

## **THE HISTORY OF BUD & LILY SCHIELE**

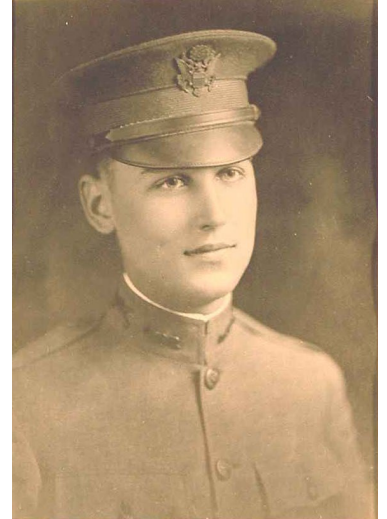
A young Rudolph “Bud” Schiele walked to class at the University of Pennsylvania, daydreaming about nature, hiking trails, and the beautiful, great outdoors. If he wasn’t studying, Bud spent his extra time working at the Commercial Museum in Philadelphia as an assistant curator. There, Bud developed an interest in photography and taxidermy, skills which he would continue to use throughout his life. Bud did not categorize these jobs as work but as the fulfillment of a dream.

Soon after his work in Philadelphia, he met a woman named Lily Hobbs. They called each other husband and wife in 1916 but didn’t have much time to celebrate. World War I beckoned young men to join ranks, and Bud left to serve as a Second Lieutenant in the Army.

After Bud’s return from the war, he devoted his time to the Boy Scouts of America. Lily and he traveled to Gastonia, North Carolina in 1924 where he worked as a scout executive to unify and expand existing troops in the North Carolina piedmont.

Bud and Lily worked tirelessly to raise enough funds to open “Camp Bud Schiele,” a boy scouts camp on the shores of Lake Lanier in Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

Though they never had children, Lily often said it was alright because they had over ‘100,000 boys’ in scout programs.



Bud and Lily continued to travel across North America, making connections wherever they went, in their exploration of the natural beauty of the different animals, environments, and Indigenous peoples across the continent. Through these travels, the Schieles amassed a collection of minerals, animals, and artifacts. Lily was particularly interested in Indigenous cultures. Their excursions across the country gave them the opportunity to visit various groups, learn about their culture, and collect items like Navajo rugs, Cherokee baskets, Hopi and Catawba pottery, and southwestern jewelry. She was inspired by the movements of the Indigenous cultures and wanted to bring home examples of their craftsmanship.

Bud, on the other hand, was far more intrigued by the minerals and rocks that abounded underfoot and discovering more about his surroundings. His zest for learning, about various environments and the connectivity to the wildlife it supported, continued throughout his life and would sprout the desire to share knowledge with others so they could understand and appreciate the world around them.

“At his home, he could fill his hand with sunflower seeds, and the birds would fly right down and eat from his hand,” said David Stultz, a close friend of Bud.

After Bud retired from the Boy Scouts, he and Lily traveled up the mountain where he worked as a naturalist for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There, he continued to photograph and film the natural beauties wildlife had to offer.

When Bud and Lily left Gastonia in 1959 for the mountains, there was still one dream that hadn’t been accomplished. The hopes to build a museum of natural history.

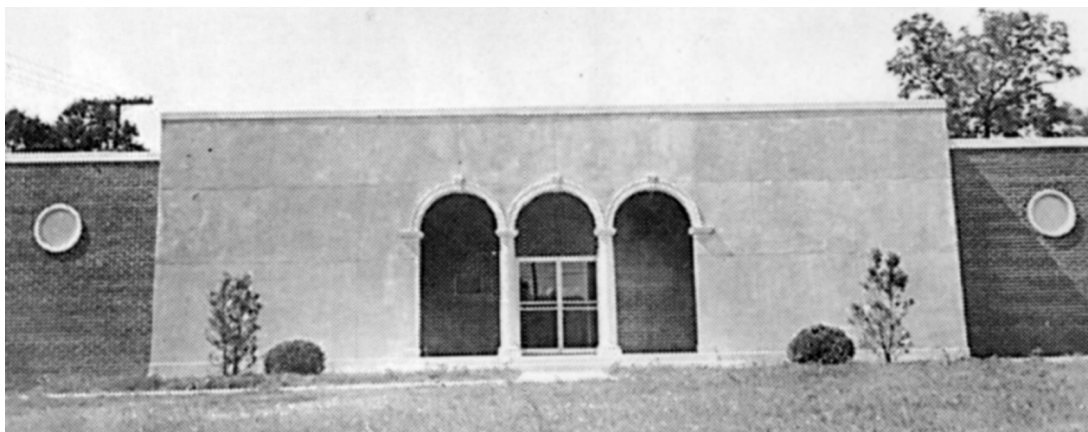
### **THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHIELE**

