented their being displayed.

At last, though, Stovall has convinced the administration that more space now is imperative. As a result, the former R.O.T.C. buildings near Sooner City are being converted into a museum research and storage center. Most of the space in these three buildings is being made available.

The directorship of the new museum will rest in the competent hands of Dr. Stovall, whose work along these lines stems from many years spent in the geological field.

“If I believed in predestination,” muses Dr. Stovall, “I would say I was cut out to be a geologist.”

Forty years ago as a youngster living in Greer County, he used to make calls with his physician father, riding over the short grass countryside in a buggy. He was an outdoor lad, loving the sagebrush prairies, and not caring especially for fishing or hunting. His love for the outdoors was built around the beauty of wildlife and scenery.

Too, he spent long hours during the lazy summer afternoons under a western Oklahoma sun, roaming the gyp hills in search of odd rocks and Indian relics. One picture that is stamped vividly in Stovall’s mind is an outdoor painting by Grant Wood. It was, he says, “The Irishman Served the Monster’s Head in One Fell Swoop.”

The “predestined” geologist could have been a landscape painter, although he emphatically denies being an artist. Yet, he has completed numerous paintings, several of which now hang in the Geology Building on the campus.

But even “predestination” almost lost Dr. Stovall his calling at one time. After three years of undergraduate work at Texas Christian University, he went to Memphis to enter the Tennessee Medical School. He was not admitted, however, because he was deficient in organic chemistry.

Stovall was cut out for geology. His first self-imposed mission was to find geology students; his second was to prove to them that geology was a legitimate academic course of study.

Stovall was cut out for teaching. He loves to teach, and has been doing it off and on for years. He has permitted them to share by-lines with him on formal reports of discoveries made on field trips and in research.

One such student is L. I. Price, who is now the world’s leading authority on Permian reptile skulls, and who draws illustrations for books. Another is the late C. Stuart Johnston, who was a recognized authority on tertiary mammals.

Stovall has written 42 technical papers which have been published in leading journals. His first was an article entitled “Does the Brain Grow?” Written as a class assignment while in Union University, he received a “B” on the paper. He sent it to Forum Magazine which published it and sent him a check for $75.

While in Vanderbilt he regularly wrote features for the Diplocaulus Magnicoinis Cope, of the Garber (Permian) age, found at Bean Farm 10 miles northeast of Edmond in Logan County. This specimen will soon be removed from its present “resting place” in the Geology Building to the new University Museum being planned.
for the Nashville Banner. These features were not necessarily of a scientific nature, but rather were on various subjects which interested the author. During this same period he contributed feature material to many other publications.

In private life Dr. Stovall has been married to Mrs. Evelyn Wyche Love of Elizabethan, Tennessee, since 1928. The couple has one daughter, Anne, who is nine years of age.

Stovall's museum organizing at the University is not his first such job. He organized one at Union University which is now a memorial to him.

He wants the new University museum, for which he has fought 18 years, to be different from any other in the nation. Plans are elaborate. They include a large outdoor display. Among these will be a full size Osage bark lodge, Pawnee earth lodge, Mound-Builders' spiro hut, Navajo Hogan, Kiowa tepee and a Wichita grass lodge. In most cases the Indians themselves will do the construction.

Also among the outdoor displays will be a fossil garden, cactus and rock gardens, terraces for lectures and movies, with flowers, trees and ladders.

The University owes a lot to Dr. Stovall. As Dr. E. D. Meacham, '14ba, dean of Arts and Sciences, says, "Dr. Stovall has been the driving force who made this museum possible. All of his planning and planning have been directed toward the utilization of the museum, which the state of Oklahoma could be proud. While there are many curators interested in the project, Dr. Stovall has furnished the necessary continuity."

Dr. Carr Brings Daniel Lecture

"Segregation is on the way out," believes Dr. Robert K. Carr, chairman of the department of political science at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Dr. Carr, former secretary of the University's department of political science, is a specialist in the field of history and government. He is noted for his many books and articles on southern history, served as principal speaker at the annual seminar on U. S. foreign policy, which will be held at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, June 21 to July 3.

Carl Coke Rister, research professor of history, a specialist in the field of algebraic analysis.

Students at the college are selected not only from the Army, Navy and Air Force, but also from the departments of state, treasury and commerce, from the bureau of the budget and the central intelligence agency.

Each year the military staff of the college is augmented by five prominent civilian professors. Civilian instructor function as leaders of seminar groups and discussion groups whose major objective is to study the objectives and capabilities of the great powers.

Students and faculty members at the college have access to a mass of secret and confidential information. In addition, they have an opportunity to obtain first hand information of conditions in all countries of the world through a series of "off the record" discussions by experts who have just returned from trips abroad.

Dangerfield, who joined the O. U. staff in 1928, served for 16 months during the war as chief international law officer in the Judge Advocate General's Office in Washington, D. C. Last summer he was one of the 100 experts invited to attend a two-weeks seminar on American foreign policy sponsored by the Brookings Institution at Dartmouth College. Recently he attended a meeting in Washington, D. C., to assist in planning the Brookings Institution's summer conference on American foreign policies to be held at Stanford University.

Dangerfield served in 1930 as a research assistant on President Hoover's committee on recent social trends. During 1936-37 he was another leave of absence to organize and direct forums for the U. S. Office of Education.

Faculty Notes . . .

Dr. Royden J. Dangerfield, executive vice president of the University, attended a conference sponsored by the Brookings Institution on February 12 to 14 in Washington, D. C. The conference was for the purpose of planning the agenda for the second annual seminar on U. S. foreign policy, which will be held at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, June 21 to July 3.

Carl Coke Rister, research professor of history, has been invited to become visiting lecturer on United States history at the University of Glasgow for the year 1948-1949. This professorship was established in 1946 through the American embassy in London by Allen Nevins, professor of history at Columbia University.

The election of Dr. J. Rud Niehen, University research professor of physics, to a two-year term as member of the national council of the American Association of University Professors was announced recently in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dr. J. E. Fetter, dean of admissions and records, was designated by President Cross as the official U. S. representative to the national conference on higher education scheduled by the National Education Association. The conference was held March 11 through 26 in Chicago.

Dr. E. E. Dale, '14ba, and Dr. Cortez A. Ewing, well-known Sooner authorities in the fields of history and government, shared the spotlight at the Southern Methodist Science Association meeting March 26 and 27 in Dallas, Texas.

Dr. Dale, University research history professor who is noted for his many books and articles on western history, served as principal speaker at the Friday night general meeting of the group. He spoke on "Twin Problems of the Plains." Dr. Ewing, president of the Association and O. U. government professor, discussed "De Maistre and Marx in the Modern World."

Edmund Pendleton Duval, University of Oklahoma mathematics professor, is a specialist in the field of algebraic analysis.

President Cross, standing, chat amiably with Victor Barnett, managing editor of the Tulsa Tribune, at the Faculty Club banquet in March at which Barnett was principal speaker. Mrs. Barnett and J. Ray Mailock, '29eng, president of the Faculty Club and director of the School of Civil Engineering, listen.