

P. T. Barnum, Jumbo the Elephant, and the Barnum Museum of Natural History at Tufts University

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In 1883, the great showman P. T. Barnum agreed to build an eponymous museum of natural history on the campus of Tufts University, which he had served as a founding trustee. After a long career managing dime museums and a travelling circus, Barnum hoped to secure a positive legacy through the creation of an unambiguously serious institution. In addition to building and collections funds, Barnum supplied the Tufts museum – as well as the Smithsonian and American Museum of Natural History in New York – with exotic and valuable dead animals from his circus. Barnum brought his influence to bear on the latter two in order to develop his museum at Tufts. His greatest prize was Jumbo the Elephant, whose skin and bones were involved in a contentious tug-of-war among the three museums following his death in a train accident in 1885.

WHEN Phineas Taylor Barnum died in 1891, he was among the best-known men in America, if not the world. During the middle years of the nineteenth century, he achieved fame and notoriety as the proprietor of more than one incarnation of his American Museum in New York City, and in later decades he was widely known as the chief impresario of ‘The Greatest Show on Earth’, the massive, spectacular travelling circus and menagerie. A tireless self-promoter and media hound, he helped give shape to modern notions of celebrity and mass entertainment. Along the way, he made household names of Tom Thumb, the Feejee Mermaid, Jenny Lind, and Jumbo the Elephant, among others. Much less familiar, then and now, are Barnum’s efforts to build another museum devoted to natural history on the campus of Tufts University in the suburbs of Boston. Founded in 1883 during the heyday of American natural history museums and dismantled sixty years later, the Barnum Museum at Tufts once boasted an outstanding collection of zoological specimens, led by Barnum’s stuffed pachyderm, Jumbo.¹ The history of the formation of this little-known institution contributes to our knowledge of the development of natural history museums in America, including the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, and the American Museum of Natural History

(AMNH) in New York, and it also sheds light on the serious aspirations and philanthropic impulses of the great showman. If Barnum is remembered today principally as a huckster and entrepreneur who believed ‘there is a sucker born every minute’, we should remember he was also a self-educated advocate of temperance who preached the Victorian virtues of self-improvement, education, and innocent recreation, and the two sides of his personality were reconciled above all in his creation of and support for circuses and museums.² Coming towards the end of his long public career, the Barnum Museum at Tufts represented the culmination of an abiding desire to converge the pursuits of edification and entertainment.

The Barnum Museum at Tufts

Barnum’s museum was conceived as part of a campaign to expand the Tufts campus during the transformational presidency of the Revd Elmer Hewitt Capen (1875–1905). When Tufts was founded in 1852 all functions, from library and lecture room to student dormitory and faculty offices, were concentrated in a single building on a hill offering a vista of downtown Boston. The gradual addition of new residence-halls around a fledgling quadrangle allowed for growth in

the student body, but core facilities were still lacking. Acknowledging an increasingly competitive educational environment, Capen told his trustees: ‘We must be progressive and aggressive if we expect Tufts College to maintain the rank it has gained among New England institutions.’³ In his inaugural address in 1875, he identified a separate library, gymnasium, chapel, and science building as top priorities and he set out to find willing benefactors. In 1881 Capen initiated a drive to raise \$150,000 for new buildings. Mary Goddard, the widow of a trustee, gave money for a new chapel and gymnasium. In hope of funding a new science building, Capen reached out to P. T. Barnum.

Barnum was an obvious target for Capen’s capital campaign. A life-long supporter of the Unitarian Universalist faith with which Tufts was affiliated, Barnum had agreed to be one of the College’s founding trustees. Though his booming career prevented him from attending trustee meetings and compelled him to resign from the board after five years of service, he continued to follow Tufts’s progress with interest. In the meantime he had also prospered and become known for charitable giving – almost too well known. When Capen first approached Barnum for a donation of \$30,000 for a museum housing scientific facilities, Barnum was reluctant in good part because he feared it would unleash further solicitations and incite ‘hard feelings among heirs and poor relations.’⁴ By May of 1883 Capen had persuaded Barnum to give the money but on two conditions: first, the gift must be kept secret, even from his wife, preferably until after his death; second, once his identity as donor was disclosed the building should ‘be forever called the Barnum Museum of Natural History’.⁵ It was only a matter of days, however, before the urge for self-display got the better of discretion. Barnum was soon suggesting that a self-portrait should ornament the entrance and that his name should go over the door. ‘You see the passion for display is “strong in death”,’ he wrote.⁶ Once he had committed to the idea of an eponymous museum, he was keen to see it built as soon as possible – ‘the quicker you get at it and the faster you drive it, the better I shall like it. Life is short.’⁷ He feared the revelation of his gift would ‘open the flood-gate of begging letters from all parts of the earth but I must stand that.’⁸

The Barnum Museum combined Capen’s need for a science building and Barnum’s life-long interest in

uplifting public spectacles and self-promotion. Fuelled by global exploration, positivist values, and an ideology of progress, Victorian science was dedicated to the study and classification of specimens, which museums both demonstrated and enabled. Natural history had also become popular with the middle-class public, giving rise to respectable new hobbies such as mineral and insect collecting, bird watching, and amateur palaeontology.⁹ Barnum capitalized on this growing interest in his New York museums (both destroyed by fire) and later in his circus and menagerie, whose educational value he trumpeted. ‘The menagerie of wild beasts, birds and reptiles – comprising every curious specimen of animal life from the denizens of the torrid African jungle to those of the Polar region – forms a study that will impart more valuable information in two hours than can be obtained from reading books on zoology in a year.’¹⁰ He was an early supporter of, and contributor to, both the Smithsonian Institution in Washington (founded 1846; National Museum opened 1881; National Zoo, 1889) and the AMNH in New York (founded 1869). Both thanked him publicly for his generous donations of animal specimens from his menageries.¹¹ Perhaps in return for Barnum’s generosity, the Smithsonian’s secretary, Joseph Henry, recognized his American Museum ‘as a *public institution*, entitled to receive . . . casts of everything that other public institutions received from the Smithsonian.’¹² The respectability Barnum sought, but never received, from his early establishments would surely come with the creation of a university museum devoted to high learning and serious science.

Construction of the museum proceeded quickly once Barnum’s gift was in hand. By June of 1884, just a year after Barnum and Capen had agreed to terms, the building was ready for a dedicatory inscription. Capen proposed Latin, to which Barnum responded, mindful perhaps of broader public interest, ‘I have no objection to Latin but somehow for we chaps who don’t understand Latin there ought to be in plain English an inscription inside or out, permanent, Barnum Museum of Natural History.’¹³ It seems brevity was the compromise as ‘Barnum fecit AD MDC–CCLXXXIII’ was carved into the stone lintel above the entrance. Ill health prevented Barnum from attending Commencement ceremonies at Tufts in June to inaugurate his building in person, but he sent comments to be read, expressing hope that the museum would

prove ‘another factor in the work of the College, helping it on its high career of usefulness.’¹⁴

Designed by the architect John Philipp Rinn (1837–1905) of the Boston firm Andrews, Jones, Biscoe & Whitmore, the Barnum Museum (Figs. 1–3), rose two stories above a basement level fitted with a laboratory and lecture room. The ground floor included a library and vestibule, complete with Thomas Ball’s marble bust of Barnum. The upper floor featured a well-lighted mezzanined grand hall, 34 feet high and 70 feet long by 50 wide, intended for the display of natural history specimens, mostly displayed in wood and glass cabinets. On the eve of its completion the university magazine asserted: ‘It will be equaled by few museums in the country either in point of size or elegance.’¹⁵ Together with the new chapel, also designed by Rinn and built of local blue stone, the new museum flanked the original college building and gave the campus an increased sense of coherence and completeness.