Bud and Lily challenged a group of leaders in Gastonia. “If you can persuade the county to build a place to house it, I will offer my entire collection of animals and minerals and give my services for free,” Bud Schiele had said.

That promise sparked action, and with funding from Gaston County, a museum committee was born in 1959. Bryce T. Dickson, Sr., Daniel L. LaFar, Jr., and Albert G. Myers, Jr. devised the museum’s Articles of Incorporation in 1960, and the Gaston Museum of Natural History came into being.

True to their word, Bud and Lily donated their collection and expertise to the fledgling museum. The original museum building was nothing like the size of The Schiele now. Standing at 1,500 square feet, the doors of The Gaston Museum of Natural History opened July 24, 1961, with Bud and Lily giving tours of the museum.

The City of Gastonia became the new stewards of museum operations in 1964 and decided to honor the Schieles for their selfless contributions of collections and time. The Gaston Museum of Natural History was renamed **The Schiele Museum of Natural History**.





As the 1960s ticked by, the museum grew popular with the community enjoying the tours and programs provided by Bud and Lily. Visitors were excited to learn about species they had never heard of and see native artifacts - sparking discussion across dinner tables.

Sadly, in 1966, Lily Schiele passed away though her love and study of Indigenous cultures continue to inspire others.

Following Lily's passing, the museum received grants from the City of Gastonia to build a planetarium expanding the exploration of our surroundings to now include space! In 1967, James Lynn became the first planetarium director.



"This facility will make the museum complete in interpreting the beautiful and wonderful world in which we live," Bud said. "and this is the purpose of the museum."

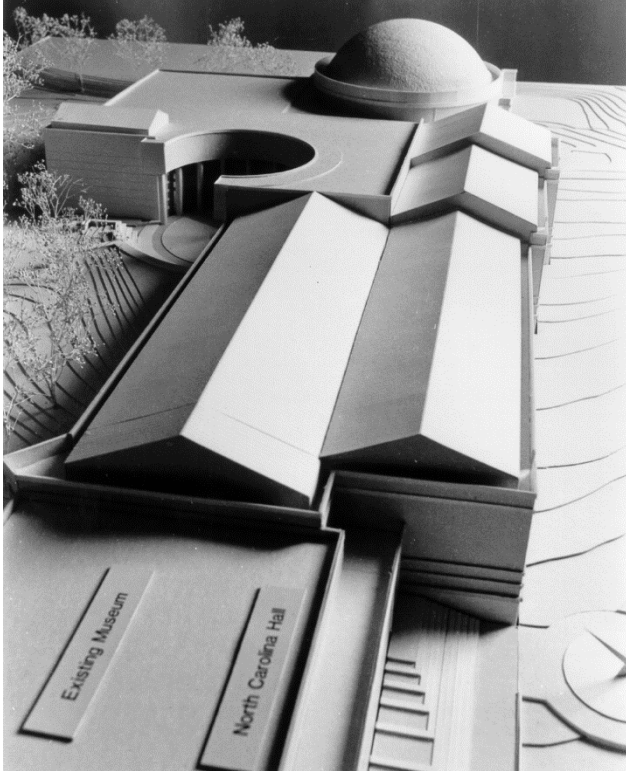
### **The 1970s**

As Bud's health declined in the early 1970s, the museum continued to expand. An auditorium was added for films and lectures. In 1974, Bud Schiele passed away leaving behind a legacy of learning and a passion for exploring the world's natural treasures.

