

2,650,000 PERSONS SERVED BY MUSEUM IN 1934

The educational influence of Field Museum was carried to a total of more than 2,650,000 persons during 1934. This figure includes 1,991,469 visitors received during the twelve months in the Museum building itself, and approximately 662,000 persons, mostly children, reached by extra-mural educational activities conducted by the institution through the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures, and the Department of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension.

The Harris Extension circulates some 1,300 traveling exhibits among more than 400 schools and other institutions of Chicago where they are available for study daily during the school year by more than 500,000 children.

The activities of the Raymond Foundation include outside work by lecturers sent to the children's classrooms and assemblies to give talks on natural history subjects, illustrated with lantern slides. These extension lectures were heard by 162,360 children in 1934. The Foundation presents also series of motion picture entertainments in the James Simpson Theatre which were attended by 27,653 children in 1934, and guide-lecture tours of the exhibits in which the participants last year numbered 14,759.

The lectures for adults in the Simpson Theatre in 1934 were attended by 24,326 persons, and 8,807 participated in the guide-lecture tours for adults. The Library of the Museum, and the scientific study collections maintained in the various Departments, served a large number of people.

While the Museum attendance of 1,991,469 persons shows a large decline from the 3,269,390 visitors received during 1933, it was nevertheless the second highest year's attendance in the history of the institution, and the reduction from the 1933 peak was a natural and expected consequence of the smaller attendance at A Century of Progress exposition in its second year. Of the visitors in 1934 only 99,553, or approximately 5 per cent, paid the 25-cent admission fee charged on certain days; all the rest either came on the days when admission is free, or belonged to classifications such as children, teachers, students, and Members of the Museum, to whom admission is free on all days.

ACANTHUS PLANT INFLUENCED ANCIENT CORINTHIAN ART

By B. E. DAHLGREN
Curator, Department of Botany

There has been added recently to the exhibits in the Hall of Plant Life (Hall 29) a reproduction of the bear's breech (*Acanthus mollis*), shown in the accompanying illustration. This is one of several species of robust herbaceous plants native to the Mediterranean region, and often grown, especially in southern Europe, Greece, Italy, Spain and southern France, for ornament on account of their handsome foliage. The species shown here, or the closely related *Acanthus spinosus*, evidently served as the model for the ornamentation of the capitals and cornices of Corinthian architecture. The legend is that Callimachus, famous artist of the fourth to fifth century B.C., derived the idea of this form of capital from the sight of a basket on a maiden's tomb, covered with a tile about which the leaves of a plant of acanthus had grown. The conventionalized acanthus motif has ever

since constituted one of the chief characteristics of the Corinthian as well as of the later Roman composite order of architecture, and has passed on in varied form into Byzantine and Renaissance art, where it was used both alone and combined with other plant forms.

The genus *Acanthus*, with about twenty species in southern Europe, northern Africa, and Asia, has given its name to the family Acanthaceae, which includes some 175 other



Acanthus

Reproduction of decorative plant recently added to exhibits in Hall 29.

genera and perhaps 2,000 species of plants, indigenous mostly to tropical and warm temperate regions of the world.

Among them are many well known ornamentals, such as the Thunbergias, tropical climbers of various species. The handsome *Sanchezia nobilis* or "hoja de independencia" (leaf of independence) of Ecuador is exhibited in the same case as the acanthus.

HALL OF RACES COMPLETED

With the addition last month of a bronze bust of a Beduin, Chauncey Keep Memorial Hall (Hall of the Races of Mankind) is now complete. The series of sculptures in bronze and stone representing diverse racial types from all parts of the world now numbers ninety-one studies (including several groups which bring the number of individuals portrayed to 101). All are life-size. A large number of them are full-length figures; the remainder are busts and heads. All are the work of the sculptor Malvina Hoffman.

Captain White Visits Museum

Captain Harold A. White of New York, who led the Harold White-John Coats Abyssinian and the Harold White-John Coats African Expeditions of Field Museum, was a visitor at the Museum about the middle of January. Among groups in this institution resulting from his collecting are the African water-hole, the bongo, and the aardvark, in Carl E. Akeley Memorial Hall (Hall 22).

Fishermen going south this winter to Florida and other gulf coast waters can become acquainted in advance with the various species of fish they may encounter by viewing the exhibits of gulf fishes in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18).

LIBRARY OF DR. LAUFER GIVEN TO MUSEUM

The late Dr. Berthold Laufer, Curator of the Department of Anthropology, who died last September, left his personal library of approximately 5,000 volumes, including much material of extreme rarity and value, chiefly on China and Tibet, to Field Museum. Dr. Laufer had planned for many years to make this bequest, and completed the formal arrangements for it as far back as 1923.

This accession, with other Orientalia previously on the shelves of the Museum Library, makes the Museum's collection of books and pamphlets on the many subjects covered one of the most important in this country. Dr. Laufer's contribution includes books in Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and in various European languages as well as in English. They were used by him in his researches and other work for the Museum.

Friends of China Memorial

As a memorial to Dr. Laufer, the American Friends of China, Chicago, have made a gift of \$500 to the Museum, to be used for expenses in connection with the cataloguing and arrangement of his library in a manner that will increase its usefulness and convenience to scholars and others who wish to consult it. This society, of which Dr. Laufer was Secretary and one of the most active members, has over a period of years made many contributions to Field Museum, both of valuable objects for the Chinese archaeological and ethnological collections, and of books for the Library.

A GREAT FOSSIL TURTLE

By ELMER S. RIGGS
Associate Curator of Paleontology

The shell and the internal skeleton of a great fossil land-turtle, *Testudo* species, have just been mounted and placed on exhibition in Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38). The specimen measures forty-eight inches in length. The shell alone is forty-two inches long by thirty-two inches wide.

This specimen was collected by a Museum expedition in 1931, from a sandy bluff above the North Platte River in western Nebraska. The upper shell was badly broken when found, but has been carefully pieced together, and missing parts have been restored. It is one of the largest specimens of fossil tortoise so far reported from North America.

Land-turtles of this genus are known to have lived as early as the Oligocene period (35 to 39 million years ago), and have since become widely distributed over the world. Species of *Testudo* are known from the Miocene formations of India where land-turtles appear to have attained their largest size. Other species have been found in western Europe, in Egypt, and in South America. Modern species still exist in various parts of the world.

Election of Officers

All officers of Field Museum who served in 1934 were re-elected for 1935 at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees held January 21. For the twenty-seventh time President Stanley Field was re-elected. He has held office continuously since 1909. The other re-elected officers are Albert A. Sprague, First Vice-President; James Simpson, Second Vice-President; Albert W. Harris, Third Vice-President; Stephen C. Simms, Director and Secretary; and Solomon A. Smith, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary. The membership of the Board of Trustees remained unchanged.



Dahlgren, B. E. 1935. "Acanthus Plant Influenced Ancient Corinthian Art." *Field Museum news* 6(2), 3-3.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/25720>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/350916>

Holding Institution

Field Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the Chicago Field Museum.
For information contact dcc@library.uiuc.edu.

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.