

THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF HEADS AND HORNS

Record Keeping of North American Big Game

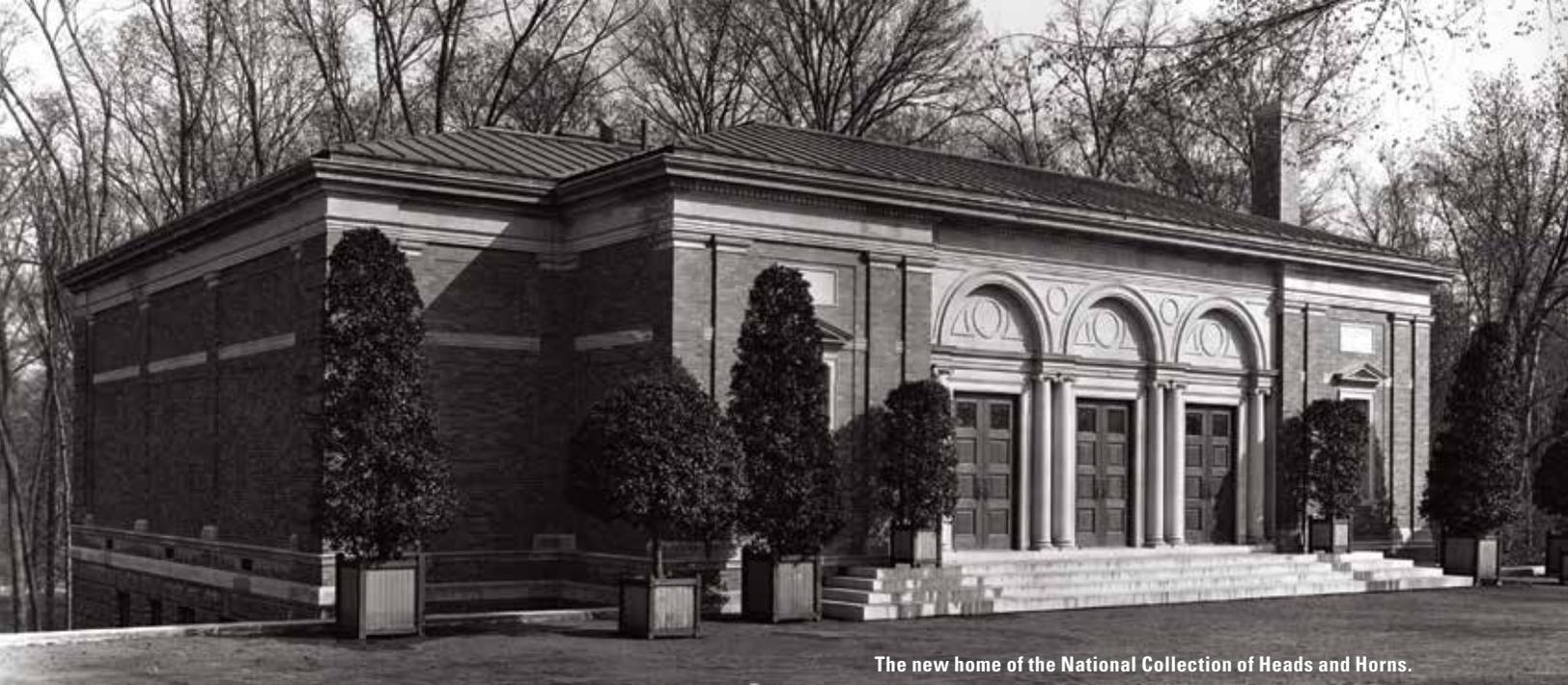
PART 3

This four part series will narrate the history and legacy of Boone and Crockett Club's National Collection of Heads and Horns. From its inception in 1906 to the big move next spring to Springfield, Missouri.

It is a story that begins with an undertaking to memorialize through museum displays big game species whose futures, at the time, looked bleak. It is, however, a story that ends on a far more positive note: the dramatic restoration of these same species to healthy and abundant numbers throughout much of their native range.

