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Otto Geist Interview, Andrea Bobner [sp] interviewer, No Location, January 31st, 1952

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The College Women's Club incorporated present Otto William Geist, research associate in Paleontology at the University of Alaska. Andrea J. Bobner is the interviewer. Some of the medium to small size animal remains found were members of the cat family such as the lion. It was larger than the present day African lion. Also the saber tooth tiger which is extinct and the lynx. The main of the male lion is now considered a leftover from when the lions were living in colder climate. The male has kept the mane as an adornment for attracting females. There are various species of bear. The largest species in the collection is the giant short faced bear. The animal was probably larger than a good sized present day horse. They also have species of smaller bears that have yet to be identified. Also dire wolves which are believed to be extraordinarily larger than present day wolf. Minks, wolverines, weasels, beaver, ground squirrels, and field mice. The giant beaver was the size of a small black bear and was probably very rare in this section of Alaska. Indication comes from the old Crowley region. Some animals have been found with hair intact such as wooly mammoth found with wooly fleece next to the body. Mammoth hair has been collected. The camel in Africa doesn't have thick coat of hair but the ones in Asia do. American Mastodon and Wooly Mammoth and members of Bison and Super Bison all larger than present day. Three species of Musk Oxen, one species of Horse, one species of camel, several species of mountain goat and antelope. The most interesting is the saiga antelope now living in the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. Smallest animal fossil is the common field mouse. Most of the mammals can be quite definitely identified by their feet. There is a part ownership between the University of Alaska and the Frick Laboratory at the American Museum in New York. U of A can call for any of the specimens when needed but cannot keep large amount of specimens at UA because of lack of space. Geist gets two or three students who he employs who help preparing, cataloguing, and typing. Ms. Florentine and an Alaskan girl from Wiseman to do the typing of the catalog. Mr. Livingston and Mr. Litch do other work. Students are good especially when they are interested in the work. Geist worked in the immediate Fairbanks area working the pits Fairbanks Creek, and Cripple Creek, as well as Dome Creek. Also spent several weeks working out of the Nome where he worked practically every mining opportunity at the Kobuk River region. Also went to the enormous fossil banks in the Norton Bay region in the Dawson area as well as the 40 and 60 mile region. Fossils were found at practically all these areas.

The future of fossil collecting depends chiefly on the mining operations on the interior of Alaska. Fossils are easier as a product of mining operations. Great fossil collections can also be made on river banks but they require special equipment and therefore is more expensive. Collecting can be carried on for a number of years to come even if mining would have to be suspended for some time. If the university

had a fireproof building to work in there would be no question that the University would be in possession of the largest and most impressive collection of Pliocene material in the world.