# Othniel Charles Marsh Encyclopedia Article

## Othniel Charles Marsh

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# Othniel Charles Marsh

**1831-1899**

American vertebrate paleontologist who helped establish the science of vertebrate paleontology in the United States. A Yale graduate and faculty member, Marsh later worked for the U.S. Geological Survey and was president of the National Academy of Sciences. He created a large collection of specimens at Yale based upon his own expeditions and on the work of hired collectors. He described the earliest fossil mammals then known, and he worked on the evolution of North American horses, the fossil reptiles of the West, and the reptilian origins of birds. He was a great rival of paleontologist Edward Drinker Cope (1840-1897).