

Transcription of a recording made by T. Wayland Vaughan for the occasion of dedicating the Aquarium-Museum in March, 1951.

Professor Revelle, colleagues: Yes, the University of California has conferred another high honor upon me in naming this handsome and useful building for me. I am profoundly grateful for this expression of approval of my efforts in behalf of the University -- and thank you for what you've done.

In 1923 the Regents of the University of California appointed me a professor of oceanography and Director of the Scripps Institution, which at that time was known as the Scripps Institution for Biological Research. It was then understood that the name would be changed from Institution for Biological Research to Institution of Oceanography. Dr. Ritter, Miss Ellen B. Scripps, Mr. E. W. Scripps, and the faculty of the university concurred in this recommendation. On October the 25th, 1925, the Regents of the University changed the name, thereby making the Scripps Institution of Oceanography the first institution for oceanographic research in America.

As the Scripps Institution for Biological Research had embarked upon an extensive program of research in heredity in the rodent genus Peromyscus, by Dr. F. B. Sumner, it was decided to continue these researches until they came to their logical conclusion, before confining the activities of the institution to studies of the sea. The change was gradually made, and Dr. Sumner transferred his activities from studies of heredity in a genus of rodents to the investigation of the numerous adaptations of fishes to their environment in the sea.

Perhaps I should say I came to change my allegiance from the U. S. Geological Survey to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. For many years a number of scientific men in this country had been endeavoring to establish an institution for oceanographic research. I was one of them. We had able help from several scientific men of other lands. Among them was Sir John Murray



and Fridtjof Nansen. Regarding Sir John Murray: when he came to this country in 1911, to deliver a memorial address for Alexander Agassiz, he went to Washington and New York in an endeavor to promote oceanographic investigation in this country. In Washington he gave to the National Academy of Sciences six thousand dollars, leaving, by increase of the interest, ten thousand dollars for the establishment of a medal in honor of his friend Alexander Agassiz. Fridtjof Nansen was a guest of honor [at a dinner] given by a number of scientific men at the Cosmos Club in January, 1918. He did what he could to promote oceanographic research in this country.

Perhaps I should make a remark on how I came to be selected as the Director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. In conjunction with other scientific men I had worked for years to bring about the establishment of an oceanographic institution in this country. After it had been decided to convert the Scripps Institution for Biological Research into the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, I was consulted regarding the nomination of the director. The first person selected did not wish to accept the post. Then the post was offered to me. It seemed that my hand had been called, and I accepted the invitation.

I undertook to do two things at the Scripps Institution. One was to convert it into an institution of oceanography. I shall not attempt to review the work which was done there, but I will say that programs in physical, chemical, biological, and geological oceanography were developed -- and in this way: I had able assistance by the staff of the institution.

The second object that I had in mind was to get an abler oceanographer than I was as my successor. The committee appointed by the President of the University to nominate a successor for me chose Harald Ulrik Sverdrup, who was duly appointed. Everybody knows that Sverdrup is a better oceanographer than I am.

The second honor that the University of California conferred upon me was to grant me the degree of Doctor of Laws. This pleased me very much, because it was an expression of approbation of the efforts that I had made.

The naming of this building for me is the third honor, and it pleases me, because it is further confirmation of the approval of the Regents and faculty of the University of my efforts.

President Sproul, I thank you, the Regents and faculty of the University for all that you've done for me.

(transcribed from a tape of the original record by Betty Shor, April, 1976)