



*The Zuhl
Geological Collection*

New Mexico State University Library



The Zuhl Geological Collection

The Zuhl Geological Collection works perfectly in the building that has been named for Joan and Herbert Zuhl, and makes the Library one of the great showcases of the Southwest.

For over thirty years Joan and Herbert Zuhl have collected fossils, minerals and rocks, both for a private collection and to be sold at their gallery on Madison Avenue in New York City. In April 2000, the Zuhls, who for the past decade have been residents of Las Cruces, generously donated their personal collection to New Mexico State University. Many of the larger floor-standing and wall-mounted specimens of petrified wood will be on permanent display on the second and third floors of Zuhl Library, while other pieces will be exhibited in the first floor lobby. In order to show the full range of specimens, the lobby display will change at least twice annually. In addition, many specimens will be used for teaching purposes by the Department of Geological Sciences.

The Zuhl Geological Collection, which numbers almost 1000 pieces, consists of three categories of geologic specimens: petrified wood, invertebrate and vertebrate fossils, and minerals and rocks.

Petrified Wood

The bulk of the Zuhl Geological Collection is composed of petrified wood ranging in size from twigs and stems a few centimeters long to logs over a meter in diameter. Although there are specimens of wood from all over the world, most come from three regions in the United States. Perhaps the most famous is petrified wood from northern Arizona, extracted from the Chinle Formation of Late Triassic age (~220 million years ago). Wood from the Chinle Formation represents conifer trees and is noted for vibrant red and yellow colors.

Equally impressive are geologically younger petrified logs of middle Tertiary age (~20 million years ago) from eastern Oregon. These logs, which consist of both conifer and angiosperm wood, have beautifully preserved growth rings. Finally, there are also many petrified twigs and stems of early Tertiary age (~40 million years ago) from Wyoming.

Invertebrate and Vertebrate Fossils

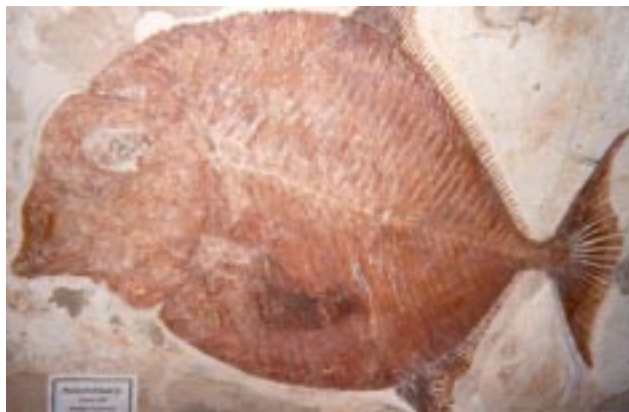
The Zuhl Geological Collection also contains a large number of fossils of invertebrate and vertebrate animals from all over the world, including trilobites, corals, ammonites, insects, and fishes. Included in the collection are fossils from three famous sites: the Solenhofn Limestone of Germany, the Green River

Formation of western Wyoming, and the White River Badlands of South Dakota. The Solenhofn Limestone is Late Jurassic in age (~150 million years ago) and was deposited in a shallow lagoon. Because of the stagnant nature of the lagoon, organisms that fell or were washed into it decayed slowly, resulting in exquisite preservation of vertebrate bones and impressions of soft tissue of invertebrates. Included among the Solenhofn fossils are fish, insects, crustaceans, and flying reptiles (pterosaurs).

The younger Green River Shale of western Wyoming consists of thousands of meters of sandstone, shale, and limestone deposited in a middle Eocene (~50 million years ago) lake. Noted for a great variety of perfectly preserved fish skeletons, the Green River Formation also contains well preserved fossil leaves. Finally, river sediment and volcanic ash of Oligocene age (~30 million years ago), exposed in the Badlands of South Dakota, contain a tremendous quantity of vertebrate fossils, including early grazers, predators and numerous tortoises.

Minerals and Rocks

The smallest part of the Zuhl Geological Collection, but nonetheless of great quality, are minerals and rocks from throughout the world. Particularly impressive are specimens of rhodochrosite, malachite, and rutilized quartz. Many of the rocks were ground and polished into spheres ranging in size from a few centimeters to a meter in diameter. -- Text, Gregory Mack. Photos, Dennis Daily and Jeanette Smith.





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maintain and preserve the
Zuhl Geological Collection
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