

## CHICAGO AREA SPRING FLOWERS BLOOM EARLY THIS YEAR

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The unusually warm weather of mid-April forced open the buds of several kinds of flowers which in the Chicago area ordinarily do not commence to open until late April or early May. On Easter Sunday (April 13) as many as sixteen different species of plants native to Illinois were actually in flower, and several other kinds were already beginning to show flower-buds.

Those in flower included (among the trees and shrubs): alder, hazelnut, hop hornbeam, red maple, silver maple, American elm, trembling aspen, cottonwood, and two species of willow. The herbaceous group in flower included skunk cabbage, hepatica (*Hepatica americana*), rue anemone, spring beauty, purple cress (*Cardamine Douglasii*), rock cress (*Arabis lyrata*), and whitlow grass (*Draba verna*). Five of the seven members of the herbaceous group in bloom belong to the mustard and buttercup families, which are two of the predominant families in the early spring flora.

Besides these, many other kinds of plants were conspicuous by their patches of green shoots. Clumps of Virginia cowslip or bluebell (*Mertensia*) and marsh marigold leaves ornamented marshy or wet ground, while in the low woods adjacent to the streams appeared green shoots of wild ginger, wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*), wild onion (*Allium canadense*), skunk cabbage leaves beginning to unfold, and young mayapple sprouts. Several other kinds were about to bloom and had good-sized buds; included in this class were wind anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*), wakerobin (*Trillium sessile*), and trailing arbutus.

This outburst of floral display was all the more spectacular because it came unexpectedly after the previous cool weather. During the first week of April only a few trees and shrubs were in bloom, and skunk cabbage was the only herbaceous plant actually in flower. The few warm days brought just enough heat and sunshine to make the difference between budding and blooming stages.

In addition to these native plants which were flowering, several garden herbs and shrubs were well advanced at Easter time. These included golden-bells or Forsythia, crocus, snowdrops, grape hyacinth, scillas, and daffodils. A week later there were fifty species in flower. At the end of the month a hundred could probably be found.

### Pan American Lectures

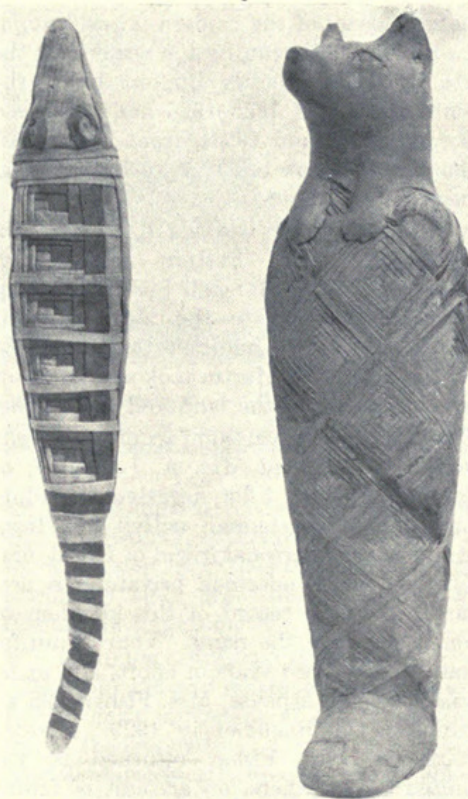
In accordance with the Museum's policy of co-operating where possible with other worthy civic movements, special lecture tours were given in certain of the exhibition halls on Pan American Day, April 14, sponsored by the Pan American Council.

Miss Elizabeth McM. Hambleton, of the Raymond Foundation staff, lectured on "Story of the People of Latin America," emphasizing facts about early Indian civilizations as well as the present-day Indian population. Mr. Clarence L. Brown lectured on "Commercial Products of Latin America," stressing the economic reasons for relationships between the United States and its western hemisphere neighbors.

### THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

#### Animal Mummies

With the mummy Harwa and his daily x-ray especially featured in this issue of FIELD MUSEUM NEWS, it is appropriate to point out that Field Museum has a representative collection of animal and bird



#### Pets? or Religious Symbols?

Mummified lizard, and cat, from Egypt. The wrappings of the former suggest a young crocodile, but x-ray examination does not justify such identification. Most mummified animals are believed to have been associated with deities, but some may have been pets, and some may have been intended as food for the dead.

mummies, as well as human mummies, from ancient Egypt. Also, it may be noted that much has been learned about these animal mummies from pioneer x-ray studies conducted at this institution some years ago.

Animal mummies and their coffins, mostly from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to the Roman Period (7th Century B.C.—First Century A.D.) are displayed in Case 8 in the Hall of Egyptian Archaeology (Hall J), and bird mummies, mostly of the Greek or Roman Period (from about the 4th Century B.C. to the First Century A.D.) are exemplified by various species, in Case 6.

Archaeologists suggest three possible reasons for the preservation of the bodies of animals and birds by Egyptians. In royal tombs in the Eighteenth Dynasty (15th–14th Centuries B.C.) there have been found desiccated birds and animals, or even parts of animals, which all evidence indicates were intended as food offerings for the human occupants of the tombs in their after life. A second possible reason in some cases is a sentimental one—some of the animals are believed to have been household pets, and therefore were mummified and laid away with their masters or mistresses to continue companionship in the hereafter as on this earth. The third and usual reason, however, for the preservation of animal mummies is that numerous species had acquired sanctity by association in certain localities with various Egyptian deities. Horus, for example, is often pictured in falcon form; Nekhbet of el-Kab is a vulture-goddess; and Amon of Thebes sometimes appears as a goose. All of the bird mummies at Field Museum (but not all those of mammals) apparently owe their existence to their religious significance. Such animals were duly embalmed and laid away en masse in cemeteries of their own or in chambers of their temples. Birds of prey have been found especially at Gizeh, Roda, and Kom Ombo. Those at Kom Ombo were buried apparently in Roman times, in trenches and pits in the sandy area behind the temple.

Strange to say, x-ray examination has revealed among these sacred animals traces of even more chicanery than has been noted in the human mummies. Some of the animal skeletons lack the head or other parts; one gazelle mummy contains no bones except the horns; and some of the "cats" are merely shaped packages of linen without a trace of the actual animal.

Coffins for these mummies were often shaped like the animals themselves, just as anthropoid coffins were made for human beings. In other instances, the creature was represented on the lid. Little cobras, lizards, eels, or shrews, in their tiny coffins of wood or bronze, seem to have had amuletic value to the ancient Egyptians and to have been carried or kept as charms.

Included in the Museum collection are mummies of two vultures, a goose, numerous small hawks, a number of cats, a gazelle, an ape, a number of shrews, and what is believed to be some sort of lizard. Also displayed are some fabricated imitations of animals, and coffins designed for the mummies of apes, shrews, cobras, and eels.

How many kinds of products come from petroleum? If you can think of only five or six, visit the extensive exhibit of petroleum products in Hall 36 of the Department of Geology. The number of things you didn't know, or at least didn't think of, will probably surprise you.





Field, Henry. 1941. "Pictorial Survey of Iraq." *Field Museum news* 12(5), 6-6.

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