This historical recap was originally published in the 8th edition of Boone and Crockett Club's *Records of North American Big Game*.

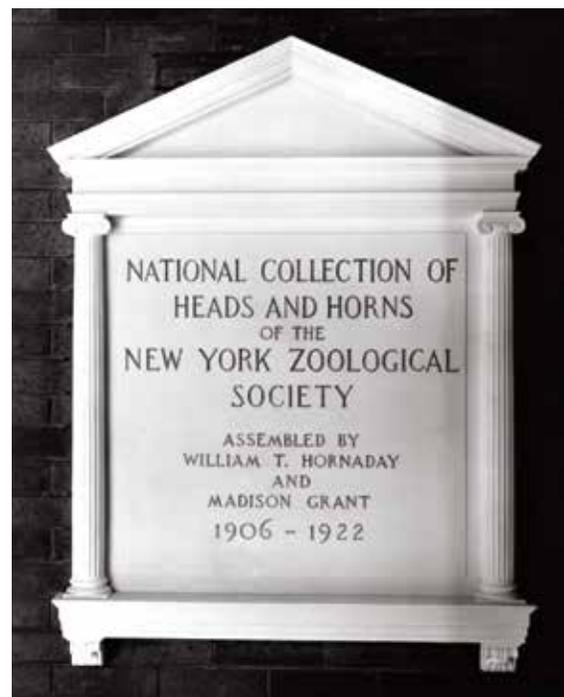




The new home of the National Collection of Heads and Horns.

In 1916 Hornaday raised \$100,000 from 10 contributors for a new building to be built along Baird Court, thus completing the grand concourse of the park. By the time Hornaday had raised the money, the first World War had come along and construction prices were rising so rapidly that the Executive Committee of the Zoological Society advised delay. Even worse, it changed Hornaday's design. In a lifetime of affronts to Hornaday's wisdom, this was the worst. The ensuing debate heated and escalated as construction costs accelerated rapidly during the War, and the \$100,000 proved inadequate. Even after the war ended, the Society had to wait for prices to come down, and then raise more money before the building could be erected. The Executive Committee backed off from its insistence on two entrances, Hornaday made some slight concessions and all was harmony when the building was finally dedicated at 4:00 P.M. May 25, 1922. Hornaday described the event in the *Zoological Bulletin* as follows:

With the dedication and opening on May 25 of the Museum of the National Collection of Heads and Horns, another dream comes true. . . . It owes its existence to the generosity and good-will-to-man of the persons whose names are as follows: Mrs. Frederick Ferris Thompson, Mrs. Russell Sage, John D. Archbold, Jacob H. Schiff, George F. Baker, Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, Andrew Carnegie, Edmund C. Converse, Samuel Thorne (In Memoriam) and George D. Pratt.... The National Collection of Heads and Horns was founded and formed as a duty owed to the American people and to the vanishing big game of the world. . . . It seemed necessary to get while the getting was good, and before further exterminations of species rendered it too late.... As wild animal extermination now is proceeding all over the world, it is saddening to think that 100 years hence many of the species now shown in our collection will have become totally extinct.



The building design was of classic, Romanesque architectural style, built of brick and Indiana limestone. It is two stories high and includes 10,842 square feet.

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Hornaday valued the collection at \$450,000 in 1922. It contained approximately 800 specimens and included 11 World's Record trophies and 14 seconds, plus other irreplaceable specimens of extreme rarity and value.

The building design was of classic, Romanesque architectural style, built of brick and Indiana limestone. It is two stories high and includes 10,842 square feet. Two main public exhibition halls were on the upper level and carried out to the letter the original plan of two distinct but equally complete series of heads and horns, arranged zoologically and geographically.

