

Field Museum of Natural History

Founded by Marshall Field, 1893

Roosevelt Road and Lake Michigan, Chicago

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FIELD MUSEUM NEWS

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

Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb., Mar.	9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
April, September, October	9 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
May, June, July, August	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 Museum's natural history Library is open for reference daily except Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

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

Lectures for schools, and special entertainments and 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 free illustrated lectures for the public, and special lectures for Members of the Museum, will appear in FIELD MUSEUM NEWS.

A cafeteria in the Museum serves visitors. Rooms are provided for those bringing their lunches.

Chicago Motor Coach Company No. 26 buses go direct to the Museum.

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

MEMBERSHIP IN FIELD MUSEUM

Field Museum has several classes of Members. Benefactors give or devise \$100,000 or more. Contributors give or devise \$1,000 to \$100,000. Life Members give \$500; Non-Resident Life and Associate Members pay \$100; Non-Resident Associate Members pay \$50. All the above classes are exempt from dues. Sustaining Members contribute \$25 annually. After six years they become Associate Members. Annual Members contribute \$10 annually. Other memberships are Corporate, Honorary, Patron, and Corresponding, additions under these classifications being made by special action of the Board of Trustees.

Each Member, in all classes, is entitled to free admission to the Museum for himself, his family and house guests, and to two reserved seats for Museum lectures provided for Members. Subscription to FIELD MUSEUM NEWS is included with all memberships. The courtesies of every museum of note in the United States and Canada are extended to all Members of Field Museum. A Member may give his personal card to non-residents of Chicago, upon presentation of which they will be admitted to the Museum without charge. Further information about memberships will be sent on request.

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.

Cash contributions made within the taxable year 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.

A COLONY OF WATER-DEER

By ELMER S. RIGGS

Associate Curator of Paleontology

In Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38) may be seen a slab of clay-stone in which are embedded the skeletons of twenty-five little water-deer, *Leptomeryx*. This specimen was found by Museum collectors in the "bad lands" of South Dakota. The skeletons are preserved just as they were found and in the original stone.

The slab containing all of these twenty-five skeletons is only four by six feet in size. They were entirely buried and covered in the layer of clay-stone when found in the bad lands. Little rivulets which ran down the hillside, cutting furrows through the softer layers of clay, had broken through the harder layer and destroyed part of the buried skeletons and left the bones of others exposed in the broken ledge.

The part of the ledge containing the skeletons was taken out in blocks and so shipped to the Museum. There the parts were then rejoined in one irregular slab. The stone of the upper surface was then removed with infinite care and patience, and each little bone was thus laid bare. Some of the skeletons are disarticulated and the bones mingled together. Others are well joined and can be traced as almost complete skeletons.

Leptomeryx was a gregarious animal which, from available evidence, lived in herds and roamed about the Black Hills and out over the adjacent plains. It fed upon grass and lived much as a modern antelope lives. It was no larger than a Persian cat or a jack-rabbit, and was more nearly related to camels and llamas than to the true deer of modern times. It had no antlers or other weapon of defense, apparently relying upon fleet-footedness to outdistance its enemies.

How these twenty-five skeletons and others which must have been destroyed by the process of erosion, came to be buried together is a matter of conjecture. Some analogy may be found in the habits of llamas and vicunas of South America in herding together in large numbers in the winter season. A similar habit is observed among domestic sheep, deer, antelope and other animals which live in large herds. In winter many die of cold and leave their skeletons to accumulate on the bedding ground. Or, they may have been buried in heavy snows and covered over by freshets in the spring which perhaps took them unaware.

SULKAS MASKS

By ALBERT B. LEWIS

Assistant Curator of Melanesian Ethnology

While belief in some sort of supernatural beings is almost universal, the ways in which these beings are supposed to make themselves known to their followers vary greatly. In many parts of Melanesia they are thought to take a material form, and so appear to their believers, often making a visit of several days' duration, spending most of the time in the sacred house or temple in the village or in some secret place in the forest near-by, appearing to the villagers at certain times with formalities and special ceremonies.

The times for such visits are either determined by custom, or arranged for special occasions by the old men having such matters in charge. The form taken by the embodied spirit is fixed by habit and tradition, and, while details may vary, the general type is quite characteristic for each region. Usually the spirit is represented by

a man with his body, except the feet, concealed by fiber or leaves, and bearing over his head a more or less elaborate mask structure.

A number of different masks, representing several types, are exhibited in Joseph N. Field Hall (Hall A). One of the most elaborate occupies a case in the center. This was made by the Sulka, a people living in southeastern New Britain. It is shaped like a huge umbrella, with a nearly flat top, supported on a cone-shaped structure covering the head of the bearer, and with a representation of a large insect (mantis) in front.

The materials used and the method of construction are the same for all Sulka masks, and in this respect they differ from all others. The frame is made of light, stiff sticks, with coils and splints of rattan, all tied together with fine rattan strips to form a definite body, over which is placed a layer of pith, tied or sewed on with the fiber obtained from the aerial roots of the pandanus. The upper surface of the umbrella, however, is covered with the fine tissue-like leaf sheaths of the coconut, to which numerous feathers are attached. The under side of the umbrella is covered with flat strips of pith cut out of a sort of reed. The somewhat ridged surface of the remainder of the mask is covered with pith out of sections of a kind of vine, beaten to flatten and soften them, and tied on with pandanus fiber.

This work is very slow and occupies many months, sometimes a year or more. It is carried on in a secret place in the forest, known only to the initiated, so that all others regard the masked figure when it appears as supernatural. The painting is not done till the very last, as the vegetable dyes used for red and green fade rapidly in bright sunlight.

After the spirits have returned to their own abode, the masks are usually destroyed, but may be left for some time in the sacred houses, or even sold, provided they can be removed without the uninitiated seeing them.

LAPIS LAZULI

One of the largest masses of lapis lazuli known, a block two feet long, twelve inches wide and eight inches thick, now occupies an individual exhibition case in Hall 34 of the Department of Geology.

Lapis lazuli, a bright blue opaque mineral or, more accurately, mixture of minerals, has been used from time immemorial as an ornamental stone. It was the sapphire of the Greeks and Romans, and the Hebrew Scriptures. Large quantities are found in early Egyptian tombs and the Chinese have long held it in high esteem. Marco Polo in A.D. 1271 visited mines where it was found.

The blue pigment called ultramarine blue originally was pulverized lapis lazuli, but an artificial ultramarine, more cheaply made and of equal quality, has now replaced the natural pigment. Lapis lazuli was once used also as a medicine for treating various disorders.

Today lapis lazuli is still carved into vases, small dishes, brooches, beads and ring stones, and is employed in mosaic work. It is found in only a few places. That of the highest repute comes from Afghanistan near the Oxus River. It is also found near Lake Baikal in Siberia, and in the Andes of Chile. The large specimen in Field Museum was obtained from an Inca grave in Peru. The Incas probably obtained it from the Chilean locality.



Lewis, A. B. 1934. "Sulka Masks." *Field Museum news* 5(4), 2-2.

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