Once the building was ready for occupation, it took several months to install the varied collection. As early as the 1850s, John P. Marshall (1832–1901), Tufts’s first professor of geology and chemistry, had begun collecting and soliciting donations of specimens, mostly geological, for use in classes. A purchase fund established by Mary Goddard allowed Marshall to shop for minerals and fossils from dealers and collectors in Europe and closer to home. Gifts of random

ethnological material, coins, curiosities, and stuffed birds rounded out the eclectic collection. Marshall’s ambition for the new museum, encouraged by Barnum, was to amass a comprehensive display of natural history. In keeping with pre-Darwinian notions of science, an orderly arrangement of animals and plants would yield knowledge of and mastery over the natural world. It would also reveal, as Barnum himself put it, ‘the infinite wisdom and power of the Creator’.¹⁶ In other words, nineteenth-century museums of natural history had both a scientific and a theological purpose ideally suited to the moral and intellectual formation of young men and women.

Barnum provided funds for the museum building; he also helped build its collections. For years he had supplied dead animals from his menagerie to museums in Washington and New York. Henceforth he would do the same for his museum at Tufts. He also promised that Tufts would one day get his prize beast, Jumbo the Elephant.¹⁷ Because the Tufts museum had no means of preparing dead animals for exhibition, Barnum put Marshall in touch with Henry Augustus Ward, proprietor of Ward’s Natural History Establishment of Rochester, New York. Educated at Harvard, where he briefly served as an assistant to the great scientist Louis Agassiz, Ward (1834–1906) became a leading taxidermist and naturalist in his own right.¹⁸ Ward travelled widely, building his knowledge of the natural world and collecting specimens for sale. His travels took him to Africa, Central America, the West Indies, Russia, and through Europe to the Middle East. He also journeyed to the American West, where he dabbled in gold mining and befriended William (‘Buffalo Bill’) Cody, reminding us that the business of ‘show’ in the nineteenth century encompassed both legitimate museum displays and Wild West extravaganzas.

Ward was among the first to recognize and foster a growing appetite for natural history collections on American university campuses and in civic museums. One of Ward’s important disciples, William T. Hornaday (1854–1937), said of him that he had done ‘more to inspire, to build up, and to fill up American museums than any other ten men of his time or since his time. But for him, our American museums would never have forged ahead as they did from 1870 to 1890.’¹⁹ By his own account he assembled natural history collections for over 200 American institutions, including numerous colleges and universities, among



Fig. 1. The Barnum Museum of Natural History, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts (1884), c.1887. Photo: Barnum Collection, Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.



Fig. 2. Gallery, Barnum Museum of Natural History, c.1930. Photo: Rollins Collection, Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.



Fig. 3. Specimen cases, Barnum Museum of Natural History, c.1920. Photo: Historical Materials Collection (UA136), Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.

them Vassar, Northwestern, Yale, Grinnell, Lehigh, Elmira, Earlham, Cornell, and Tufts. He also worked regularly for the AMNH and the Smithsonian, to both of which he sent specimens and trained taxidermists, notably Hornaday and Carl Akeley (1864–1927), who each went on to enjoy important careers in

museums. In addition to his own trips in search of stock, he became a US agent for European suppliers, including Deyrolle in Paris and the Blaschka brothers in Germany, famous for their glass models of plants and marine invertebrates. Another important source of specimens for Ward were the circuses and menageries

that toured the United States – none bigger than Barnum’s. Through taxidermy, deceased animals from travelling menageries enjoyed an afterlife as mounted museum exhibits. Soon enough museums would employ their own taxidermists and mount their own collecting expeditions, but for many years in the late nineteenth century Ward operated as an essential middleman.

In November 1883 Ward paid Tufts a visit with a commitment from Barnum to provide \$5,000 to start a collection under his guidance.²⁰ As he did for other small and understaffed colleges, Ward worked closely with Marshall to plan the formation of a ‘Zoological Cabinet’ – in this case, one that would be ‘more scientifically (systematically) complete than is any other collection except that of Agassiz [at Harvard] East of the Hudson.’²¹ He assured Marshall that the collection would both fulfil ‘the demands of systematic science’ and ‘comprehend forms which make a fine display’.²² Aiming to provide comprehensive service, Ward further offered to design the wall-cabinets and to provide text labels for the exhibits. Relying on unimpeded visual access to specimens and the accurate ordering of species and genera in relation to each other, natural history museums were only as good as their displays and labelling.

Following Ward’s visit to Tufts, Marshall returned with Ward to Rochester where the two men drew up an eighteen-page catalogue that gave precedence to ‘Beasts, Birds, Reptiles and Fishes.’²³ In addition to an initial delivery of some 250 mounted animals and 150 shells and coral pieces from Ward’s stock, a three-way arrangement with Barnum, Ward, and Tufts secured a future supply of new specimens. When animals from *The Greatest Show on Earth* died, the carcasses would be sent to Ward who would then prepare and offer them to Tufts. If Tufts wanted them, the price of mounting and delivery would be taken from Barnum’s acquisition fund. If Tufts declined a given specimen but Ward wanted it for his own stock, he would give Tufts credit towards future work. For example, in 1886 when he received a camel from Barnum, he wanted \$75 to prepare it or offered Tufts a \$10 credit; for a small red kangaroo, he asked \$25 or offered a further \$10 credit. If neither Tufts nor Ward had need of a given animal, no credit would be offered; Ward informed Marshall that should he receive, say, a peccary from Barnum he could offer Tufts nothing because he already had thirty-three of the stuffed pig-

like creatures waiting to be sold!²⁴ Barnum evidently believed Ward was the best in the business but he was wary of being overcharged. He cautioned Marshall that Ward could become ‘too greedy’ yet was also confident he could be ‘bargained down to low prices by shrewd Yankees.’²⁵ Perhaps in part to keep Ward honest, Barnum sent occasional work for Tufts to a second taxidermist, John Wallace of New York.

The arrangement between Ward and Tufts was not always straightforward. Though Barnum had been giving dead animals to museums since the early 1870s, he needed to renegotiate this agreement with his various business partners over the years. In July of 1883, Barnum got his partners to consent once more to donate the museum animals from the menagerie after they died. As he confided to Elmer Capen, his partners ‘cared more for dollars than for science or for the museum and it is only because they don’t happen to see dollars in our dead animals that they don’t as yet interfere with my giving them for the benefit of the museum.’²⁶ Three years later, however, his partners had come to see the dollars at stake in their menagerie assets. As Barnum explained to Capen, a recent partner and experienced menagerie man, James Cooper, was proving more

... illiberal than my other two partners, Hutchinson & Cole – and as Cooper has charge of the animal department, he takes pride in cutting me off from obtaining our dead animals free. When I get my three partners together in March next, I shall endeavor to remedy this, especially so far as small animals are concerned. I own but 3/8ths of the entire show, and not being personally with it I can’t do so much in this way. But I shall do my best.²⁷

If peccaries and other small animals had little value on the open market, extraordinary creatures could command a handsome price. Ward estimated that the carcass of large male lion with a heavy mane could fetch \$75–100, while a rare double-horned rhino was worth \$1,500. In both cases, Barnum contented his partners and had them mounted for Tufts.²⁸ Among the animals that came to the Barnum Museum via Ward in the 1880s and early 1890s, besides the large lion and double-horned rhino, were other species of carnivorous cats and monkeys; camels, llamas, and bears; tapirs and anteaters; elks, antelopes, hyenas, and hartebeest; a kangaroo, giraffe, peccary, coati, cassowary, porcupine, and ostrich.²⁹

Marshall was grateful for what Barnum provided, but at the same time he wanted to remind the world

‘the primary intention of our museum is the instruction of our students rather than the amusement of the sight-seeing public.’³⁰ Barnum’s menagerie by design had more in common with a curiosity cabinet than a modern teaching collection. Ward called the Barnum Museum’s ‘series of rarer exotic animals the finest in America’ but a teaching museum needed more than exotica.³¹ Marshall was happy to give Barnum’s ‘pets . . . a kind of immortality in the museum he has so generously created for us’, yet he hoped to balance donations of rare creatures with acquisitions more relevant to routine pedagogy – everyday flora and fauna that no curiosity seeker would pay to see. At times Marshall also wrestled with the showman’s natural tendency to favour visual effect over utility: ‘Evidently Mr. Barnum prizes mounted skins above mounted skeletons. I want more skeletons.’³²

