

85

Zoo's who's who

Animals from A to Z

By SHIRLEY WILLIAMS

She's lived on the hill overlooking Utica probably longer than any other resident and she'll squawk about it until you pay her some notice.

Polly is elderly and not a bit embarrassed about a sign on the front of her house that warns: "I may bite."

"She's like a landmark," said Utica Zoo veterinary technician Audrey Barndt, referring to the salmon-crested cockatoo who's been at the zoo since the 1940s.

She welcomed us on a tour of the zoo atop Steele Hill Road in Roscoe Conkling Park, where we learned the names of close to 300 residents who live there.

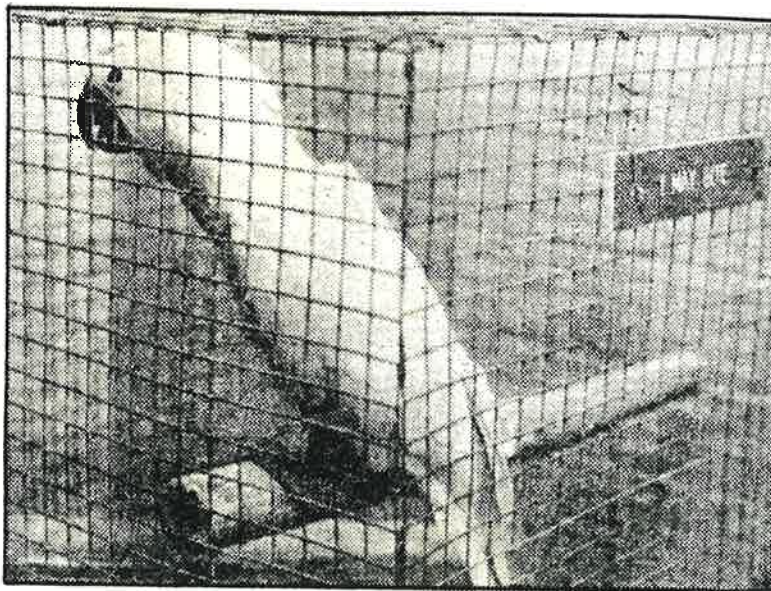
There was *Daisy*, a yellow rattlesnake well known to area school children from her many educational Zoomobile tours.

The three-foot long Nile monitor lizards have no names. Barndt refers to them as *His* and *Her*.

The male was called *Sid Vicious* when he first came here and some still call him that, Barndt said.

The Forest cobras are "not too bright ... kind of pea-brains," said Barndt. So, she calls them *Half Pea* and *Quarter Pea*.

There's *Quasimodo*, the snapping



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SENIOR RESIDENT — "*Polly*," the salmon-crested cockatoo, has been living at the Utica Zoo since she was a baby bird in the 1940s.

turtle with the humped back, *Otus*, the screech owl, named for a genus of small-eared owls, and three "mildly venomous" mangrove snakes — *Peter*, *Paula* and *Mary*.

It was obvious how *Big Mamma* got her name — a python 24 feet long, 24 inches around, and weighing more than 200 pounds.

Three smiling aligators remain nameless.

"They're just not anything you'd want to put a name to," said Barndt.

While the names give the animals identity and make it fun for kids to recognize their friends by name, the animals really don't respond to voice commands, Barndt said.

Names are given "if one fits the animal" or if the animals are to be used for educational purposes, such as a visiting nursing homes and schools, Barndt said.

Mr. Peeper, the black swan named from his constant chatter, was born of the first successful swan hatching at the zoo.

Mabel, the white duck, is a favorite of school children who read her name as *Ma Bell*, and call her that.

Rhett Butler is a rabbit who got his name from the black moustache effect on the side of his white face.

There's *Franklin* the skunk, *Muffin* and *Merlin* the chinchillas — *Merlin* named for the magician after he fled his cage and hid between the cage dividers.

Jezebel and *Jason* are ferrets, *Woody* is a wood turtle and *Nugget* is a boa constrictor and son of *Pretzel*.

Then there's the tiny little house pet turtle, *Frodo the Wanderer*, found atop a restaurant table, left by a careless patron.

Two cotton-top marmosets that look like miniature monkeys answer to *Montague* and *Megan* — born at the Utica Zoo, rejected by their parents, and hand-raised.

Dugan and *Rachel* are blue and gold macaws, who have some

(See ZOO — Page 4B)