

Carl Akeley however, had a special flair to do spectacular things and so he went on to become the great African explorer and the creator of African Hall in the American Museum of Natural History. It is said that he traveled with Theodore Roosevelt on many of his safaris. Akeley is also credited with being the first taxidermist to place specimens in their natural surroundings in decorated cases. That however, is a case where the inventor of a way of doing something does not receive the credit due him by the public. For it was the teacher, David Bruce, whose work with butterflies that really led Carl Akeley on to elephants.

1. Meyer, Louise J.  
Elephants and Butterflies  
Brockport History Club  
Presented 1967

2. Elwell, A. B. News Article  
"Brockport Republic-Democrat" 1954

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Saw-Whet Owl           | 19. Purple Grackle      |
| 2. Rose Breasted Grosbeak | 20. Snow Bunting        |
| 3. Red Headed Woodpecker  | 21. Pigeon Hawk         |
| Blue Bird                 | 22. Screech Owl         |
| 4. Blue Jay               | 23. Golden Plover       |
| 5. Magpie                 | 24. Meadowlark          |
| 6. Northern Shrike        | 25. Rail                |
| Snow Bunting              | 26. Cardinal            |
| 7. Red-Bellied Woodpecker | 27. Least Tern          |
| 8. Least Sandpiper        | Red-Backed Sandpiper    |
| Common Gallinule          | 28. Killdeer            |
| 9. Black Tern             | 29. Bob-White           |
| 10. Ruddy Turnstone       | 30. Wood Duck           |
| 11. Black Crowned Tern    | 31. Belted Kingfisher   |
| 12. Horned Grebe          | 32. Wilson's Snipe      |
| 13. Pine Grosbeak         | 33. Stilt Sandpiper     |
| 14. Sparrow Hawk          | 34. Blue-Winged Teal    |
| 15. Warbler               | 35. Greater Yellow-Legs |
| Downey Woodpecker         | 36. Least Bittern       |
| Purple Finch              | 37. Sanderling          |
| 16. Northern Flicker      | 38. American Woodcock   |
| 17. Scarlet Tanager       | 39. Green-Winged Teal   |
| 18. Black-Billed Cuckoo   |                         |

### The Cobblestone Museum

The Cobblestone Museum is located on the ground floor of the 1834 church and is maintained by The Cobblestone Society along with its five restored buildings. One can find here pictures and information on cobblestone masonry, displays of artifacts relating to local history, special exhibitions on a seasonal basis in the John Proctor Room, and a gift shop with articles made by local artists and craftsmen. The museum acts as the central headquarters from which visitors disperse to peruse the other buildings.