The lower level was reserved for zoologists, educators and sportsmen, with a spacious exhibition hall and areas for duplicate specimens, reference and study. The inscription carved over the entrance reads: NATIONAL COLLECTION OF HEADS AND HORNS. The flanking exterior tablet at the left was inscribed: ERECTED BY THE NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY 1922; the tablet at the right reads: IN MEMORY OF THE VANISHING BIG GAME OF THE WORLD. The building was built by the Miller-Reed Company of New York for a contract price of \$114,782.

The National Collection entered the second period of its history with the completion of the Heads and Horns Building and the appointment of Martin S. Garretson as Attendant (and subsequently curator) of the Collection in May 1924. Until then, Hornaday had maintained the tedious position of curator along with his many vigorous

responsibilities as Director of the Zoological Park. Hornaday and Garretson had been friends for many years since both were instrumental in founding the American Bison Society in 1905. Hornaday was 70 when he appointed Garretson. He had been Director of the Zoological Park for 28 years and he retired in June 1926 at the age of 72 after 30 years of service.

Exhibition merely for the sake of exhibition was the purpose of the Zoological Park in Hornaday's opinion (and the Society's), and he had accomplished this with his capstone being the Heads and Horns Museum. The Zoological Society had two other goals, conservation of wildlife and promotion of zoological science for research and education. Garretson continued Hornaday's drive to complete all the gaps in the National Collection's family orders and zoologic classifications throughout his 17-year curatorship that lasted until 1940. But a parallel development introduced definite confusion in the focus and interpretation of what the National Collection stood for and eventually led to its discredit and demise under the increasingly scientifically oriented leadership of the New York Zoological Society. That development was the big game records keeping system of the early 1930s.

In 1930, the Society's President, Madison Grant, appointed a Committee on Record Heads. That Committee issued a report in 1931 titled "Records of North American Big Game" which was signed by Prentiss N. Gray, Chairman, Kermit Roosevelt, E. Hubert Litchfield and W. Redmond Cross, Madison Grant and George Harrison. This report begins,

The committee appointed by President Grant in 1930 to compile a record of North

American Big Game trophies, is approaching the completion of its task. The idea of this record originated not through a desire to inspire hunters to indiscriminate killing in an effort to acquire a record head, nor to promote a market for heads of extraordinary size, but rather to preserve an official record of vanishing game of North America.

Subsequently in 1932 the Boone and Crockett Club's first records book, *Records of North American Big Game*, was issued under the auspices of the National Collection of Heads and Horns of the New York Zoological Society. Its foreword outlines the impetus behind the book:

Some of the best trophies which were recorded even a generation ago have entirely disappeared, relegated perhaps to attics, or the waste heap through the death of the owner who prized them for sentimental reasons. Therefore this record seems timely as preserving an authentic history of the many splendid trophies taken before some of our big game animals have been brought practically to the point of extinction... no museum can contain even a small percentage of the largest trophies and therefore this volume was conceived to record the finest specimens of North American Big Game in this country and abroad of which, after three years diligent search, we were able to obtain authenticated measurements.

Martin S. Garretson continued Hornaday's drive to complete all the gaps in the National Collection's family orders and zoologic classifications throughout his 17-year curatorship that lasted until 1940.

In 1939, the Boone and Crockett Club's second records book, *North American Big Game*, was published in cooperation with the National Collection of Heads and Horns of the New York Zoological Society and the American Museum of Natural History. The foreword contains the following appeal:

With the decimation of our game herds, we have arrived at a time when it is of utmost importance to preserve the best trophies now in existence. The National Collection of Heads and Horns of the New York Zoological Society was founded for this purpose. There, in the Bronx Zoological Park, is the finest and most comprehensive collection of heads and horns of the big game of the world, including by far the best collection of



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North American Big Game in existence, among which are many records. All owners of record heads are urged to make this collection the ultimate repository of their trophies in order that they may be preserved beyond peradventure from the ignominious oblivion that has been the lot of the magnificent specimens of the past and that this collection may be further established as a lasting tribute to these wonderful animals.

Throughout this decade, Hornaday's old friend and hand-picked successor as curator of the National Collection, M.S. Garretson, consistently affirmed Hornaday's primary theme behind the National Collection, the necessity of zoological completeness and educational relevance against the historical backdrop of the world's vanishing species.