To meet the Museum’s need for more prosaic but pedagogically useful specimens, Barnum brokered another triangular deal, this one involving his menagerie, Tufts, and the Smithsonian in Washington. As mentioned above, Barnum had had an arrangement to supply the Smithsonian with dead animals from the early 1870s. Following the creation of the Tufts museum, he asked for something in return for his gifts. In March of 1884, Barnum informed Elmer Capen that he would soon be seeing the Smithsonian’s secretary, Spencer F. Baird (1823–87), and ‘expect to get him to present duplicates to your Museum as some offset to the many dead animals which I present to his institution.’³³ Baird soon confirmed in writing that he would be happy to provide specimens ‘in return for the many favors you have rendered the Smithsonian.’³⁴ A year passed without further exchange of letters – or specimens. Alarmed by the diminished flow of animals to Washington, Baird wrote an imploring letter to Barnum: ‘May I not put in another plea for the National Museum in connection with the animals that die in your great Menagerie? We have enjoyed your favor in this respect for so many years that the cessation has been a source of serious concern.’³⁵ Barnum assured Baird he had no intention of cutting off the Smithsonian, and reiterated his plan to donate Jumbo, but he also made clear his desire to help ‘my little pet museum at Tufts.’³⁶ At the same time, Barnum wrote to Tufts, underscoring the leverage he had over the Smithsonian, and urged Marshall to go in person to Washington to select objects for the Barnum Museum.³⁷

Marshall duly sent a list of desiderata – including plants of the western United States, fossils and minerals, invertebrates, and archaeological materials – and followed with a visit to Baird in the autumn of 1885. As Marshall later recalled, the audience with Baird did not go well:

I did not feel very enthusiastic over the results of my visit. While Prof. Baird was apparently cordial, he did not offer to give me any information in regard to what the Smithsonian or National Museum had for exchange. It seemed that they had found out at Washington the best way how not to do it. A remark made by Prof. Baird showed how little he appreciated your effort to found the Barnum Museum. ‘What need is there,’ he said, ‘of another Museum near Harvard College.’ He could not understand that such a Museum would enlist the sympathies and efforts of a large class in our country, besides being a most useful factor in a College education, that every college must have its Nat. History collections on its own ground and not two or three miles distant.³⁸

Barnum was disappointed by the Smithsonian’s ‘meanness’ and decided that since ‘Prof. Baird cannot or will not carry out his promises’ he would henceforth send all dead animals from the menagerie to Ward in Rochester for the Tufts museum. Beyond the snub, Barnum had no time to play go-between: ‘I want this matter simplified so that I need not hereafter be often bothered with details of skins and bones.’³⁹ In hope of settling matters, he asked Marshall to send him a list of specimens, which he would then forward to Baird with another clear reminder of what the Smithsonian stood to lose should his wishes not be met.⁴⁰

Evidently the favourable results Barnum anticipated were not forthcoming. In the summer of 1886 Tufts received a shipment from Washington, but it was much smaller than expected – ‘the small collection rec’d from them did not occupy one twelfth the space that I reserved for them’, Marshall reported, and moreover included unnecessary duplicates.⁴¹ Marshall allowed there might have been a misunderstanding, that the Smithsonian curators could have confused the Tufts order with that of another college, since ‘Country academies get collections similar to the one sent us, by making application through the representatives in Congress from their districts.’⁴² But the problem was not easily resolved. Over the next two years correspondence back and forth reveals further misunderstandings, delays, and growing irritation on all sides.

Eventually brought to task by Barnum, William Hornaday at the Smithsonian pleaded ignorance, apologized for the confusion, and set about satisfying Tufts's requests. In May 1888 he informed the impatient showman that he had just dispatched a 'first class' set of mineral duplicates and stone implements, 'the best collection the museum has ever sent out,' and that a second shipment of invertebrates would soon follow, complementing the one sent two years earlier, which included specimens 'such as are never furnished to institutions applying through members of Congress.'⁴³ Unfortunately, this new consignment also proved somewhat disappointing. Marshall wrote to Hornaday's superior at the Smithsonian, George Brown Goode (1851-96), that the minerals and artefacts were mostly 'duplicates of what we already have', though they would prove 'useful for purposes of instruction'.⁴⁴ Marshall's tepid response infuriated Hornaday. He wrote to Goode: 'Mr. Marshall is offensively critical and without any cause whatsoever. Evidently nothing less than the universe will satisfy him. He deserves to be brought up this time with a round turn, and put on the defensive from this time on.'⁴⁵ Choosing a more diplomatic course, Goode reached out to Barnum. In the spring of 1889 further requests from, and shipments to, Tufts followed, but these elicited yet more mild complaints about the quality and preparation of samples, which brought Hornaday to a boil.⁴⁶ Bypassing Goode, he wrote in-temperately to Barnum:

I must say I am very sorry that Professor Marshall is so ill pleased, indeed, I might even say disgusted, for that is what his tone clearly implies, with what we have sent to your Museum. Seriously, Mr. Barnum, I do not think we can ever please him with anything, and hereafter it will be a matter of indifference whether he is pleased or not with what we send.⁴⁷

Barnum sent the letter to Marshall with a personal note: 'Take this coolly. Don't refer to it. Whom the Gods wish to destroy they first make mad. Guess Hornaday will help us yet.'

Sure enough, once mollified by Barnum and perhaps reined in by Goode, Hornaday was once more encouraged to cooperate. In March 1890, a significant consignment was sent to Tufts, which included large and small casts of fish species, an ancient Assyrian inscription, Native and Central American artefacts, a meteorite, and 118 marine invertebrates collected by the new marine research vessel USS *Albatross*, to-

gether with 'the exact name, locality and depth of each specimen given.' Hornaday wanted it understood, 'This is the best collection of invertebrates ever sent out from here, and it would cost at least \$500 to duplicate it.'⁴⁸ This time the delivery was as good as promised and Barnum happily reported to Hornaday that he had received from Marshall 'a glowing description of the specimens which you have sent to the Barnum Museum. I thank you and Prof. Goode and the Smithsonian and National Museum for these contributions.'⁴⁹

Barnum and Marshall were at last satisfied, yet Barnum's relationship with the Smithsonian had been irrevocably damaged. A year before his death, he told Hornaday: 'I confess that I have felt that the National Museum did not contribute as much as she easily could, and ought, toward the Tufts Museum.'⁵⁰ The Smithsonian would not be the last museum to feel the sting of an unrequited donor who holds out on a precious gift. For many years, Barnum felt a patriotic obligation to help the Smithsonian, supplying animals, and taking part in early plans to create a national zoo. It was long his intention to give the National Museum his prize elephant, Jumbo, the most famous animal in the world. In the late nineteenth century, Jumbo was equal (if not superior) to the *Mona Lisa* in terms of public interest, and correspondence with Barnum never failed to mention Washington's desire to acquire the celebrated beast. In the end, the Smithsonian's inadequate courtship of a mighty patron cost it a unique gift.

Jumbo the Elephant

The story of Jumbo has been often told and needs only brief summary here.⁵¹ Captured as a young elephant in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) in 1861, he was acquired by the Jardin des Plantes in Paris before being sent to England in 1865 in an exchange with the Zoological Society of London. In the years following, Jumbo grew to be the largest elephant in captivity and became the crowd favourite of the London Zoo. For children – including those of Queen Victoria and the young Winston Churchill – no visit to the Zoo was complete without a ride on his back (Fig. 4). But not long before he was sold to Barnum in 1882, Jumbo had begun to show signs of aggressive and potentially dangerous behaviour (symptoms of what is know in



Fig. 4. Jumbo with riders, c.1880. Photo: Archives, Tufts University, Medford, MA.

elephant circles as ‘musth’). Fearing a public catastrophe, zoo authorities accepted Barnum’s handsome offer to purchase the elephant for \$10,000. The sale triggered huge public outcry and controversy in Britain, which Barnum, ever the master of public relations, turned to great advantage. The story of Jumbo’s exodus from London and arrival in New York was serialized in the press (Fig. 5) and much hyped by the showman. By the time Jumbo joined *The Greatest Show on Earth*, he was already a household name on both sides of the Atlantic.

