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JOSEPH RICHARD SLEVIN (1881-1957)

Vasco M. Tanner¹

Members of the California Academy of Sciences and Herpetologists will greatly miss the genial and cooperative help of Joseph R. Slevin who died February 15, 1957, at the age of 75. For 53 years Mr. Slevin had been connected with the Academy. He first served as a collector and understudy of Dr. John Van Denburgh, next as herpetologist on the Galapagos Island Expedition sent out by the Academy in 1905-1906 and finally as a capable curator of the Department of Herpetology following the death of Dr. Van Denburgh in October, 1924.

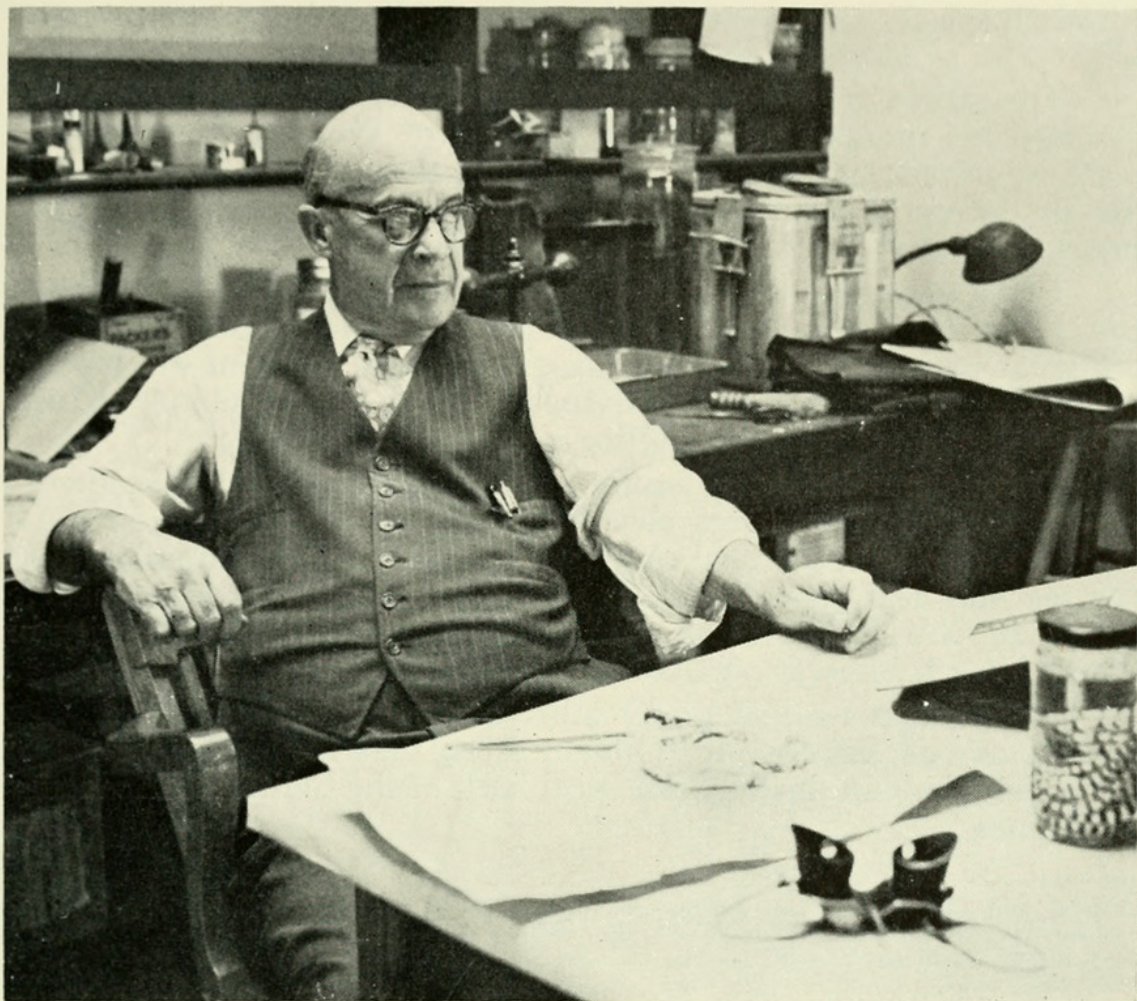
Mr. Slevin must be given much of the credit for collecting and preserving the enviable collection of more than 75,000 specimens of amphibians and reptiles now in the Academy collection. This collection has been brought together following the fire and earthquake in San Francisco in 1906. At the time of the earthquake, the Academy herpetological specimens numbered 8,100 of which number only 13 were saved from the fire.²

The Department of Herpetology of the Academy was organized in 1895 with John Van Denburgh as the first curator. In 1908 Dr. Joseph C. Thompson, a surgeon with the United States Navy, was appointed assistant curator of herpetology. This position was, however, terminated in 1912. During Dr. Thompson's association with the Academy he added his rather large collections of reptiles, which he had made in Japan, Formosa and the Philippine Islands to that of the fast growing Academy collection.

Mr. Slevin, as the second curator of herpetology at the Academy, made collections from many areas between the years 1905 and 1953. Because of the interest students of the reptiles have in the sources of a collection as now found at the Academy, the collecting trips he made are given in some detail. His first trip was made to the Revillagigedo Islands, Mexico and the Galapagos Islands in 1905-1906. This expedition returned 4,506 specimens as a nucleus for the new collection at the Academy. Many specimens were rare gigantic land tortoises from the Galapagos Islands. Fourteen species of land tortoises have been reported from these islands, thirteen of which are

1. Contribution No. 152. Department of Zoology and Entomology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

2. Joseph R. Slevin and Alen E. Leviton, 1956. Holotype Specimens of Reptiles and Amphibians in the Collection of the California Academy of Sciences. *Proc. Cal. Acad. of Sci.*, Vol. 28, 4th Series, No. 14, pp. 529-560.



Joseph Richard Slevin, Curator of the Department of Herpetology, California Academy of Sciences, 1924-1957.

now represented in the Academy collection, five of the species by type specimens.³ Mr. Slevin again visited these islands in 1928-1929.

In 1911, 1919 and 1953, Mr. Slevin collected along the coastal and interior regions of California, Oregon and Washington; 1912, 1920 and 1947 in Arizona; 1913 and 1916 in Nevada and Utah; 1913 Tehachapi Mountains, California; 1915 in Southern California, Nevada and Utah; 1917, 1927 and 1951 Southern California; 1919 Cape Region, Lower California, Mexico; 1923 San Pedro Martir Mountains, Mexico; 1924 and 1926 Guatemala; 1926 Farallon Islands, California; 1929-1930, 1936-1937, 1947-1948 in Australia; 1931 Death Valley, California; 1939 Panama; 1940 Cedros Islands, Lower California, Mexico; and 1951 Lower California, Mexico.

Mr. Slevin's collection trip into Salt Lake, Summit, Wasatch, Utah, Emery, Grand and Beaver Counties of Utah in 1913 was one of the early careful studies to be made of the reptiles found in this state. Although he succeeded in getting only 36 of the now recog-

3. John Van Denburgh, 1914. Expedition of the California Academy of Sciences to the Galapagos Islands. Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci. 4th Series, Vol. II, pt. 1, pp. 203-375; pls. 12-124.



Tanner, Vasco M. 1957. "JOSEPH RICHARD SLEVIN (1881-1957)." *The Great Basin naturalist* 17, 56–58.

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