

Field Museum of Natural History

Founded by Marshall Field, 1893

Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan, Chicago

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FIELD MUSEUM NEWS

STEPHEN C. SIMMS, *Director of the Museum*.....Editor

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| O. C. FARRINGTON |Curator of Geology |
| WILFRED H. OSGOOD |Curator of Zoology |
| H. B. HARTE |Managing Editor |

Field Museum is open every day of the year during the hours indicated below:

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| November, December, January | 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. |
| February, March, April, October | 9 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. |
| May, June, July, August, September | 9 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. |

Admission is free to Members on all days. Other adults are admitted free on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays; non-members pay 25 cents on other days. Children are admitted free on all days. Students and faculty members of educational institutions are admitted free any day upon presentation of credentials.

The Library of the Museum, containing some 92,000 volumes on natural history subjects, is open for reference daily except Sunday.

Traveling exhibits are circulated in the schools of Chicago by the Museum's Department of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension.

Lectures for school classrooms and assemblies, and special entertainments and lecture tours for children at the Museum, are provided by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures.

Announcements of courses of free illustrated lectures on science and travel for the public, and special lectures for Members of the Museum, will appear in FIELD MUSEUM NEWS.

There is a cafeteria in the Museum where luncheon is served for visitors. Other rooms are provided for those bringing their lunches.

Members are requested to inform the Museum promptly of changes of address.

THE DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY —ITS SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS

Formerly it was not unusual for natural history museums to concern themselves only with the mineral kingdom, with animals, and with man, and to ignore the plant world entirely. It apparently did not occur to those in authority that without vegetation there could be no animal life.

Field Museum recognized from the beginning that the science of botany is one of the principal divisions of natural history, and developed its Department of Botany with a staff of competent scientists and technical assistants, a large library, laboratories, and extensive study collections and exhibits. It was the first general natural history museum to devote to botany attention comparable to that given other subjects.

The botanical exhibits now occupy five large halls. They are designed to present a synoptic view of the entire plant kingdom in a sufficiently comprehensive manner to give the visitor or student a general idea of its various main divisions from bacteria to the many orders of flowering plants. This

is a matter which is far from simple because of the impossibility of preserving the natural appearance of plants. The problem has been solved by the use of accurate reproductions of living plants, in place of the perishable parts of the natural material. These are provided through the munificence of President Stanley Field, who maintains for the purpose special laboratories in the Department.

Two halls are devoted to plant products which play a large part in furnishing mankind with food and raw materials for his industries. Special halls illustrate the principal trees of North America and of foreign countries.

Great pains are taken to make the labels accompanying all the exhibits as informative and accurate as possible without undue technicalities. The exhibits of the Department are growing and are being improved constantly.

Besides the collections seen by the casual visitor, the Department of Botany has reserve or study collections which are the basis of research by members of the staff, and are available for reference by others seeking botanical information. Most extensive of these is the Herbarium, consisting of 640,000 mounted sheets of plant specimens assembled from every part of the world. The Herbarium is especially rich in plants of tropical America. A special herbarium of Illinois plants is also maintained. These collections have been the basis of many volumes of botanical studies published by Field Museum and also by other institutions.

Non-technical leaflets are published to explain for the layman some of the exhibits and activities of the Department. Leaflets describing the wild flowers and trees of the Chicago region have had a large circulation, as has also an illustrated handbook of the plants of the Lake Michigan sand dunes.

Some of the plant material in the Museum's exhibits and study collections has been obtained through gifts, by purchases, and by exchanges with other museums, but often to obtain required material it is necessary to send expeditions into the field. These have been carried on chiefly in Central and South America and the West Indies. Through them much material that is unique has been acquired.

In order to increase its own facilities, and those of other American institutions as well, the Department has undertaken, with the aid of a special grant of funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, the important task of obtaining in European herbaria photographs of the earliest named specimens of thousands of tropical American plants collected by European botanists but unrepresented in American collections.

That the residents of the Chicago area rely upon Field Museum for scientific information is proved by the constant queries on botanical subjects which are received. Every year several thousand plant specimens are named for correspondents in lots ranging from a single specimen to many hundred different plants. Rarely does a day pass without requests by telephone, letters or visitors for data regarding plants or their products. These are of bewildering variety, and cover almost every phase of botanical science. They come from educational institutions, business houses, other organizations of various kinds, and individuals, and range from the identification of mushrooms for amateur collectors, and inquiries about hay fever pollen, to industrial problems involving plant products, and questions concerning the establishment of plantations in the tropics.

Requests for assistance in botanical matters come also from every part of the United States, and from Europe and other parts of the world as well.

—B. E. DAHLGREN

(An article on the purposes and functions of the Department of Geology will appear next month, and a similar article on the Department of Zoology in the following month.)

ALL GRAHAM HALL MURALS ARE NOW COMPLETED

The series of twenty-eight large mural paintings depicting life in prehistoric ages, presented to Field Museum by Ernest R. Graham, has been completed by the artist, Charles R. Knight, and all are now installed on the walls of Ernest R. Graham Hall of Historical Geology (Hall 38).

The final three were hung last month. One of them depicts primitive hoofed mammals (*Uintatheres*) and the four-toed horse (*Orohippus*) which lived approximately 55,000,000 years ago. Another shows flying reptiles, primitive birds and small dinosaurs of 175,000,000 years ago. The third illustrates primitive reptiles of the Permian age, some 215,000,000 years back. More detailed descriptions of these paintings, and possibly photographs of them, will appear in future issues of FIELD MUSEUM NEWS.

The project of restoring scenes of the primitive world in large mural paintings was undertaken in 1926, and six years were allotted for its completion. The work has progressed more rapidly than was expected, however, enabling this important educational series to be finished more than a year ahead of schedule. Mr. Graham provided a fund of \$125,000 for the execution of these paintings, and for several life size group restorations. The services of Mr. Knight, known as a foremost painter in this field due to his previous work in other institutions, were engaged for the series. In these twenty-eight pictures Mr. Knight has performed some of his most notable work.

Chinese Painting Presented

A rare Chinese painting of the Ming period (sixteenth century) was recently presented to Field Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Everett of Hinsdale, Illinois, who had acquired it at Peking some years ago. The picture, 32 by 66 inches in dimensions, is painted in bright colors on silk. It represents a school of carp in a pond. The fish are life-like and drawn with great care for detail. This painting, with a number of others in the Museum's possession, will adorn the walls of the new Jade Room which is now in process of preparation.

BEQUESTS AND ENDOWMENTS

Bequests to Field Museum of Natural History may be made in securities, money, books or collections. They may, if desired, take the form of a memorial to a person or cause, named by the giver. For those desiring to make bequests, the following form is suggested:

FORM OF BEQUEST

I do hereby give and bequeath to Field Museum of Natural History of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois,

Cash contributions made within the taxable year to Field Museum not exceeding 15 per cent of the taxpayer's net income are allowable as deductions in computing net income under Article 251 of Regulation 69 relating to the income tax under the Revenue Act of 1926.

Endowments may be made to the Museum with the provision that an annuity be paid to the patron for life. These annuities are tax-free and are guaranteed against fluctuation in amount.



1931. "All Graham Hill Murals Are Now Completed." *Field Museum news* 2(9), 2-2.

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