By virtue of his unrivalled size and celebrity, Jumbo remained the star attraction of the circus until his accidental death in a collision with a train in St Thomas, Ontario, on 15 September 1885. No stranger to a business setback or loss of animal life in his menagerie, Barnum made plans to ensure Jumbo’s posthumous fame almost as soon as he came to America. Though Jumbo was a healthy twenty-one-year-old elephant when he crossed the Atlantic in 1882, the stresses of captivity, constant rail travel and performance in an alien climate, not to mention the rudimentary state of veterinary medicine, made the longevity of circus animals unpredictable. After his second year on tour, in the autumn of 1883, Jumbo came down

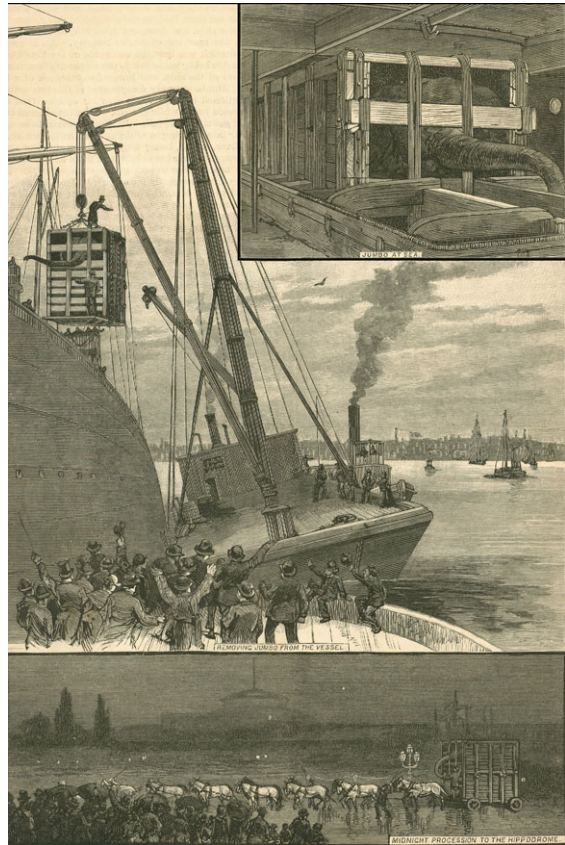


Fig. 5. ‘How Jumbo crossed the Ocean’, *Harper’s Young People*, 25 April 1882.

with a mysterious ailment that caused him to lose energy and weight. With his prognosis uncertain, Barnum contracted with Ward to give immediate priority to mounting his remains if and when he should perish. ‘I shall have my managers understand that if we lose Jumbo (which Heaven forbid!) you must be telegraphed to immediately, and hope you will lose no time in saving his skin & skeleton.’²⁵² Barnum shrewdly anticipated that even in death Jumbo could be a valuable attraction in his travelling show.

And so Ward was ready when news came of Jumbo’s accident in Canada. In fact, he may have been especially well prepared since just two weeks before his death the circus had passed through Rochester and Jumbo’s keeper, Matthew Scott, had confided in Henry Ward’s cousin, Frank, that ‘he does not think that he will live long, that it is now nearly a year since he has been able to lie down.’²⁵³ In any event, two days after Jumbo’s death, Barnum wired Ward: ‘Go ahead, save



Fig. 6. Jumbo killed in St Thomas, Ontario, Canada by a GTR. freight train, 15 September 1885. Photo: Historical Materials Collection (UA136), Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.

skin and skeleton . . . Have not doubt you will finish both for Exhibition.⁵⁴ With the 1885 season coming to an end, it was decided that Jumbo's mounted hide and skeleton would both accompany the circus when it set out on tour the following spring.

Ward worked furiously through the winter, aided by a young Carl Akeley, who went on to a successful career at the Field Museum in Chicago and at the AMNH, where he designed the great room of African mammals that now bears his name (see below). Following advice from Spencer Baird, Barnum wrote to Ward encouraging him to increase Jumbo's height during stuffing. 'It will be a grand thing to take all advantage possible in this direction,' wrote Barnum. 'Let him show like a mountain!'⁵⁵ The purpose of taxidermy was to perpetuate in death the appearance of life; typically, it involved (re)presenting a given specimen in the best possible condition, free of blemish (including unsightly bullet holes) and in the prime of life.⁵⁶ While Jumbo was alive, Barnum had always prevaricated on the subject of his actual size, allowing imagination and rumour to inflate estimates.⁵⁷ Once dead and stuffed, a definitive reckoning was unavoidable, so Barnum leapt at the chance to enhance his dimensions for posterity. Jumbo's mounted hide and skeleton (Figs. 7–8) were finished by late February 1886 and Barnum orchestrated a media event in

Rochester, hoping to prime public curiosity for the upcoming season. By all accounts, Jumbo was as popular dead as alive and he travelled with the circus through Barnum's triumphant return to London in the winter of 1889–90.

Even as Barnum calculated Jumbo's posthumous worth in the years leading up to the fatal train collision, he expected public interest eventually to wane and all the while gave thought to a permanent home for his great elephant beyond the circus. As early as July 1883, a year after Jumbo's acquisition and only two months after committing to build the Barnum Museum, he got his partners to agree to give Jumbo to Tufts once he died.⁵⁸ Whether Tufts would receive Jumbo's skin or skeleton he did not say – perhaps it had yet to occur to him that he might have two Jumbos to dispose of. A year later he wrote to Spencer Baird:

my manager and self think Jumbo's skin or skeleton should go to your Institution, you taking your choice, and then the 'Barnum' Museum at Tufts College take the other . . . P.S. We hope however that Jumbo may yet live many years, but think it as well to decide now as ever where he shall be distributed when he ceases to breathe.⁵⁹

Barnum believed his great trophy belonged in a national museum. He also thought it especially fitting that an animal that first achieved fame in Great Britain

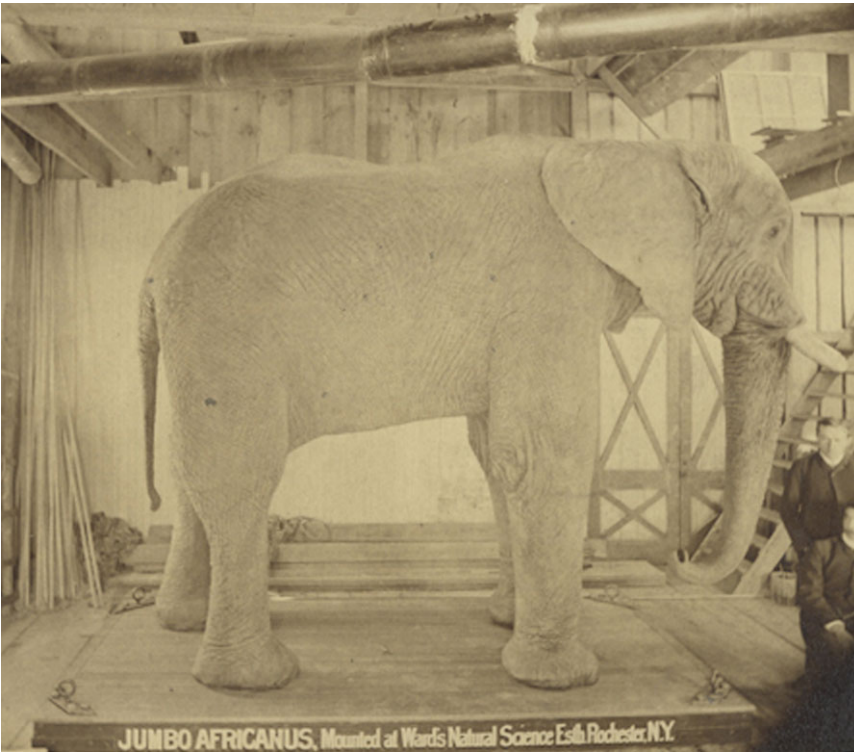


Fig. 7. Jumbo's hide at Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Rochester, NY, 1886. Photo: Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Libraries.

