

THE LARGE MAMMAL BUILDING AT DALLAS ZOO

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REALIZING the popularity of such animals as the elephant, giraffe, hippopotamus and rhinoceros, the Dallas Park Board agreed that a new enclosure for these animals should be given priority in the new rebuilding programme. After studying the housing requirements of these mammals, it was decided that it would be possible to house them in one unit. The 'Large Mammal Building' was formally opened on 3rd May 1959.

Winters in Texas are relatively mild and so the new building has been designed so that both animals and spectators stay out of doors as much as possible. However, a covered spectators' walk, 14 ft. wide, was provided so that people could view the animals in their stalls during inclement weather. The animals are exhibited behind moats so that the view is not obstructed between spectator and animal. Paddock floors have been kept on the same level as the spectators' walk so that the relative size of the animals can be visualized. A pool is located in each outdoor yard, with the exception of that belonging to the giraffe. This has proved very popular with the spectators, especially when the elephants are bathing, or the hippos are playing in the water. Equally popular is the giraffe's feeding basket, suspended from a pole. Visitors seem to be greatly surprised by the extent to which the giraffe can stretch its neck when reaching for food high overhead. In order to bring the hippos close to the public, their pool was built with the moat serving as one wall of the pool. The water level comes within 18 in. of the top of the moat wall with a 10 ft. depth at this location to keep the animals from leaning on the bottom and preventing them from pushing the moat wall over. When the dimensions of the yards were planned, consideration was given to keeping the animals close to the spectators while, at the same time, giving them enough room to move about in. As the paddocks are slightly wedge shaped, the following measurements are not exact, but the animals are never more than 70 ft. away from the spectators' walk. Elephant Enclosure: 60 ft. \times 48 ft.; Rhino Enclosure: 60 ft. \times 48 ft.; Giraffe Enclosure: 48 ft. \times 72 ft.; Pigmy Hippo Enclosure: 52 ft. \times 44 ft.; River Hippo Enclosure: 48 ft. \times 48 ft.

Inside, the floors of the stalls are made out of concrete and have rough surfaces. Individual stalls are provided for the elephants and metal rings are mounted in the floors so that the elephants can be tethered when necessary. The stalls are separated from each other by two-inch steel bars. The giraffe section has been designed for three or more animals. The stall measures 50 ft. \times 22 ft.

A movable fence, mounted on rollers, has been provided as a means of separating the male from the female during births, or for separating other individuals when necessary. This movable wall is pushed out of the way when the animals are all living together. Provision has also been made to separate the hippos when they are indoors. The pool and stall can be divided in half by a steel grille and gate arrangement. Two upper levels are located in the building, one over the Pigmy Hippo quarters and one over the rhino quarters. These areas are used for feed and equipment storage. Enough hay and grain is taken from the central storage barn to these rooms to last a week. Heating units are also located on the upper levels.

In order to save time and manpower, special electrical hoists mounted on monorails were installed so that food supplies and equipment can be lifted to the upper level. It is usually not necessary to provide heated water for the animal pools; however, for emergencies, a water heater with a 100-gallon capacity was installed in the building. All the stalls are equipped with electrically operated steel roller doors which roll up at the top. Steel grille doors are used to protect the roller doors when the animals are inside. Special equipment for this building is kept at a minimum.

The animals are kept as gentle as possible so that the keepers can work round the animals. Keepers assigned to this area are not moved to other parts of the zoo and new men assigned to the section are kept under close supervision until the animals become accustomed to them. Even rhinos and hippos have become tame enough for the keepers to enter their stalls. However, we do not encourage playing with these animals or crowding them too much.

The only elephants kept at the Dallas Zoo are two young female Indian Elephants. They are being trained to obey simple commands, but they are not taught tricks to amuse the public. There are no plans, at present, to use the elephants for rides through the park or to put on shows.

A trio of Reticulated Giraffes (two females and one male) are exhibited in the building. So far, the older female has given birth to two young.

THE NEW ELEPHANT STOCKADE AT SAN DIEGO ZOO

THE new stockade for young elephants was designed by Charles R. Faust and was constructed by private contractor under the supervision of the Buildings and Maintenance Department of San Diego Zoo. Building was completed in April, 1960. It is located about 20 ft. from the entrance to the Children's Zoo.