The continued growth of the museum after Bud's passing is a testament to the strong foundation of the museum and the community's desire for this resource. The Nature Trail, Back Country Farm, and North Carolina Hall exhibit rounded out the major additions in the 70s under Alan Stout, one of Bud's first hires, who became director of the museum.



Schiele Museum Earth/Space Science Center 1988–89



## The 1980s

The Schiele tore through the 1980s with exciting new programs and exhibits. The Catawba Indian Village opened in 1984, adding fresh areas of focus to the outdoor exhibits. The museum conducted archeological research in North Carolina and the western United States, which led to a significant upgrade for the museum's collection. Following this extensive paleontological project, the Elizabeth W. Robinson Hall of Earth and Man opened in 1988.





### The 1990s

In April 1990, The Schiele received a major addition to its building. The Earth Space Science Center provided an entrance and lobby, expanded parking, a planetarium able to seat 150 people, a larger auditorium, a K-3 classroom, and an additional 4500 square feet of exhibit space. It was also at this time, that the museum's now-iconic centerpiece was placed in the lobby.

Alan Stout retired after the great addition of The Earth Space Science Center in 1994, and David Brose became the next director. Alongside The Schiele Board of Trustees, the museum continued to expand temporary exhibit programs and renovate several permanent exhibits as well.

### The 2000s

In 2001, The Schiele became a Smithsonian Institute Affiliate. Through this connection, the museum received a grant from the Museum Loan Network to bring in significant Smithsonian artifacts for exhibition on Gastonia. In 2004, The Schiele received accreditation from the American Association of Museums which recognizes organizations utilizing best practices. A year later, Dr. V. Ann Tippitt was named director of The Schiele.

Along with the celebration of The Schiele's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, the Hall of North American Wildlife exhibits received extensive improvements. Designs and fundraisers followed for the museum to create their Environmental Studies Center. This center opened in 2013 and hosts everything from science camps to wedding venues for guests.

The later 2010s consisted of different renovations for many permanent exhibits. The Nature Trail added Play'scape, an outdoor playground for children, in 2014, and the Henry Hall was renovated. In 2016, the Catawba Village was repaired and the James H. Lynn Planetarium received a huge makeover as it upgraded to full-dome digital technology. A longtime exhibit, The Hall of Earth and Man, transformed into the Creepy Nature exhibit in 2018 with a few upgrades.

May 3, 2018 *Gastonia and the North Carolina Piedmont* exhibit opening in Gotha, Germany at the KunstForum.



Smithsonian  
*Affiliate*



2018: The American Alliance of Museums re-accredited The Schiele.

Beginning in 2019, The Schiele created The Farm out of a space that had prior interpreted a narrow program about colonial life. New buildings, gardens, heritage equipment, graphics, hands-on activities, and live animals have helped to create a significant outdoor attraction that appeals to all visitors. Integration of these changes has been undertaken in phases, and most of the new live animal experiences are now complete.



On March 16, 2020, The Schiele Museum's leadership team made the difficult decision to close the museum to the public due to growing concerns about the Covid-19 virus.

We understood the need to be proactive to keep our members, visitors, and staff safe from what became a global pandemic. The museum was able to reopen with new safety measures in place, plastic barriers, increased cleaning, mask requirements, and limited capacity on September 8 – 10<sup>th</sup> for our Schiele Members, and open to the general public on September 11, 2020. Many programs were adapted to meet the needs of visitors in smaller groups that provided more space for social distancing. These programs were offered over a series of days to allow for more opportunities for the experience without the risk of major events with a potentially high rate of exposure.

On Feb. 26, 2022, Fossil Fair was brought back in its original, “large-scale” format and was the first one-day event on the scale of pre-pandemic experiences. March 2022, the mask requirement was rolled back to an optional and highly recommended while visiting the museum interior exhibits.

**Bud and Lily Schiele’s legacy lives on --- not only in exhibits but in the spirit of education and conservation engendered at The Schiele.**



**2019 France Trip**  
September 20 - 28

**2017 Eclipse Trip**  
August 17 – 23

**2017 Norway Cruise**  
March 18 - 27



**The Schiele Museum of Natural History is committed to inspiring curiosity and understanding of science and the natural world through exceptional educational programs, exhibits, and research.**