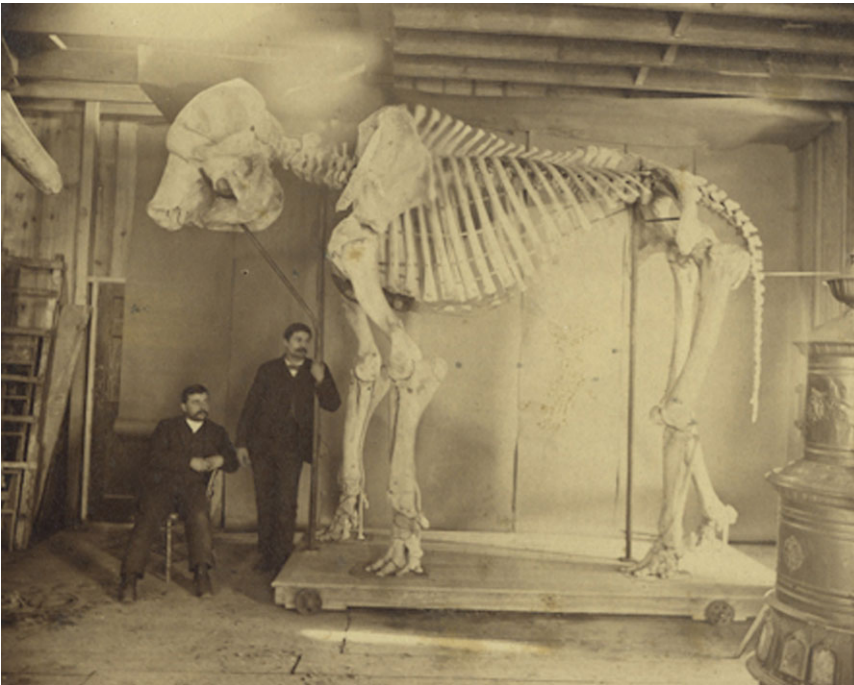


Fig. 8. Jumbo's skeleton at Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Rochester, NY, 1886. Photo: Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Libraries.

should find a home in an institution created with a bequest by a Briton, James Smithson.⁶⁰

By December 1884 it had been decided that the Smithsonian would get the skeleton and Tufts the mounted hide.⁶¹ Though Barnum reaffirmed his commitment to both institutions over the years, his mind was not firmly settled on several scores. First, Barnum kept both museums waiting. The stuffed Jumbo had great value to the circus – Barnum estimated ‘it is worth \$100,000 or more per year for exhibition in our show’ – and neither museum could expect delivery so long as it brought in good money.⁶² Second, he entertained various business propositions that threatened to trump all promises. More than once, Barnum and his partners explored the possibility of selling the mounted elephant to buyers in London; one rumour suggested the British Museum (Natural History) might be interested.⁶³ As late as 1889, thought was given to creating a permanent museum in New York affiliated with the Greatest Show, with Jumbo as a key exhibit.⁶⁴ And when Barnum was finally willing to part with skeleton and skin, he retained the right to reclaim them for further ventures. Indeed the circus borrowed both Jumbos for its London run in 1889, and no sooner was the mounted hide back at Tufts than Barnum wrote to Marshall: ‘glad you have Jumbo again. Perhaps he will remain always, but as he speaks all languages he may possibly in future years go around the world.’⁶⁵ Lastly, by the mid 1880s, Barnum had developed competing loyalties to three museums – his museum at Tufts, the Smithsonian, and the AMNH in New York – and after Jumbo’s death he wavered on which two would receive his prize objects, notwithstanding his stated commitments. Never was a gift more tentatively given.

In a confidential letter sent to Albert Bickmore at the AMNH two weeks after Jumbo’s accident, Henry Ward wrote that, while the Smithsonian was in line to get the skeleton, Barnum had been

. . . sensibly affected by the call to put the stuffed Jumbo eventually in your great museum. It is possible – this is only my surmise, – that he wishes that he had promised to you before to Tufts College. He cannot now fairly change (and I think him a very fair man) without giving them a quid pro quo. Possibly he may be induced to do that.⁶⁶

Ward offered his help and he may well have lobbied Barnum on behalf of the New York museum before that time. In the previous year, the AMNH president, Morris Jesup, had appealed to Ward: ‘Can’t

you induce Barnum to give American Museum “Jumbo”?’⁶⁷

As it happened, Barnum could not be induced to break his word to Tufts and in the spring of 1889 Jumbo’s mounted hide was delivered to the Barnum Museum and installed in the vestibule next to the founder’s bust (Figs. 9–10). His massive size and rigid posture required the removal of the front steps and the doorframe to get him in; while the work was done, he was staged for photographs outside.⁶⁸ The complicated process was repeated when he went to London in the autumn, but upon his return to Tufts in 1890 he was permanently installed.

Barnum’s commitment to the Smithsonian proved less secure. Despite frequent assertions that Jumbo belonged in Washington, the entangled dealings with Tufts caused a change of heart. His partners evidently favoured New York over the capital and by the spring of 1887 Barnum was ready to go with the majority. In late April he wrote to Jesup that he and his partners had a ‘tacit understanding that you shall have the first chance for Jumbo’s skeleton.’⁶⁹ Soon thereafter he began sharing his views with relevant parties. In May he told John Marshall of pressure from the AMNH to donate specimens and added: ‘entre-nous the Smithsonian has behaved so shabbily I hope Jumbo’s skeleton will go to the NY Institution.’⁷⁰ In July, after the circus had passed through Rochester, Henry Ward informed Marshall that Barnum had called and expressed ‘grave doubt about sending the skeleton to Smithsonian.’⁷¹ Finally in December, Barnum visited the AMNH and let it be known publicly that the skeleton would not be going to Washington after all but rather to the New York museum.⁷² Jumbo went on display in New York in April (Fig. 11) and the exultant president of the museum invited Barnum to come and see it for himself: ‘I think you will be surprised & thoroughly pleased when you see his skeleton; it has been finely mounted, both as regards the body and the pedestal.’⁷³ The skeleton accompanied the mounted hide to London in September but Barnum’s partner, James Bailey, promised it would return by April, ‘possibly to remain at the American Museum forever.’⁷⁴

Notwithstanding the loan to the AMNH in 1889, the Smithsonian remained confident Barnum would keep his word and give the skeleton permanently to the National Museum. Hornaday had worked hard to keep Barnum and Tufts happy and clearly hoped



Fig. 9. Moving Jumbo into the Barnum Museum, 1889. Photo: Historical Materials Collection (UA136), Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.

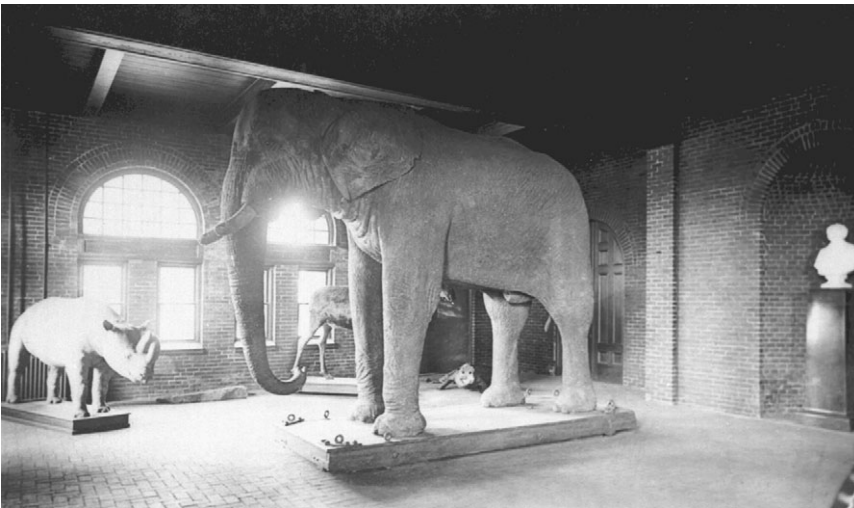


Fig. 10. Jumbo in the Barnum Museum, c.1930. Photo: Rollins Collection, Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.