Scarlet Tanagers

# THE HON. E. K. HART COLLECTION

1883

DAVID BRUCE - TAXIDERMIST

The  
COBBLESTONE MUSEUM  
Childs, New York

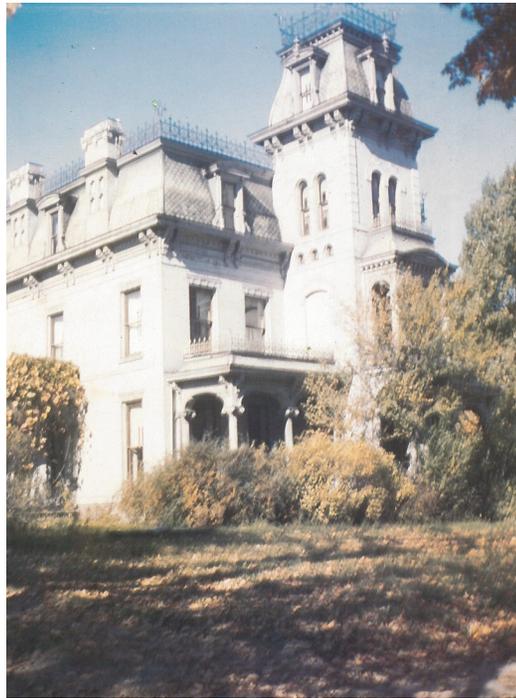
POST OFFICE - ALBION, NEW YORK 14411





**E. Kirke Hart  
1841-1893**

**The E. K. Hart  
Residence—Razed  
in the 1940's.**



## **Hon. E. K. Hart**

One of the most illustrious names to appear in local history is that of Hon. E. Kirke Hart. He was born in 1841 and was the only son of Elizur Hart. He received his education in the common schools of his native home, Albion. During his career he directed his attention mainly to banking interests but was also identified in other enterprises including the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company. In 1876 he was elected to one term as a Representative in Congress from the 30th District (Orleans and Monroe Counties). He was largely instrumental in securing electric lights in the Village of Albion and was wholly responsible for the location of the House of Refuge for Women in Albion (1890) now the Correction Facility. Through combined efforts with his cousin John W. Hart, both giving liberally, the present brick and stone Presbyterian Manse was erected on East State Street in Albion.

Some time in 1883, E. K. Hart commissioned David Bruce to create an exhibit of taxidermy. This display of 39 cases representing over 40 species of birds, was hung in the stairwell of the Hart mansion which was located on South Main Street in Albion. It is said that when the cases were being installed, a workman fell from the scaffold and plunged three stories down through the stairwell to his death. In the mid-1940's when the Hart mansion was razed, E. K. Hart's grandson John, gave the collection to the Albion High School. The Cobblestone Society is deeply appreciative to the Albion Board of Education for placing this fabulous collection in our museum.

Signor, Isaac & Others  
Landmarks of Orleans County, 1894

## **David Bruce—Taxidermist**

David Bruce was born in Perth, Scotland, June 13, 1833. When he was a year old, the family moved to Norwich, Norfolk, England. He was always interested in birds, butterflies and in painting. In 1861 he made his first trip to New Zealand. There he collected birds and did some painting and paperhanging. He was in the business of procuring plumes and breast feathers of birds for millinery purposes.

It was not until the late 1870's that he moved to the United States and here he settled in Brockport, New York. He was known as a decorator, painter, naturalist and foremost, a taxidermist. In 1883 he did the interior decorating at St. Luke's Church in Brockport. Many of the older homes in the Brockport area were also painted by him with his motif being foliage and brightly-hued birds. Also about this same time he received a Government appointment to make a collection of butterflies and moths of the United States. For this he traveled extensively in the west, making Colorado Springs his headquarters. Through his efforts, the first and a most complete classification of butterflies was made. David Bruce contributed to E. H. Eaton's work on "Birds of Western New York" and W. H. Edwards' 3-volume work "Butterflies of North America." In 1892 he collected and arranged an exhibit of moths and butterflies of Colorado as part of that State's exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. He became known in the world of ornithology and entomology.

David Bruce was the first taxidermist to place birds and mammals in cases surrounded by their natural environment. With his skill as an artist he was able to reproduce a suitable background for each particular case of mounted specimens. Prior to this, stuffed specimens often looked stiff, out of place and dead. His sculpturing ability in clay became especially important to his work. At that time taxidermists usually treated skins with salt, alum and arsenic soap. The bones were wired, wrapped and put in the legs. The body was hung upside down and stuffed with straw. It was certainly David Bruce's attempt to improve the art of taxidermy by his own artistic and ingenious approach.

David Bruce died in September 1903 while on a hike along the shore of Lake Ontario near Hamlin, N. Y. where he had been collecting specimens. He had no aspirations to becoming a wealthy man although he must have been a very happy man; one who was able to roam at will over some of the most beautiful country in the world doing the thing that he loved best.

However, our story does not end here, because not far from Brockport lies the township of Clarendon in the southeast of Orleans County. Here on May 19, 1864 was born Carl Ethan Akeley. As a boy he was torn between his desire to please his parents in becoming a good farmer, and his love for the forest and wild life. Through an advertisement in the Youth's Companion, he found his answer (a book on Taxidermy for \$1 .00). A neighbor's deceased pet canary was his first subject. Eventually, Carl Akeley learned of David Bruce who lived just a few miles away. He went to Brockport and got acquainted with him. During the following three years Carl Akeley worked with David Bruce, the latter teaching and showing him the secrets of mixing paints, sculpturing in clay and other aspects of taxidermy including anatomy and sketching.

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