

Museum Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

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MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

One of the oldest, built in 1901, structures on Mt. Oread is the Museum of Natural History. The Museum is often called Dyche Museum after Lewis Lindsay Dyche, by whose interests and dedication the idea behind this unique museum made its construction possible. In this history of the Museum, backgrounds of Dyche and of the Museum will be put forth revealing some colorful and informative material. To begin with a short description of Dyche and his links with the University and ultimately the Museum of Natural History will be discussed.

An unusual man was Lewis Lindsay Dyche, combining energy, ability and skill with a flair for showmanship, he brought to himself and the University. Dyche lived all of his life but three months in the Wakarusa Valley. He attended the University of Kansas. After graduating he was asked back to the University in a new role, to teach natural history. In 1866 the young man who was to teach natural history called on Chancellor R. Oliver. In the course of the conversation he asked whether any provisions had been made for collecting specimens. Dr. Oliver replied, "About all you can do now is to take your gun and go hunting." And that Dyche did, with expeditions to the Rockies and elsewhere.

One of the men that had a strong influence of Dyche was Francis Huntington Snow, who really laid the foundation for a museum by maintaining a deep interest in natural history.

Dyche first became widely known as the result of a display of more than one-hundred of his "stuffed animals" at the 1893