earlier grievances would be forgotten. So, it seems, it came as an unwelcome surprise to learn in March 1890 that the skeleton would probably stay in New York after all. ‘During the last week I have been much disquieted – and so has Professor Goode,’ Hornaday wrote Barnum, ‘by a rumor that has reached

us from New York to the effect that Jumbo’s skeleton, which you promised us years ago, is “positively to go to the American Museum of Natural History” at New York, to remain permanently, when the great show returns from Europe. Surely this is not true. What says the King of Showmen?’⁷⁵ Barnum replied



Fig. 11. Jumbo at the American Museum of Natural History, 1895. Photo: American Museum of Natural History, New York.

elliptically, 'I felt and still do that a great National Museum situated in the Nation's Capital is the most proper place for Jumbo's skeleton',⁷⁶ but this fell short of a promise to give and Hornaday correctly surmised Barnum's intent. He wrote to George Brown Goode that he was sure 'the National Museum will never get Jumbo's skeleton' owing to frustrations generated by Tufts's 'utterly insatiable' demands.⁷⁷ After Barnum's death in April 1891, the Smithsonian reviewed the relevant correspondence only to determine that the showman had been careful to hedge his offer with enough qualifications to deter efforts to make a legal claim on the skeleton.⁷⁸

The Barnum Museum: later years

The Tufts museum continued to prosper after Barnum's death in 1891. Barnum gave the University a further \$40,000 to build two new wings on the Museum and new gifts were added to the collection. The triangular arrangement with Ward survived into the 1890s. Following Barnum's death, his partner, Bailey, wanted to end the deal but was evidently talked into carrying on for a while longer by Marshall, and perhaps also by Ward who pointed out that it seemed a 'great pity that the skins and skeletons' of lost animals 'should be put to no use'.⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, donations from the Smithsonian came to an end.

Over time, the collection of animal specimens aged and grew less useful to instruction in the life sciences. Marshall's retirement in 1898 slowed further expansion and his successors on the faculty came to the university with new and different intellectual interests. The Barnum Museum was completed on the cusp of a revolution in scientific inquiry that, in the words of historian Stephen Conn, 'drew natural history into new areas of research, away from morphology and toward genetics, from whole organism biology into cellular biology', and consequently 'from museum halls into university labs'.⁸⁰ At the Tufts museum, the two new wings Barnum intended for further specimens were indeed used instead for classrooms and laboratories. Furthermore, as a museum display, the Tufts collection was gradually rendered old fashioned by the evolution in taxidermy practice from static single specimens to dynamic habitat groups and dioramas. In the 1880s, while still an apprentice under Ward, William Hornaday pioneered multi-figured groups in simulated environments that recalled original habitats. Robert Schufeldt's government-sponsored *Scientific Taxidermy for Museums* (1899) commended the trend for creating 'the look of life'.⁸¹ Hornaday's fellow apprentice at Ward's, Carl Akeley, would set a new standard of verisimilitude and shift the emphasis

in museum displays definitively from taxonomy to animal behaviour and ecology in his celebrated hall of African mammals at the AMNH, completed in 1936 after his death and named after him (Fig. 12).⁸² The remarkable centrepiece of a travelling herd of elephants shows how far he had brought the art of taxidermy since his early work on Jumbo in 1885.

In 1938 Russell Carpenter joined the biology faculty and took over the Museum. In the following year he decided to clear the building of its animal collection and re-design the vestibule as a shrine to Barnum and Jumbo. The Museum had been closed to the public for some years and he believed the space could be more effectively utilized. ‘Fifty years of sunlight, moths and the ravages of time have not dealt too kindly with some of the specimens’, he wrote. ‘The lions have faded to a tawdry blondness, the zebra has stripes only on his shady side, and the giraffe split his seams some time ago. As a collection for public exhibition, it served its purpose for many years but I feel that its usefulness has passed.’⁸³

As the animal specimens declined in value, Jumbo’s iconic stature steadily grew. Of course, Jumbo had always been more than just another animal specimen. From the first, he was set apart in the entrance as a popular attraction and showpiece.⁸⁴ Carpenter

wrote to Barnum’s eldest grandson: ‘I propose to move everything except Jumbo and the bust of Mr. Barnum, re-decorate and furnish the room attractively . . . I want to make this room a permanent memorial to P. T. Barnum as a notable figure in American life and finance and as a benefactor of Tufts College.’⁸⁵ The Barnum Museum became Barnum Hall, Jumbo was restored, and freed of association with other natural history exhibits he gained a stronger profile as the ‘insignia and symbol of Tufts,’ according to Carpenter.⁸⁶ While the skeleton at the AMNH retained value as a type specimen of the African bush elephant (*Loxodonta Africana rothschildi*), the mounted Jumbo at Tufts became the beloved companion of undergraduates, who posed with him for photographs and dropped pennies in his trunk for good luck in exams (Fig. 13).

Jumbo stood tall on the Tufts campus until a fire destroyed the Barnum building and its contents on an April night in 1975. The morning after the fire, an employee entered the smouldering ruins and swept Jumbo’s ashes into an empty peanut butter jar. Today, those ashes, still housed in their makeshift urn, are brought out to inspire the college athletic teams that bear his name.

Jumbo enjoyed (endured) a remarkable life and afterlife, which took him from the savannahs of East Africa to captivity and fame in the zoos of Paris and



Fig. 12. Akeley Hall of African Mammals, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1930s. Photo: American Museum of Natural History, New York.



Fig. 13. Tufts students with Jumbo, c.1954. Photo: Melville Munro Collection, Digital Collections and Archives, Tufts University.

London and Barnum's peripatetic American circus, a fatal train accident in Canada, and finally to posthumous celebrity as museum piece, college mascot, and byword for anything of great size. Perhaps no animal illustrates more dramatically the range of 'journeys or passages that some wild animals make between the contested terrain of "nature" and "culture" – from those spaces and conditions in which their lives are largely their own concerns and lived apart from us, to the differently configured spaces and conditions that arise when we . . . bring them out of their spaces and into our human "cultural" world.'⁸⁷

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Notes and references

- 1 For an overview of American university natural history museums, see Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, 'Museums on campus: a tradition of inquiry and teaching', in Ronald Rainger, Keith R. Benson and Jane Maienschein (eds), *The American Development of Biology* (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 15–47. Kohlstedt does not include Tufts in her appendix: 'Buildings established for scientific study on selected campuses, 1871–1910'.
- 2 Barnum has been well served by two modern biographies: Neil Harris, *Humbug. The Art of P. T. Barnum* (Chicago, 1973); A. H. Saxon, *P. T. Barnum. The Legend and the Man* (New York, 1989).
- 3 Quoted in Russell E. Miller, *Light on the Hill. A History of Tufts College 1852–1952* (Boston, 1966), p. 143.
- 4 P. T. Barnum to Elmer Capen, 10 October 1883. Tufts University Archives [hereafter TUA], MS 2 Box 001, folder 1:1 (2/4). Barnum told Capen that he recently arrived home from travels to find 'nearly a peck of begging letters' and had also drawn attention from St Lawrence University, another Unitarian Universalist institution.
- 5 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 3 May 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, folder 1:1 (2/4).
- 6 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 6 May 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, folder 1:1 (2/4). This and some other letters quoted in this article are reproduced in A. H. Saxon (ed.), *Selected Letters of P. T. Barnum* (New York, 1983), p. 236.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 12 June 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4].
- 9 Lynn Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History 1820–1870* (New York, 1980).
- 10 P. T. Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs: or, The Life of P. T. Barnum*, ed. George S. Bryan (New York, 1927), vol. II, p. 794.
- 11 For an overview of his contributions to natural history and involvement with museums, see John Richards Betts, 'P. T. Barnum and the popularization of natural history', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 no. 3 (1959), pp. 353–68.
- 12 Barnum to William T. Hornaday, 16 April 1890, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, RU 192 Box 637.
- 13 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 12 June 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4].
- 14 Ibid. For full text, see Saxon, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 252–4.
- 15 *Tuftonian* 10 no. 1 (1884), p. 6. The magazine failed to note that the design was much indebted to the Boston Society of Natural History, which had opened in 1864. See Sally Gregory Kohlstedt and Paul Brinkman, 'Framing nature: the formative years of natural history museum development in the United States', in Alan Leviton and Michele Aldrich (eds), *Museums and other Institutions of Natural History: Past, Present, and Future*, Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences 55 Supplement 1 (2004), pp. 7–33.
- 16 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 13 June 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4]. For full text, see Saxon, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 252–4. Keith Benson points out that academic natural history, congruent with Barnum's own views, 'often made a more overt connection between the study of the wondrous artifacts in nature and the American version of natural theology; that is, one studied nature to observe signs of a beneficent creator who designed the harmonious