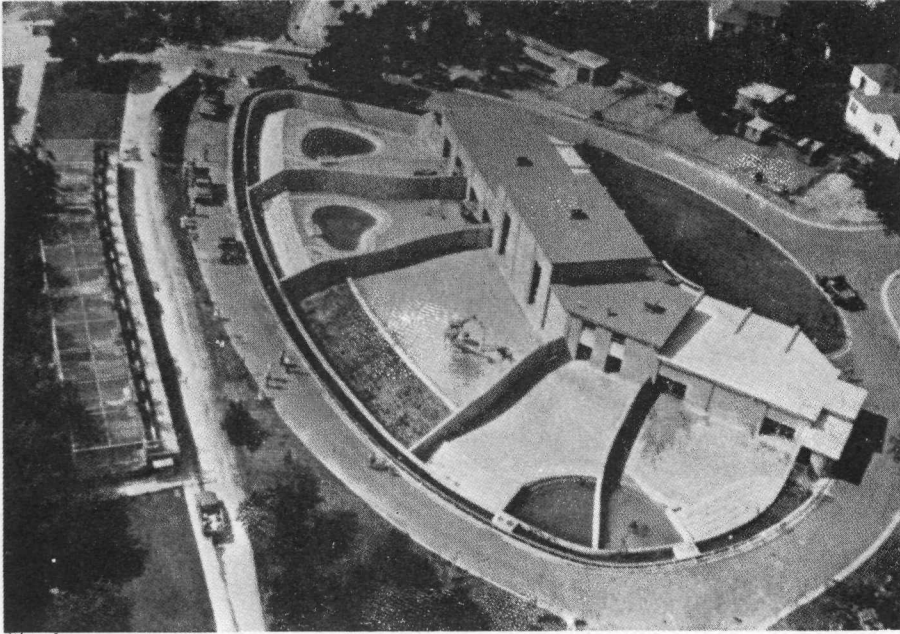


Plate I

Aerial view of the Large Mammal Building at Dallas Zoo (see pp. 1-2). On the far left is the Elephant Area with its pool, and to the right are the enclosures for the Black Rhinos, Reticulated Giraffes, Pigmy Hippos and River Hippos, in that order. All enclosures are moated and all have pools, except for that of the giraffes. The spectators' gallery is 18 ft. wide with a concrete slatted roof. The animals are separated from the visitors by a glass wall.

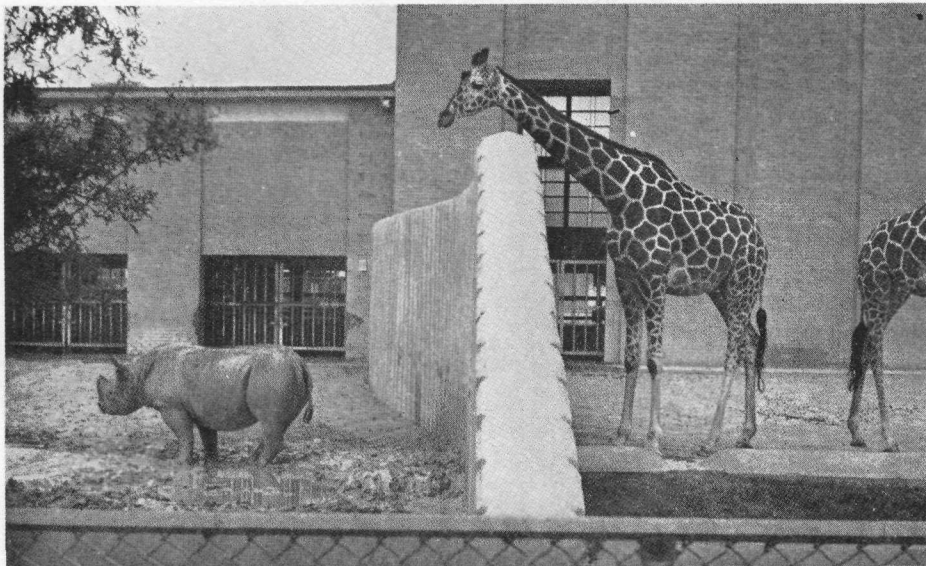


Plate II

Enclosures for Black Rhino and Reticulated Giraffe at the Dallas Zoo. The different species are separated by a concrete wall 1 ft. thick. (See pp. 1-2.)

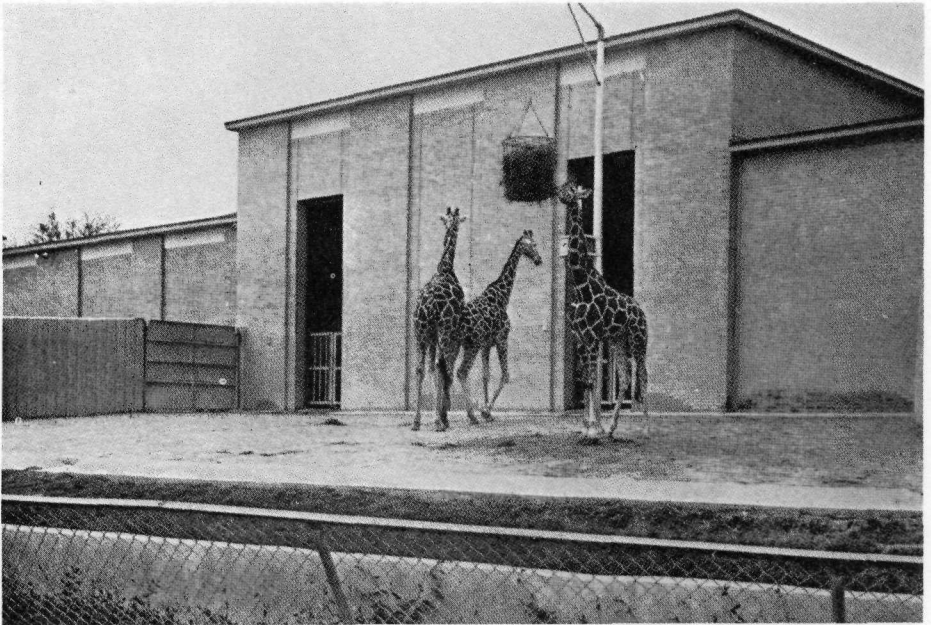


Plate III

Reticulated Giraffe Enclosure at the Dallas Zoo. The giraffes are kept out of the moat by a low 'stumbling mound' of concrete. The floor of the paddock is at the same level as the spectators' walk. In this way the relative height of the giraffe can be realized. (See pp. 1-2.)



Plate IV

'Stockade' for young elephants at the San Diego Zoo Children's Zoo. (See p. 2.)

San Diego Zoo Photo