

Field Museum News

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RAWSON EXPEDITION RETURNS WITH 2,000 SPECIMENS

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The Frederick H. Rawson-Field Museum Ethnological Expedition to West Africa has returned to Chicago after nearly a year in the field. Work was conducted in two regions which are geographically and ethnologically distinct—Angola (Portuguese West Africa), a region which anthropologists had studied less than any other part of the continent, and Nigeria (British West Africa), together with French Niger Territory. Approximately 2,000 objects were collected, including good examples of wood carving, leather products, articles fashioned from iron, brass and silver, and implements of warfare, domestic work and magical rites. Included also are series of objects illustrating stages in the manufacture of these products.

About 800 still pictures were taken of the country, racial types and industrial processes. Also, several thousand feet of motion pictures were made of native dances, ceremonies and manufacturing. Data were obtained for

the construction of proposed life-size groups, including one showing the native blacksmith's craft.

The most important result is a scientific report which is to be prepared on the ethnology of the Ovimbundu of Angola. Research was conducted into every department of tribal life. Arts and handicrafts, agriculture, fishing, social organization and magical rites were subjects of a large part of the inquiry. Fifty adult males were measured, and the data obtained, in combination with numerous photographs, provide a most useful record for studies in physical anthropology. The grammar and vocabulary of the Umbundu language were recorded. A dictaphone was used to record speech, singing and drum music.

In addition to ethnological material, a collection of about 150 skins of small mammals, lizards and snakes was obtained for the Department of Zoology.

More than 10,000 miles of African territory were traversed, traveling being done chiefly in a motor lorry under arduous circumstances. Great difficulties were encountered in crossing rivers, passing over stretches of deep sand, and avoiding flooded areas.

TWO NEW MURALS IN GRAHAM HALL

Two more of the large mural paintings of prehistoric life in the series being prepared for Ernest R. Graham Hall of Historical Geology have been completed and placed on exhibition. One of them, nine by eleven feet in dimensions, shows two great cave bears—which were contemporary with early man—emerging from a cavern overlooking a river valley of the late Ice Age. The other, nine by twenty-five feet, shows groups of various animals which lived about twenty million years ago in what is now Nebraska. The animals are the Parahippus, an early species of small three-toed horse; the Oxydactylus or extinct North American camel; the Diceratherium, a small species of prehistoric two-horned rhinoceros; the Dinohyus, a huge extinct pig-like animal; and the Moropus, a grotesque creature with a body something like a horse, head and teeth resembling those of a rhinoceros, and feet with claws for digging—the last most unusual in combination with the other characteristics of this animal.

With the installation of these paintings the total number of the series placed on exhibition to date is eighteen. Ten more are still to be prepared. The series is a gift from Ernest R. Graham, and is being executed by the well-known painter of paleontological subjects, Charles R. Knight of New York. Subjects of the other sixteen paintings placed on exhibition to date are: A Cooling Earth; The Beginnings of Life; An Early Sea Beach; The Chicago Coral Reef; An Armored Dinosaur; Egg-laying Dinosaurs of the Gobi Desert; Tyrannosaurus and Triceratops; The Moa; The Giant Kangaroo; The Mastodon; The Giant Irish Deer; Northern Mammoth; Great Ground Sloths and Glyptodonts; The Apatosaurus; The Zeuglodon; and Flying and Swimming Reptiles.

SATURDAY LECTURES IN APRIL

Four lectures in the Museum's fifty-third free lecture course remain to be given on Saturday afternoons during April. The speakers will be eminent explorers and naturalists, and their lectures will be illustrated with motion pictures and stereopticon slides. Following are the dates, subjects and speakers:

April 5—Bird Enchantment

T. Walter Weiseman, Lakewood, Ohio

April 12—The Wonderland of Plants

A. C. Pillsbury, Berkeley, California

April 19—A Naturalist in the South Seas

Karl P. Schmidt, Assistant Curator of Reptiles, Field Museum of Natural History; leader of the scientific section of the Cornelius Crane Pacific Expedition for Field Museum, 1928-29

April 26—Indian Cultures of the Southwest

Dr. Paul Martin, Assistant Curator of North American Archaeology, Field Museum of Natural History

All lectures begin at 3 P.M., and are given in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum. Admission is free.

Rare Lizards Received

Three rare African geckos or lizards, one of them equipped by nature with a broad shovel-like snout for digging in the sand, one with fringed toes designed to produce the same effect as anti-skid chains on an automobile tire, and one with web feet, have been presented to the Museum by Dr. Will J. Cameron of Chicago. This is the second gift resulting from Dr. Cameron's activities on the recent Cameron-Kadle Kalahari Desert Expedition. He had previously presented two other specimens of the web-footed species. The lizards are of kinds represented in few if any other museums of the world. Colored like the desert sand, they are in their native habitat practically invisible to any except the most observant eyes.



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