- natural world.' Keith R. Benson, 'From museum research to laboratory research: the transformation of natural history into academic biology', in Rainger, Benson and Maienschein, op. cit. (note 1), p. 56.
- 17 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 1 July 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4]: 'I am determined you shall have "Jumbo" & such other specimens as I can spare – when you get the building ready – and when Jumbo dies.'
 - 18 On Ward, see Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, 'Henry A. Ward: the merchant naturalist and American museum development', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* 9 no. 4 (1980), pp. 647–61. Further facts about his life are provided by: Robert G. Koch, 'Henry A. Ward', *Crooked Lake Review* (December 1992). http://crookedlakereview.com/articles/34_66/57de1992/57koch.html.
 - 19 Quoted by Kohlstedt, op. cit. (note 18), p. 647.
 - 20 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 11 November 1883. Henry Ward Papers. University of Rochester Library [hereafter URL].
 - 21 Henry Ward to John Marshall, 16 November 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:12.
 - 22 Ibid.
 - 23 Henry Ward to Barnum, November 18, 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:7. The Tufts archives has two lists of specimens supplied by Ward in 1884, listing some 250 animals and 150 shells and pieces of coral. TUA, MS 2 Box 2, folder 7.
 - 24 Henry Ward to John Marshall, 1 January and 12 February 1886. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:12.
 - 25 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 12 February 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4]; Barnum to John Marshall, 19 July 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4]. Barnum's suspicions are hard to justify in view of the fact that Ward twice went bankrupt and typically sold close to dealer costs and was often bargained lower; see Kohlstedt, op. cit. (note 18), p. 655.
 - 26 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 20 November 1885. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
 - 27 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 27 January 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
 - 28 Barnum to John Marshall, 15 January 1887; 19 January 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
 - 29 1886 inventory of animals received from Barnum. TUA, MS 2 Box 002, folder 6. The Museum continued to receive gifts from other donors as well. Some of these gifts were sizeable, including a large set of stuffed birds and animals from the Lady Members of the 1st Universalist Church of Boston in 1888. After 1886 the Museum presented separate annual reports, complete with yearly gifts, as appendices to the President's published annual reports.
 - 30 *Annual Report of the President of Tufts College, 1893–94* (Boston, 1894), p. 63. Marshall voiced his concerns from the outset, noting that Barnum's first offerings were 'unnecessarily strong in the monkey, bat and anteater families' and hoping in time 'to purchase what other things are more needed just now for purposes of instruction.' John Marshall to Henry A. Ward, 21 November 1883. Ward Papers, URL.
 - 31 Henry A. Ward to Barnum, 15 May 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:13. Ward also remarked that the vertebrate collection 'takes rank with the best museums in the country.'
 - 32 John Marshall to Henry A. Ward, 4 January 1887. Ward Papers, URL.
 - 33 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 21 March 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4].
 - 34 Spencer F. Baird to Barnum, 23 June 1884. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [1/4].
 - 35 Spencer F. Baird to Barnum, 14 April 1885. TUA, MS 2 Box 004, folder 19.
 - 36 Barnum to Spencer F. Baird, 20 April 1885. Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington [hereafter SIA], RU 192 Box 637. Barnum further noted that Baird's predecessor, Joseph Henry, had offered to supply Barnum's American Museum with specimen duplicates, recognizing it as 'a scientific institution'. He hoped that offer might now be extended to Tufts.
 - 37 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 30 October 1885. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [2/4]: Baird 'feels indebted to me – and especially as he is to have skeleton of Jumbo.' The *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, 1886), p. 24, notes that 'For a number of years the Institution has been indebted to the proprietors of the menageries of the country for the contribution of animals', the most important being that of 'Messrs. Barnum, Bailey, and Hutchinson'. The Smithsonian archives also has a list of animals presented by Barnum in 1884–5, which includes baboons and other monkeys; an Indian elephant, leopard, and cheetah; a llama, zebra, kangaroo, and a few antelope. RU 192 Box 637.
 - 38 John Marshall to Barnum, 16 April 1888. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:9. It is evident from correspondence that Ward had also complained about Baird and the Smithsonian. John Marshall to Henry A. Ward, 28 December 1885. Ward Papers, URL.
 - 39 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 20 November 1885. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
 - 40 Barnum to John Marshall, 3 February 1886. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4]; Barnum told Marshall he expected 'favorable results' from his intervention. In March, Marshall sent Barnum a list of desiderata, mostly East Coast invertebrates 'which would be most valuable for purposes of instruction.' John Marshall to Barnum, 13 March 1886. SIA, RU 192, Box 637.
 - 41 John Marshall to Barnum, 16 April 1888. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:9.
 - 42 Ibid.
 - 43 William T. Hornaday to Barnum, 5 May 1888. SIA, RU 192 Box 637. An earlier letter from Hornaday, dated 31 March 1888, stated: 'I am really shocked at the discovery that you have a feeling that we are disposed to refuse duplicates to the Barnum Museum at Tufts. If this is true, 'some one has blundered,' and I wish to know all about it . . . The officers of this Institution have by no means forgotten the many & valuable favors we have received from you.' RU 192 Box 637. A subsequent letter from Hornaday of 29 April 1888 details the measures he had taken to fill Marshall's order, expressing regret if offence had been caused. Five days earlier, Goode had told Hornaday that the Smithsonian would honour the arrangement between Baird and Barnum to 'give a considerable amount of material in exchange to the Barnum Museum of Tufts College.' George Brown Goode to William Hornaday, 24 April 1888. TUA, MS 2 Box 002, folder 1.
 - 44 John Marshall to George Brown Goode, 12 August 1888. SIA, RU 189 Box 79, folder 1.
 - 45 William Hornaday to George Brown Goode, 16 August 1888. SIA, RU 189 Box 79, folder 1. Hornaday included a draft of an angry letter which he suggested Goode should send to

