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# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## AN AKELEY FOX COMES TO LIGHT

Pictured here is Mr. John Seager with the fox his great grandfather Francis Harling shot almost one hundred years ago. Mr. Seager has recently given this family heirloom to the Cobblestone Museum for its permanent collection in memory of his parents Agnes Harling Seager and John Seager.

The story goes that sometime in the 1880's Francis Harling lay near a fox run in a Barre Swamp almost all day before this specimen came along. At the time Carl Akeley of Clarendon who was in his late teens or early twenties was learning techniques of taxidermy under the tutelage of David Bruce from Brockport. Knowing Akeley, Francis Harling purposely procured the fox for him to mount. The fox is depicted in a large gold-framed shadow box just as he has killed a partridge. This is one of Akeley's early works as it is signed on the reverse side of the glass - C.E. Akeley, Clarendon''.

In the late 19th Century Akeley went on to become the great world renowned African explorer and established African Hall in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He was noted as being one of the first taxidermists to place specimens in their natural surroundings and traveled with Theodore Roosevelt and George Eastman on several safaries. One of his staunchest supporters was none other than J. Pierpont Morgan. Unfortunately, Akeley died in his early sixties before he had a chance to complete his life's work. This particular fox however is testimony to a great man's artistic genius. For many years it hung in the parlor of the Harling residence on East County House Road near Albion. It was then inherited by Walker Harling, son of Francis and passed on to his daughter Agnes Harling Seager who kept it in the attic for over forty years.

The fox is now assimilated with the Hon. E. K. Hart Bird Collection in the museum at the Cobblestone Church. Ironically, the Hart Bird Collection was all prepared by Akeley's teacher, David Bruce and the fox now can be viewed by the public for the first time during this Mother's Day weekend Annual Art Show and Sale at the Cobblestone Church on Route 104 and 98.