

## SUNDAY LECTURES IN MARCH ON GEMS AND JEWELS

"Gems, Jewels and 'Junk'" will be the subject of the Sunday afternoon lectures to be presented at Field Museum during March by Mr. Paul G. Dallwig, the Layman Lecturer. Mr. Dallwig's story will trace precious and semi-precious gem stones from their original home in the mother-rocks to their ultimate resting place in a museum collection, a jewelry store, or milady's personal jewel chest. He will tell about the superstitions that led to the customs of wearing gems as talismans, amulets, and charms against evil and illness, to bring good luck, or further the cause of love. He will also reveal how imitation and synthetic gems are produced, and how to test them to ascertain artificiality. The lecture will be illustrated with exhibits among the mineral collections in the Department of Geology.

To meet the demands for accommodations, the same lecture will be presented on each of the five Sundays of the month (March 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30). Lecture audiences assemble promptly at 2 P.M. Because the number that can be conducted among the exhibits under comfortable circumstances on a lecture of this type is limited, it is necessary to make reservations for all Sunday lectures well in advance. This may be done by mail or telephone (WABash 9410). Children cannot be accommodated. The lectures last until 4:30 P.M. with a half-hour intermission midway. During this interval those who desire to smoke or obtain refreshments may do so in the Cafeteria, where special tables are reserved for the group.

On Sundays in April Mr. Dallwig will supplement the general lecture on gems with "The Romance of Diamonds from Mine to Man." Reservations for the April, as well as the March lectures, are currently being taken at the Museum.

## Fossil Plants and Invertebrates

Extensive collections of invertebrate fossils and fossil plants are displayed in the west half of Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37). These exhibits are arranged in two distinct series—stratigraphic and systematic. The stratigraphic series consists of plants and animals of the successive geological periods from the Cambrian to the Pleistocene. This arrangement shows that each important geologic period is characterized by a more or less distinctive group of plants and animals, and that life moved in an orderly succession from the simple to the more complex forms. Furthermore, this series furnishes evidence helpful in the determination of the age of rocks in which the fossils occur, and supplies a record of the distribution of the ancient seas and lands.

The systematic series consists of the different classes of animals and plants arranged

according to their biologic position. The object of this series is to show the characteristic features of each of the great groups of organisms, and their relationships to other forms. Visitors may find also in this series

examples of the many animals which in the geologic past played an important role upon the earth, but have since disappeared leaving no descendants. These form an especially interesting group in the evolutionary scale.

## THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

### ARMADILLOS—3-Banded Kind Rolls Up, but Giant Species Burrows, for Protection

There is a popular belief that the armadillo rolls up in its shell as a means of protection. This is only one-tenth true, as there are ten kinds of armadillos, and only one of them—the three-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*)—really rolls up.

This species has a thicker, harder shell, and heavier plates in its head and tail than other armadillos.

When rolled up, the edges of the front half of the shell fit inside the edges of the posterior half, and the head and tail lie side by side. In this position, it is safe from most of the carnivores.

This armadillo does not always immediately assume this position when approached, but lies on its side with the shell partly closed. If touched on the abdomen or chest, the shell snaps together like a steel trap. Any mammal that had its nose or paw pinched in this trap would certainly be wary of the next three-banded armadillo it might encounter. A pack of Brazilian dogs with which the writer once hunted never showed any interest in these armadillos, but did attack both the six-banded and the nine-banded species. It is of interest that an animal with such absolute protection by means of its armor should have developed so characteristic an instinct.

The three-banded armadillo is found from Pernambuco in northeastern Brazil, south through Matto Grosso and Paraguay, to northern Patagonia. Specimens of the animal may be seen, together with many of its relatives, in Field Museum's systematic collection of mammals in Hall 15.

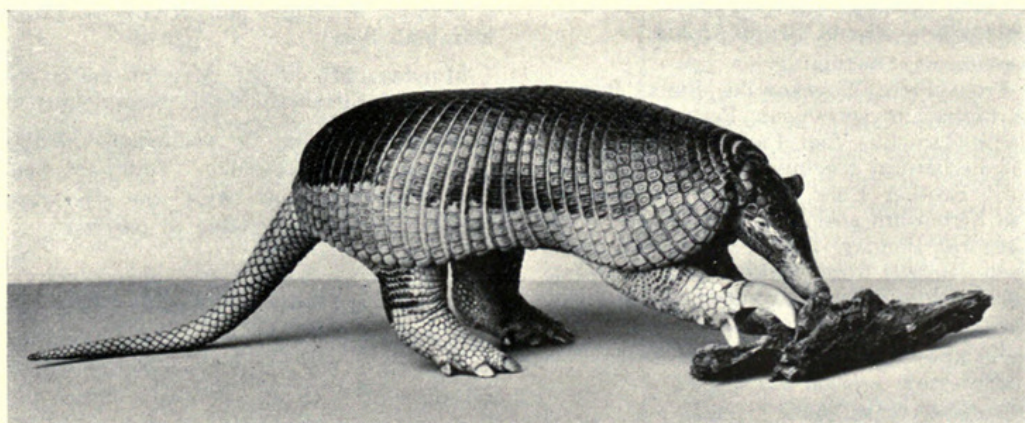
Various other armadillos are represented



A Unique Armadillo

Exhibit in Hall 15 showing the three-banded armadillo, which differs from its relatives in many ways. It has the hardest carapace, with rigid shields, and it is the only armadillo that rolls itself into a ball, as seen on the right, for protection. It is also the only species that walks on the tips of the nails of its forefeet.

by specimens in the Hall 15 exhibit, including the giant armadillo illustrated on this page. Armadillos range in size from the pygmy, which is about eight inches long, and weighs less than a pound, to the giant which is more than four feet long and so heavy that a man can hardly lift one. Despite its size, the latter is able to burrow under ground with amazing speed, and for this reason is seldom seen alive. It ranges from British Guiana to central Brazil.—C.C.S.



Largest of All Armadillos

Known as the giant armadillo, this species, also exhibited in the Hall 15 collection, is seldom seen alive. Although more than four feet long, it has the ability to dig hiding places in the ground with truly startling rapidity.





1941. "Armadillos." *Field Museum news* 12(3), 7-7.

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