- Marshall. The letter Goode did send Marshall was a good deal tamer. Perhaps Marshall felt bad for appearing ungrateful, for Barnum wrote to Hornaday on 24 August 1888: 'Prof. Marshall writes me in great ecstasy over the beautiful and useful presents which Secretary Goode and yourself have graciously sent to the Barnum Museum.' SIA, RU192 Box 637.
- 46 John Marshall to Barnum, 24 April 1889; Barnum to William Hornaday, 27 April 1889. SIA, RU 192 Box 637. Marshall wrote to Barnum that Tufts would like casts of Assyrian antiquities, duplicates of the 'fine invertebrates collected by the Albatross', and 'a set of good fossils and rocks collected & determined by the U.S. Geological Society.' He complained that the plants received in 1888 were hastily prepared, the Indian artefacts duplicates of what they already had, and the set of rocks and minerals 'from the Territories' received earlier from Washington 'very poor.' He added: 'Prof. Hornaday knows perfectly well what else is needed.'
- 47 William Hornaday to Barnum, 6 May 1889. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
- 48 William Hornaday to Barnum, 29 March 1890. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4]. A list of gifts received is included in the *Annual Report of the President of Tufts College, 1889-90* (Boston, 1890), pp. 37-8.
- 49 Barnum to William Hornaday, 20 May 1890. SIA, RU 192 Box 637.
- 50 Barnum to William Hornaday, 16 April 1890. SIA, RU 192 Box 637.
- 51 For the story of Jumbo, see Paul Chambers, *Jumbo. The Greatest Elephant in the World* (Hanover, NH, 2008); W. P. Jolly, *Jumbo* (London, 1976).
- 52 Barnum to Henry A. Ward, 9 October 1883. Ward Papers, URL.
- 53 Henry A. Ward to John Marshall, 29 August 1885. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:12.
- 54 Barnum to Henry A. Ward, 17 September 1885. Ward Papers, URL. The idea of preparing both skin and skeleton for exhibition evidently came from Barnum's associates, see Saxon, op. cit. (note 2), p. 299.
- 55 Barnum to Henry A. Ward, 26 September 1885. Ward Papers, URL.
- 56 On the idealizing function of taxidermy, see Hanna Rose Shell, 'Skin deep: taxidermy, embodiment, and extinction in W.T. Hornaday's Buffalo Group', in Leviton and Aldrich, op. cit. (note 15), pp. 88-112.
- 57 Before and after his death, there were conflicting reports about Jumbo's height, but it seems he stood just under 11 feet. Mounted on his pedestal by Ward he measured 11 feet 8½ inches. See Walter Guest Kellogg, 'How big was Jumbo?', *Circus Scrap Book* (April 1932), pp. 3-7.
- 58 Barnum to Elmer Capen, 1 July and 8 July 1883. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [1/4]. See note 17 above.
- 59 Barnum to Spencer F. Baird, 21 June 1884. SIA, RU192, Box 637.
- 60 In June of 1882, while in discussions with Baird about the creation of a national zoo in Washington, Barnum offered to lend Jumbo occasionally. Barnum to Spencer F. Baird, 10 June 1882. SIA, RU 7050, Box 1, Barnum file.
- 61 Barnum to Spencer F. Baird, 9 December 1884. SIA, RU192, Box 637.
- 62 Barnum to Morris K. Jesup, 21 September 1885. American Museum of Natural History (hereafter AMNH), Central Archives, Administrative Files.
- 63 Barnum to Spencer F. Baird, 27 September 1885: 'We have been called from London for a price for skin and skeleton, by a Naturalist there. My partners think it is for the British Museum and they evidently have some idea that the skeleton may be sold for a large price when its public exhibition is finished in our show.' SIA, RU192, Box 637; Barnum to John Marshall, 12 December 1889: 'We came very near selling Jumbo here [in London] but the chances are he will get back to the College in the spring.' TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
- 64 Barnum to John Marshall, 6 April 1889. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4]: 'it grows more and more probable that before next Christmas we shall open a Museum here, wherein we must place the skin and skeleton of Jumbo. This I cannot help for in that case the greater benefit will swallow the smaller one.'
- 65 Barnum to John Marshall, 26 March 1890. TUA, MS2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
- 66 Henry A. Ward to Albert Bickmore, 2 October 1885. AMNH, Central Archives, Administrative Files.
- 67 Morris K. Jesup to Henry A. Ward, 19 September 1884. Ward Papers, URL.
- 68 Getting Jumbo into the museum at Tufts required extraordinary effort. The 1,500-pound stuffed hide was first carried by horse-drawn cart from the local railway station but then hauled up the hill by some fifty Tufts professors and students and a host of neighbourhood boys. Jumbo was too big to fit through the door, requiring the removal of the stone steps, some of the brick flooring, and the wooden door frame. TUA, MS 2, Box 4, folders 1, 11. Correspondence between Henry Ward and John Marshall in October 1885 contains further details about maneuvering Jumbo into the museum. Ward Papers, URL.
- 69 Saxon, op. cit. (note 6), p. 286.
- 70 Barnum to John Marshall, 6 May 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
- 71 Henry A. Ward to John Marshall, 14 July 1887. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:12.
- 72 J. A. Allen to Morris K. Jesup, 14 December 1887. AMNH, Central Archives, Administrative Files.
- 73 Morris K. Jesup to Barnum, 20 April 1889. AMNH, Central Archives, Letterpress Book 9, pp. 180-82. In the letter, Jesup acknowledged that Jumbo was on loan and would place a notice to that effect on the pedestal, but hoped 'such an interesting subject will not be required to be removed by you for a very long time to come.' Barnum had come to the museum in March to confirm loan details; Barnum to Morris K. Jesup, 18 March 1889. AMNH, Central Archives, Administrative Files.
- 74 James Bailey to Jennes Richardson, telegram, 7 September 1889. AMNH Central Archives, Administrative Files.
- 75 William Hornaday to Barnum, 29 March 1890. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:1 [3/4].
- 76 Barnum to William Hornaday, 16 April 1890. SIA, RU192, Box 637.
- 77 William Hornaday to George Brown Goode, 17 April 1890. SIA, RU192, Box 637. The memo is marked 'R.I.P.' In a follow-up memo of 11 June 1890, Hornaday noted: 'Evidently

- the Museum will never get Jumbo's skeleton, notwithstanding Mr. Barnum's promises in the matter.'
- 78 'Memorandum to Mr. Goode', 14 April 1891. SIA, RU192, Box 637. The memo cites a letter of 27 September 1885 in which Barnum told Baird: 'It is my full intention that the Smithsonian shall receive Jumbo's skeleton in due time as a gift. I may not perhaps be able to carry it out – for I don't own quite half of the show & I shall have one or two new partners.'
- 79 Frank Ward to John Marshall, 7 March 1892. TUA, MS 2 Box 001, 1:13. No specimens from Ward's are listed after 1897. In 1901–2 the Barnum Museum welcomed a donation of deceased animals from Bostock's Animal Arena, which were prepared for exhibition by a janitor who doubled as a taxidermist. *Annual Report of the President of Tufts College, 1901–02* (Boston, 1902).
- 80 Stephen Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 44, 65. Also Keith Benson: 'beginning in the 1860s and continuing through the end of the century, biology moved beyond the museum. First into nature . . . and then into the university laboratory.' Benson, *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 77.
- 81 Quoted by Shell, *op. cit.* (note 56), p. 90. On taxidermy also see, Rachel Poliquin, 'The matter and meaning of museum taxidermy', in 'Constructing nature under glass', in Samuel J. M. M. Alberti and Christopher Whitehead (eds.), *Museum and Society* 6 no. 2 (2008), pp. 123–34.
- 82 See Stephen Christopher Quinn, *Windows on Nature. The Great Habitat Dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History* (New York, 2006).
- 83 Russell Carpenter to C. Barnum Seeley, 21 July 1939. TUA, MS 2, Box 2, folder 3. Also Russell Carpenter to Ward Cruickshank, 19 March 1962. TUA, MS 2, Box 2, folder 3, in which Carpenter recalls the sad state of the animals when he arrived. It was decided that the Harvard museum nearby could satisfy student needs, as Spencer Baird had suggested in the beginning. Some of the animals were sent to decorate Perry's Tropical Nut Houses of Belfast, Maine and Seabrook, New Hampshire in 1949; others were used as landfill in construction of college playing fields.
- 84 Two weeks before Jumbo died, John Marshall had written to Henry Ward: 'I should not consider the Barnum Museum complete without this noble animal. It would be the greatest ornament that we could place in the vestibule near Mr. Barnum's bust.' John Marshall to Henry A. Ward, 1 September 1885. Ward Papers, URL.
- 85 Russell Carpenter to C. Barnum Seeley, 21 July 1939. TUA, MS 2, Box 2, folder 3.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 Garry Marvin, 'Perpetuating polar bears: the cultural life of dead animals', in Bryndis Snaebjornsdottir and Mark Wilson (eds), *nanoq: flatout and bluesome. A Cultural Life of Polar Bears* (London, 2006), p. 157.