



## **Allyn G Smith (1893-1976)**

Biographical Sketch by Jane Radcliffe, Archives Volunteer and  
Christina Fidler, Archives and Digital Production Assistant

On June 4, 1893, Allyn Goodwin Smith was born in Harford, Connecticut. His family moved shortly thereafter to Redlands, CA in 1908. As a teenager, while on vacation with his parents, Smith attended a lecture given by Professor Josiah Keep on the topic of mollusks. This lecture along with collecting trips he would subsequently complete with Keep, inspired Smith in the field of conchology. In Redlands, Smith met S. Stillman Berry who would become his mentor and inspire Smith's interests in chitons and land snails.

Despite his early interests in Malacology, in 1916, Smith graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in electrical engineering. After serving as a radio operator and as an observer of Army planes for the United States Army, Smith launched his career with the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (P.T. &T.C.). This would be the first of two successful careers. At P.T. &T.C. Smith served as the Administrative Superintendent of Personnel and his career at P.T. &T.C. would last 32 years. He retired in 1955 after which he began his second fruitful career.

Throughout his time at P.T.&T.C. Smith maintained his interests in Malacology with annual publications beginning in 1931. Consequently, after his retirement, Smith took up a full time position with the California Academy of Sciences as a Research Malacologist and Executive Assistant to the Director. By 1960, Smith became the Associate Curator of the Department of Invertebrate Zoology and by 1963, served as chairman of the department. Among his many accomplishments at the California Academy of Sciences, Smith was primarily responsible for assembling one of the largest wet preserved invertebrate collections in the Western United States.

Smith retired from his second career in 1972 but remained active as a research associate in Malacology in association with the Department of Geology. In 1976, Smith died in his home in Berkeley after a brief illness at the age of 83.

### Sources Consulted:

Annual Report of the Western Society of Malacologists, Vol. 9, 1976.

California Academy of Sciences Newsletter, No. 442, October, 1976.