

## MEMORIES OF MARVIN JONES AND MAMMALS IN THE PARIS MENAGERIE

### Marvin Jones

When I was a teenager growing up in my hometown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I became fascinated with the kinds of mammals that had been living over the years in captivity both in North America but also worldwide. Despite my tender years I was allowed to use the library in the Academy of Natural Sciences - which was the Natural History Museum of the city - that had, because of its age, an unrivalled collection of books and journals, and in various languages. One of the journals was the annual reports of the old Hamburg Zoological Gardens, which told of the arrivals by date, although the sex was not always given, and, if born there, just when and maybe parents. Some of the deaths were also reported but, as was common with all zoo reports, very little space was given to the exact animal that died, as to its arrival or birth date, which in the main is still done today. Death is not an item zoos like to talk about.

By the time I was 16 I became a keeper in the Philadelphia Zoo, for about a year. That was almost sixty years ago. Since my father, the breadwinner of the household, had died when I was 13, I now was making enough money to help with household expenses, and also had money to travel. I began with New York City, which was about a one hour ride north via the railroad. I had, of course, been reading about the zoos and aquariums of that city for years, knew where they were and how to get to them. My parents did not have an automobile so I had always used public transport and knew how to find it. At least for one who had been a long distance walker for years, one zoo, Central Park, was not that far from Penn Station. It was a relatively new zoo and, like many operated by city park departments, had no fence around it. It was open 24 hours a day, the buildings were opened and closed but that's all, in fact many of the animals had outdoor connecting cages (which they did not all have in Philadelphia) so some animals could also be seen at night in the summer, small mammals anyway. The collection was very good, not large, but good.

My next zoo was the great New York Zoological Park also called the Bronx Zoo\*, a long subway ride away. My days off at Philadelphia were weekdays, only senior keepers had Saturday or Sunday off, which was fine when one travelled since one could see the other zoo's regular keepers. Naturally having liked small mammals better than anything else, I made a beeline for that nice large house, with much larger cages than Philadelphia, and many with outdoor ones too. I made friends with the keeper there and, on about the third or so visit, he introduced me to his boss, General Curator, Lee Saunders Crandall, a kindly looking fellow with a small grey moustache and a chain smoker. We chatted, and he invited me to come with him to his office. I had told him about my books that listed all of the mammals and some of the birds and reptiles in every cage at the Philadelphia Zoo with information on when they arrived, or were born, or both, and my private lists of the species of mammals that had been in other zoos, by year of first arrival. I was not at that time keeping a list of those species that had been born or bred. He asked if I was keeping track of how long they lived and I said no, and he asked why I did not think of that. We had both read the many papers of Flower in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* so were familiar with them. Lee suggested maybe that's something I might do, after all, since the start of the War, we heard little about what was taking place in the zoos or with zoo people.

To get my interest up he said he would allow me to look at the file cards on the mammal collection of the Bronx Zoo which was cared for by his assistant, Miss Grace Davall, who he introduced me to. Grace did not smile at the idea, she was in fact very much against it, after all these were HER files, and no way was she going to allow this skinny young boy from Philadelphia to pore over them and maybe get them out of order, but Lee was the boss, so she had no choice. But she watched me as I took out a card and looked at it and made sure it went back where it was supposed to go. But, like the librarian at the Academy of Natural Sciences, she soon melted and let me alone. Over the years we became very good friends. In fact I will mention here a story that some folks have heard before, some may have not.

In 1969, when Lee was dying of cancer, I was in Vietnam with the Army and I made arrangements to have sent to him at the hospital in New York some

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\*As of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004 again officially called the Bronx Zoo.

I was told this meant 'Mort Menagerie', or 'died in the Menagerie', but there was no date shown as to when it moved there and there was no record of it in the Menagerie files either. It needs clarification. I should add here that I have been told that none of the animal dealers in Germany did any animal business during the war, but zoo records show just the opposite.

