



# The Collector, the Guide and the Bone Digger

*James P. Barber*

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## **The Collector, the Guide and the Bone Digger** James P. Barber

The original scope of this book was to provide a reproduction of the photos from a turn-of-the-century (about 1902-1904) expedition into the rugged Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains of Mexico led by Charles M. Barber. However, as details were added, the book developed into two distinct parts. This meant including the photo journal in its entirety as Part I of the book. It is unique and valuable in its own right, but it was just the beginning of the journey that Charley Barber seemed to have in mind for me. His role in this expedition was only a small part of a most fascinating, adventurous life that unfolded before me. Part II of the book is a biography of his bold life beyond his work as a guide as shown in the photo journal and into his world of collecting museum specimens. Much of it is told in his own words from letters archived at the Field Museum in Chicago. Charley hitch-hiked across the southwest in 1890 at about age 15. He organized his first collecting expedition at age 17. He played and coached football at New Mexico State University 1897-1900. He was mentored by several of the most recognized men in the field of zoology, including C. Hart Merriam, one of the founders of the National Geographic Society, C. H. T. Townsend, and T. D. A. Cockerell. He eventually became a “bone digger” – a collector of fossilized remains. He developed a passion for prehistoric turtles of the Cretaceous Period (65-145 million years ago when the dinosaurs were king) and spent the latter half of his life in this pursuit. The Field Museum contains over a thousand specimens collected by Charley. Take a look into his world through his correspondence, through some stories of his business ventures, and through some lost manuscripts of stories that he personally penned about his adventures. Observe his relationships with his contemporaries, his love for life and his dedication to friendship. This latest edition of the book includes additional new material that allows us to see how Charley hoped to preserve the way of life that they led for the sake of those who meant so much to him. [www.jamespbarber.com](http://www.jamespbarber.com)



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