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History of Zoology at Berkeley

University of California

1987-1988
The Centennial Year

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of Zoology

HOPKINS MARINE STATION LIBRARY

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Note: History of Hopkins Marine Station: p. 38-39.

Bodega Marine Laboratory (BML). The need for a seaside station for teaching and research in marine zoology was first recognized by William E. Ritter. His various ventures are chronicled in my earlier chapter on the history of Zoology at Berkeley. After Ritter transferred to La Jolla and the directorship of the Scripps Institution of Biological Research, there was no move to revive a Berkeley program at the seashore until Sol Felty Light was appointed by Kofoid in 1926 to our departmental faculty. S.F., as he preferred to be called, taught rigorous summer courses in invertebrate zoology for several years between 1930 and 1941 under spartan conditions: in a seaside tavern at Moss Beach, or a former dancehall at Dillon Beach, or a hotel lobby at Montara.

When I became Chairman, Light and I began to think of a modest station on the coast near Berkeley for his summer instruction. I appointed a committee of Light, S.C. Brooks and Frank Pitelka to prepare a plan that I took to President Sproul. The response in his booming voice was: "Eakin, you already have a marine station at La Jolla." Nothing would convince him that we needed a facility in northern California. World War II interrupted our lobbying. In 1946 I took up the cause again. One day Prexy telephoned to say that he and President Tressider of Stanford had talked about the possibility of using Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station at Pacific Grove for our summer courses. To discuss the proposal, Professor Lawrence Blinks, Director of the Hopkins Marine Station, and I met with the two presidents after their luncheon at the Bohemian Club in San Francisco. Blinks and I waited patiently (or was it impatiently?) in the lobby of the Club. As a result of this conference Berkeley rented space at Pacific Grove for our courses in the summer of 1947 on a trial basis. About a week before the summer session was to begin Light drowned in Clear Lake. The course was brought off splendidly, however, by Frank Pitelka and Ralph Smith, who had recently joined our faculty. For additional staff I asked

Theodore H. Bullock, then at UCLA and a former doctoral student of Light's, to join Pitelka and Smith.

In the next five years our marine invertebrate summer courses (one undergraduate and one graduate) were given by Smith in collaboration with Pitelka (1948), C.M. Yonge from Glasgow (1949), Donald Abbott (1950) who was at the time one of Smith's graduate students and later a member of the Stanford faculty at the Hopkins Station, and William Berg (1948, 1952). The courses in 1951 were offered by Cadet Hand and Willard Hartman, an authority on sponges who was with us at Berkeley for a few years before resigning to accept a position in the Peabody Museum at Yale University. Our course in experimental embryology at Hopkins was given by Berg in 1948 and by Joan Rattenbury in 1950.

There was a breakdown in negotiations between Stanford and UC, largely over the rent being asked. We were back to zero. The dream of a seaside laboratory was not lost, however, and more than just zoologists became interested in one near Berkeley, especially three botanists: Professors Lincoln Constance, Ralph Emerson, and George Papenfuss. There was now a Chancellor in charge of the Berkeley campus for the first time, Clark Kerr, who recognized our needs. He appointed a Marine Station Committee, chaired by Papenfuss, to make a proposal that eventually reached Kerr's desk after he became President following the retirement of Sproul.

Meanwhile, in the summers of 1956 and 1957 Smith and Hand gave our marine invertebrate zoology courses in a shed--dubbed the "Foggy Bottom Laboratory"--on Bodega Bay, near the site of the present Porto Bodega Marina. Windows and lights were installed and equipment was brought from Berkeley. The students in those classes were outstanding. One of them, Frank Ruddle, is now Professor of Biology at Yale University and a member of the National Academy of Sciences. In 1958 Smith and Hand taught in the garage of a former U.S. Coast Guard facility at Bolinas. Shades of S.F. Light!