

HISTORY OF FIELD MUSEUM

By OLIVER C. FARRINGTON

Curator, Department of Geology

(Continued from last month)

With the accession of Stanley Field to the Presidency of the Museum, the selection of a site for a new building began to be actively considered. It was generally felt that a site near the center of the city would be preferable to that in Jackson Park, since it would make the Museum more readily accessible from all parts of the city. In order to obtain this desired end it seemed probable that a site in Grant Park could be secured, but on proposing this, opposition developed on the part of some of the owners of property adjoining the park. Legal steps were taken to determine what rights could be obtained, with the result that the proposed site at the central portion of the park was not granted.



Stanley Field

For a time it seemed likely that the new building would be erected on the site of that already occupied in Jackson Park, and some preparations were made for the erection of the building there. These were carried on to the extent of removing the collections of the Department of Geology from the west annex of the building to the central part. Further negotiations, however, enabled the present site to be secured.

Meanwhile the work of enlarging and improving the collections and exhibits was continued. An important line of work in the Department of Botany was inaugurated in 1909. This was the establishment of facilities for modeling plants, flowers and fruits in natural colors and permanent form. The services of Dr. B. E. Dahlgren of New York City, now Acting Curator of Botany, were secured. Through his skill and art and that of his associates, and the generous and continued support of President Field, the beautiful reproductions, to which the Hall of Plant Life in the Museum is now largely devoted, were made.

In 1911 the work of collecting fossil mammals was renewed, and an expedition in charge of Assistant, now Associate, Curator Elmer S. Riggs spent a season in Utah which resulted in obtaining a remarkable series of extinct species of mammals from strata of one of the early periods. Valuable collections of invertebrate fossils were also made during this year at several North American localities by Assistant Curator A. W. Slocum. In the same year an important line of work was inaugurated through an endowment created by Norman W. Harris of Chicago. This fund had for its purpose an extension of the work of the Museum to the Chicago public schools. By means of this fund a much closer connection of the Museum with the public schools was established than had been heretofore obtained. The work has continually increased in importance and extent and has become a prominent feature of the institution. In 1912 Assistant Curator, now Director, Stephen C. Simms was appointed head of this Department—the N. W. Harris Public School Extension of Field Museum. The work of the Department consists of preparing

and circulating among the schools traveling exhibition cases of natural history and economic material.

Expeditions to Venezuela, Colombia and other parts of South America were made by Assistant Curator, now Curator, Wilfred H. Osgood, and many new species of the birds and mammals of the regions visited were secured. During the period of the construction of the Panama Canal, exhaustive collections and studies of the fishes of the Isthmus were made by Assistant Curator S. E. Meek, who was accompanied by S. F. Hildebrand of the United States Bureau of Fisheries. Curator C. F. Millspaugh of the Department of Botany, in a trip to several Oriental countries including the East Indies, obtained many plants and plant products suitable for exhibition purposes.

In 1913 a notable accession was obtained by the acquisition of the Ward-Coonley collection of meteorites. This collection, the largest private one of these celestial visitors ever made, gave, when combined with the extensive collection previously possessed by the Museum, a world leadership in the assemblage of these bodies. In another field of mineralogical interest, yearly contributions by W. J. Chalmers of the Board of Trustees have gradually built up one of the finest collections of mineral crystals in the world. Beginning in 1900 through a fund contributed for an exhibit of crystals at the Paris Exposition, continued contributions by Mr. Chalmers have enabled a collection of great value to be made.

Activities of the Museum during this period were, however, by no means confined to the collecting and acquisition of specimens. A number of the large bird groups now occupying one of the Museum halls were prepared at this time. They included the wild turkey, pelican, condor, whooping crane, blue heron, loon and birds of Laysan Island groups. These, as well as the Mexican bear, American antelope and beaver groups, all constructed during this period, were the work of taxidermists of the present Museum staff, Julius Friesser and L. L. Pray. The backgrounds were by Charles A. Corwin, also a member of the present staff. Models of a Philippine village and of Philippine ironworkers and pottery makers were made by C. A. Gardner and others. The series of models now in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall, representing the development of the iron blast furnace, and a model of a twenty-stamp gold mill, were constructed by Assistant, now Associate, Curator H. W. Nichols and many fossil mammal exhibits were prepared by Assistant, now Associate, Curator Riggs, J. B. Abbott and others.

(To be continued next month)

A BIT OF LUNAR MYTHOLOGY

By BERTHOLD LAUFER

Curator, Department of Anthropology

Of the astral bodies the moon, from times immemorial, was the first to arouse the attention and to fire the imagination of primitive man. Lunar mythology is older than solar mythology. According to an ancient Chinese myth, the material universe was created from the body of Pan-ku, the first man—a sort of demiurge. From his breath arose the wind, from his voice thunder; from his right eye was formed the moon, from his left eye the sun; vegetation grew out of his hair, rivers flowed out of his blood.

In the dualistic philosophy of the Chinese all phenomena of the world were attributed to interaction of two principles called *yang* and *yin*, the former being the male or positive

principle, the latter the female or negative principle in nature. The sun as light and heat giver was *yang*, while the moon represented the female principle. The mid-autumn festival celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth month is devoted to worship of the moon and is a popular holiday.

A Chinese metal mirror of highly artistic quality, made in the seventh or eighth century A.D. under the T'ang dynasty, and recently presented to Field Museum by Mrs. Charles Schweppe of Chicago, is decorated with a scene wrought in high relief, which depicts ancient Chinese notions of the moon. The center of the ornamented surface is occupied by a large tree. This is the sacred cassia which blossoms in the autumn and emits an exquisite fragrance; it is also reputed to possess powerful medicinal virtues. The cassia believed to grow in the palace of the moon makes the human body immortal. Beneath the cassia is a hare seated on its hind legs and pounding in a mortar herbs that will form the ingredients in an elixir of eternal life. The hare in the moon is an old mythical concept both in ancient India and China. The luminous property of the moon is ascribed to the agency of the hare. At the lunar festival clay figures of hares are given to children, so that the lunar hare plays a role similar to our Easter rabbit.

To the left of the hare is another inhabitant of the moon, a toad—not by any means an ordinary toad, but a supernatural one, long-lived and believed to grow horns at the



Chinese Metal Mirror

Design depicts ancient ideas about the moon. The mirror is a gift from Mrs. Charles Schweppe.

age of three thousand years and to cause the eclipses of the moon by swallowing her. This toad is regarded as the transformation of a beautiful woman, Ch'ang O by name, who was the wife of a famed archer. The latter had received from the queen of paradise the elixir of immortality. His wife filched the precious beverage, fled to the moon, and was changed into a striped toad.

A dragon and a phoenix are also represented on the mirror. Besides a goddess of the moon, the Chinese recognize a man in the moon, who is worshiped as divine match-maker. All marriages are prearranged in heaven or ordained by fate, and the Old Man of the Moon ties with red cords the feet of children destined as future spouses. The marriage contract is accompanied by two needles joined by a red thread. At the wedding ceremony bride and groom drink wine from twin cups fastened together by a red cord. The moon is the guardian of lovers, and in Chinese poetry is as much the object of sentimental thoughts as in our own.



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