In December 1936, the Heads & Horns Committee of the New York Zoological Society

issued a Special Report that exhaustively classified every specimen in the National Collection by zoological family and order and meticulously detailed specimens required to complete the Collection. In describing the scope of the Collection and threshold qualifications for entry of any specimen at the beginning of the Report, the Committee stated:

The Collection is one of trophies of big game of the world. Manifestly and properly so, this necessarily excludes educational or scientific phases which are the functions of natural history museums and like institutions, where complete specimens including skeletons, skins and so forth are preserved for study and research. While there may be differences of opinion as to whether certain species fall within the term "Big Game", generally speaking what is "Big Game" is pretty definitely established today, as manifested by such publications as Records of Big Game by Rowland Ward (now in its 9th edition) and Records of North American Big Game edited by Prentiss N. Gray. ■

SPOTLIGHT TROPHY WORLD'S RECORD DALL'S SHEEP DONATED BY L.S. CHADWICK

Lee Sherman Chadwick was enterprising enough to hunt Stone's sheep (*Ovis dalli stonei*) in the upper Muskwa River country of British Columbia in 1936, long before the Alcan Highway made a formerly virgin game range more accessible. He was accompanied by Roy Hargreaves, with whom he had hunted several times in that region, as well as local guides Walter (Curly) Cochrane and Frank Golata.

On the evening the campsite was reached, Hargreaves looked the country over with a 20x spotting scope and saw a few sheep on a distant mountain. The next morning, the whole party rode in that direction. In the early afternoon, they saw three rams on the skyline of a ridge, about a mile and a half away. The horses were left with the guides, while Chadwick started off with Hargreaves for the final approach.

"We went up pretty fast for a man close to 62 years of age, but when my hatband, which was tight, banked up a large pool of perspiration, I would remove the hat and scoop off several handfuls of water, take a short rest, then plod on toward the top, with dry mouth and my shoes slowly filling with perspiration.

"When we arrived at the top, the sheep were gone, as was to be expected, but we sighted them down in the Muskwa Valley, two thousand feet or more below. Then down over the rock slide, with sore feet and trembling knees, we went, until we got to within about 200 yards of them. We stopped and took movies of the three, and I undertook to shoot the big one.

"My first shot was low, through his brisket. I used the scope for the first time. He started off at a terrible speed, and I started to pour lead into him. I shot four times, one of these hitting him lightly in the hip. Roy followed him on the run and, when he started up the mountain, he could not keep up with the other rams and this gave Roy a chance to get in the finishing shot.

"He fell down a sharp ravine into a little brook. I was about all in and, of course, could not keep up with Roy. It was a very bad place to get to, but we both got down to the sheep without a fall, and when we got to him, we saw that he was well worth the hard work.

"He had the most magnificent head I had ever seen, but not an overly large body. He had two almost perfect horns. The right horn was slightly broken on the end and only measured 50-4/8 inches. The left horn was pointed clear to the end and measured 52-1/8 inches. They were both a little over 15-3/8 inches at the base and the spread was 31-2/8 inches. All told, he was the finest head I had ever seen. If he is not a record head, he is close to it."

While Chadwick's field measurements were unofficial, his hunch was absolutely correct. Scored at a World's Record 196-6/8 points, this is the only recorded ram ever taken in North America with both horns over 50 inches long, and it is widely regarded as the best big game trophy this continent has produced.

WORLD'S RECORD STONE'S SHEEP

SCORE: 196 6/8
LOCATION: Muskwa River, BC
HUNTER: L.S. Chadwick
OWNER: B&C National Collection
DATE: 1936

KEY MEASUREMENTS:
Length of horn: Right 50 1/8 - Left 51 5/8
Circumference of base:
Right 14 6/8 - Left 14 6/8
Circumference of 3rd quarter:
Right 6 6/8 - Left 7
Greatest spread: 31
Tip to tip spread: 31

