CLAUDE W. HIBBARD (1905-1973)

All scientists working in Pleistocene geology and paleontology will mourn the death of Claude William Hibbard on October 9, 1973. Death came suddenly as he was preparing for the day's work in the Museum of Paleontology of the University of Michigan at a characteristically early hour. Death came some time before 8 A.M., apparently of a heart attack. Professor Hibbard, Hibbie to his friends, is survived by his wife, Fay, a daughter and two granddaughters, his mother, four brothers, and one sister.

To all those who studied paleontology at Ann Arbor after 1946, he was a friend and counselor, ever ready with a helping hand and a cheery word. Dean Frank Rhodes has well characterized him as 'A man of immense energy, dedicated with a fierce commitment to unraveling the secrets of the earth ....' The other side of his character was an equally strong commitment to his fellow man, especially his students and colleagues at the University of Michigan.

Claude William Hibbard was born March 21, 1905 in Toronto, Kansas, at a time when the pioneer virtues of hard work, scrupulous honesty, and the duty of helping one's neighbor were still held in high honor. All through his life he practiced them but never preached except by example.

He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1933 and earned a M.S. degree from that university in 1934. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1941. The dates hint at the fact that in those depression years he had to finance his education by hard work in school and out of it.

In 1946, Hibbie returned to the University of Michigan as assistant professor and curator of fossil vertebrates. His duties included teaching which he enjoyed and excelled in, the multitudinous chores involved in caring for an already large collection of fossil vertebrates, and research in between. He won promotion to associate rank in 1949 and to full professor and curator in 1953.

Those of us who burned the midnight oil in graduate work two and three years after World War II learned to turn to him as an ever-present source of help in emergencies and of wise counsel for those in need of it. When early classes brought us to the Museum before 8 A.M. there was always light burning in his office and he had already done at least an hour's work before other members of the staff arrived. These work habits he continued to observe to his dying day.

In late spring, as soon as his teaching duties were over, he would leave for a season of field work in his native Kansas returning to Ann Arbor a week or so before classes resumed, ready to begin his indoor work and to show the fruits of his collecting to all interested parties.

His main field of endeavor was vertebrate paleontology and he specialixed in the small mammals of the Cenozoic particularly those of the Pleistocene. His collecting methods were highly successful, mainly because they were so thorough. He often said jokingly that he had to collect the whole outcrop to get enough specimens for study—and he literally did.

In doing so, he collected much ancillary material, in particular non-marine Mollusca carefully pinpointed to locality and stratigraphic position. He was ever generous in lending his collections to others for study and he co-operated with several colleagues in papers dealing with Mollusca.

His services to malacology were manifold. First, he has written extensively on the paleoecology of the Mollusca living at the same time as his mammals. Secondly, he has assembled a massive amount of material which he intended to work up after retirement but which he left in good order for his successors. Most of all, he encouraged all those who came in contact with him and who sought his advice on Pleistocene paleontology.

Those of us who were privileged to know him personally and benefited from his kindness and friendship will long remember him as a teacher and friend.

Aurèle La Rocque