We now come to Ungulates, Perissodactyls and Artiodactyls which was the reason for my visit to Paris, and in my notebook they take up half of the pages. But I will digest this down. If you want more details of any of these species be aware that I can supply you with detailed data on most of the species and sub-species

### Perissodactyls

Just when the Menagerie had the Quagga, and if it ever bred it, I will leave up to David Barnaby. I was told by Dandelot that the word Dauw meant Quagga, but others said 'no' that was the name of the pure Burchell's zebra. Two specimens arrived from the dealer Cross, a male and female, about 1824. The male, who was called a Quagga, died 9<sup>th</sup> October 1843 and the female, called a Burchell's zebra, died 5<sup>th</sup> September 1853. The two had several young, one of which, a male born 6<sup>th</sup> July 1829, was sent to Lord Derby 7<sup>th</sup> December 1845; it will be interesting to see what it was called by Lord Derby. The third young, a female born 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1835, was sent to the Museum after she died 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1847. Two of the other young that died in 1845 and 1847 also went to the Muscum, so perhaps someone can some day look at the old folios of arrivals at the Museum in the Bird and Mammal laboratory and see what they say the specimens were. One of those little mysteries for a zoo sleuth to work on. True Burchell's did arrive in 1870 and 1871, from the Antwerp Zoo, and they too bred, but all were gone by 1894.

There were only two Cape mountain zebras, one in 1804, and a female from the Amsterdam Zoo in 1894 that died in 1919. Hartmann's mountain zebra did not arrive until 1932, and the Grant's zebra only twice, first from Hagenbeck in 1907 and later in 1966, likewise few Chapman's (in 1895 and 1896 and 1932) and, despite the fact that the species was named for a President of France, only four Grevy's, in 1911 and 1932. There were born over the years quite a few hybrids between the various zebras and domestic horses, and wild asses, or between the zebras themselves, some of which

were sent to other zoos, and one, a cross between a Chapman's and a Cape Mountain, went to Hagenbeck.

But the real forte of the Menagerie was its collection of wild asses which it bred in large numbers and over many years. Most were always called just *hemionus*, but the source of the original animals told you what they would be called today. A trio from the JdA in 1884 were said to be from Persia, so would be Onager now, the two females both bred and they died in 1896 and 1902, 11 were born, most lived, and the last a female, born 20<sup>th</sup> July 1904, died 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1928. However, far more impressive was the breeding from a pair that came from the Cutch of India which would now be called the Indian Wild ass and, as far as I know, not on exhibit in any zoo outside of India today. They came from the trapper Dussumier in 1835 and 1838 and a second male in 1844. Breeding began in 1842 and interestingly enough one of the first young went to the Hamburg Zoological Gardens in 1866 where it was called a Tibetan wild ass. In the 1800s it was common for the Menagerie to give its specimens numbers and for some species such as this to tell which animals were the parents, so one can see how the breeding transpired. From 1842 to 1872 twenty four were born and the young were sent to Antwerp Zoo, the JdA, Amsterdam Zoo and one that is now extinct, Ghent in Belgium, as well as a private party in Caen. Another rare form was the Syrian wild ass, *hemippus*, of which only two females arrived, in 1855. Both at death went to the Museum, one in 1863 which became the type of the species named by I Geoffroy St Hilaire, and the skeleton placed in the Anatomical Gallery. Additionally there was one wild ass from Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), two Kiangs and, naturally, Przewalski wild horse. And, again, there were hybrids between the various species and sub-species.

A few Malayan and more South American tapirs, three Indian rhinoceroses, one from Versailles in 1793, a male in 1850 and a female from London 1865. Also a short-lived Sumatran rhinoceros from the dealer Cross in 1885, and a single African Black rhinoceros - from Nubia and the dealer Reiche - in 1880.

Some wild swine, a few African bush pigs, Red river hogs, Warthogs and various races of *Sus scrofa*. Of note was a pair of Babirusa 14<sup>th</sup> June 1829, which had one young 10<sup>th</sup> February 1830, it lived for almost two years. A single male arrived in 1864. A few White-lipped peccary but many Collared