

Field Museum News

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KIVA REVEALED ON LOWRY RUIN

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Expedition to the Southwest

The Field Museum Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest has been excavating on the large Lowry ruin, located in southwestern Colorado. Superficially this ruin looked like a large mound covered with rocks and broken pieces of pottery. In order to find just where the walls were located it was necessary to dig a deep trench, 400 feet long and ten feet wide. In the course of excavating this trench many interesting things came to light. It seems that the site now covered by the Lowry ruin was inhabited many times during the past three thousand years, for in this trench were discovered houses and ceremonial buildings of at least three different periods or cultures. In the older dirt-walled rooms were found ancient fire-pits filled to the brims with white wood-ash.

When finally the walls were struck, one could see that they had been constructed by experienced masons, for instead of depending solely upon the adobe or mud mortar to hold the individual stones in place, these primitive builders had also inserted small, flat rocks between the courses of masonry to act as chinking stones and strengtheners.

So much dirt had to be removed that it became necessary to install mine railroad tracks and a mine dump-car. As the debris was removed from the rooms proper it was shoveled into a chute under which stood the empty car. With this system, all dirt from the most distant rooms must first be excavated and moved; otherwise dirt and rocks will fall back into the cleared rooms. In this instance the farthest room is a kiva or ceremonial chamber.

Ancient kivas are generally round and usually very interesting to dig out. This kiva was particularly attractive because later work disclosed the fact that it had been built on top of another older ceremonial room.

The floor of the upper kiva had sagged considerably due to the fact that the lower room had not been properly filled in. Great was the surprise when we found that still adhering to the walls of the upper room were fragments of paintings which had not seen the light of day for probably well over a thousand years. These paintings were entirely geometrical and had been executed in black and white. Even greater was our surprise to find that the paintings on the walls of the lower kiva were perfectly preserved. The design there is one that is commonly seen on many pieces of prehistoric pottery and may represent rain, lightning or clouds. So far as is known at present, this is the first example of such a design on a kiva wall. Fortunately also many of the original roof beams are in place. The tree rings of these beams, it is hoped, will indicate the age of this large ruin.

Burial grounds for several of the early villages have been excavated with great success. Up to the present more than eighteen burials have been carefully uncovered. These burials have yielded thirty pieces of pottery of a very excellent type.

The expedition is financed with income derived from the Julius and Augusta Rosenwald Fund.

At Botanical Congress

J. Francis Macbride, Assistant Curator of Taxonomy, who has been in Europe since the beginning of the year to obtain photographs of type specimens of tropical American plants in European herbaria, was assigned last month as Field Museum's representative to the section of nomenclature of the International Botanical Congress at Cambridge, England. Llewelyn Williams, Assistant in Wood Technology, represented the Museum at the Congress' informal conference on woods. Professor Samuel J. Record, the Museum's Research Associate in Wood Technology, attended the Congress as the representative of Yale University.

MAMMALS FROM INDO-CHINA

Field Museum has received a large collection of mammals from French Indo-China collected by Jean Delacour, the well-known French naturalist. The collection has been submitted by M. Delacour for study and report by Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, Curator of Zoology. When this work has been completed the specimens will be divided among Field Museum, the British Museum (Natural History), and the Paris Museum of Natural History.

The animals are from regions adjoining the territory covered last year by the William V. Kelley-Roosevelts Expedition to Eastern Asia for Field Museum, and the report on them will be combined with the one on the collections of that expedition. The Delacour collection is a very important supplement to the Kelley-Roosevelts material, and adds greatly to the representation in Field Museum of the important fauna of that part of the world. There are 900 specimens in the collection, all from regions which the Kelley-Roosevelts Expedition was unable to visit.

Of outstanding interest among the Delacour specimens is one of a new species of black monkey with a white back. There are also several new species of squirrels and other rodents, and a small deer which may prove to have been hitherto unknown.

M. Delacour also made a large collection of birds, of which one-third has been purchased by Field Museum.

New General Guidebook

A new edition of the General Guide to the Collections in Field Museum has been published and is now on sale.

Bus Service to the Museum

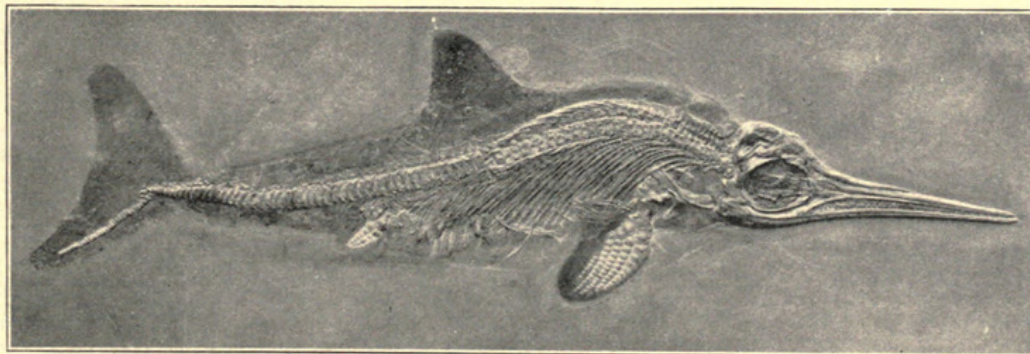
The Chicago Motor Coach Company's No. 26 busses (Jackson Boulevard Line) operate directly to the entrance of Field Museum. Free transfers are issued between these and all other lines of the company on north, south, and west sides.

Unusually Complete Fossil Fish-lizard on Exhibition in Ernest R. Graham Hall

A remarkably complete and excellent fossil skeleton of an ichthyosaurus or fish-lizard which lived about 150,000,000 years ago, the specimen possessing the unusual feature of including in the slab of stone in which it is imbedded a clear impression of the fins and the skin, has been received in the paleontological division of the Department of Geology.

The specimen was found in a stone quarry in Bavaria in which lithographic shales are secured. The block of stone in which the fossil was concealed split directly along the skeleton.

The specimen is of a comparatively young fish-lizard, being about four feet long, where-



Ichthyosaurus Skeleton

as full-grown ones are known often to have attained a length of ten feet, according to

Associate Curator of Paleontology Elmer S. Riggs. The ichthyosaurus was an animal with

a fish-like body, tail and fins, but with a long snout similar to that of a gar pike. Its jaws contained many sharp teeth with which it was able easily to prey upon fishes and other marine creatures.

The specimen has been placed on exhibition in Ernest R. Graham Hall of Historical Geology.

A mural painting by Charles R. Knight representing this animal as it appeared in life can be seen adjacent to the specimen. It was presented by Mr. Graham.



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