

Field Museum of Natural History

FOUNDED BY MARSHALL FIELD, 1893
Roosevelt Road and Field Drive, Chicago
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FIELD MUSEUM NEWS

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

HARDEKOOL OR "LEADWOOD"

In 1932 there arrived at Field Museum a heavy piece of wood, a cross-section of a trunk without bark. It was painted on both cut surfaces to insure slow and even drying, and was stenciled with the name of the Vernay-Lang Kalahari Expedition, which had then recently visited Bechuanaland in South Africa. The expedition had transmitted to the Museum many specimens, but the various lists made no mention of a piece of wood weighing at least 100 pounds. It was assumed that in the course of time some information about it would be forthcoming. The painted chunk of wood was therefore placed in storage.

There it remained until recently when it was decided to remove enough of the white paint with which it was coated to permit an inspection of the cut surface of the now perfectly dry specimen. The wood was found to be extremely hard, and the heavy block, when cleaned, resembled a piece of lignum-vitae of enormous size. An examination of the literature on hand concerning the woods of South Africa quickly gave a clue to its identity. In color, weight, and other characters it corresponded to the description of the "ironwood" (or, because of its weight, "leadwood") of the region visited by the expedition; and it was therefore identified as a specimen of *Combretum imberbe* of the buttonwood family. By the Africans this wood is called "hardekool."

Less than two inches of light-colored sapwood enclose a dark brown heart 26 inches

in diameter. Like lignum-vitae, the heartwood is so dense it is said to be useful for slow speed machinery bearings and to have served the natives as material for hoes before the advent of iron, whence the name "rooiblad" applied to the wood of this and a closely related species.

The specimen is now on exhibition among the African woods (Case 438) in the Hall of Foreign Woods.

—B.E.D.

Museum Admissions Are Now Taxed; Children Still Admitted Free

It has become necessary for Field Museum to charge a federal admission tax of three cents in addition to the regular twenty-five cents admission fee for adults on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, because the revenue act of 1941, recently enacted by Congress and effective since October 1, removes the exemption from tax on admission charges which formerly applied to religious, educational and charitable organizations, and all other hitherto exempt beneficiaries. The free days, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, are unaffected by the provisions of the new legislation.

The Museum will continue to admit school children free. Also, students and faculty members of recognized educational institutions will be admitted free on all days upon presentation of proper credentials, although the Museum will itself be required to pay the three-cent tax on such admissions, and on all children over twelve years old, on the days when charge is made to other persons. Likewise, all Members of the Museum will retain the privilege of free admissions for themselves, families, and their guests. Admission will continue to be free on all days to members of the armed forces of the United States, in uniform, whom the law specifically exempts from the tax.

Staff Notes

Dr. Francis Drouet, Curator of Cryptogamic Botany, reports that he has nearly completed the work of the expedition which he has been conducting since August in Utah and in various parts of California. Large collections of algae, especially of deserts and hot springs, have been made. Dr. Drouet is now studying the cryptogamic plant life of the Mojave Desert and the Imperial Valley. Mr. Donald Richards, his volunteer companion on the expedition, has returned with a large part of the collection.

Mr. J. Francis Macbride, Associate Curator of the Herbarium, who is engaged in work on the *Flora of Peru*, is at present studying the Andean collections in the herbarium of the University of California.

Dr. Henry Field, Curator of Physical Anthropology, has resigned, effective October 1, 1941.

Field Museum Staff Lecturer Aids Trailside Museum

Mr. Bert. E. Grove, a member of the lecture staff of the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation at Field Museum, has organized and is now conducting a group of natural science clubs at the Trailside Museum of River Forest, Illinois, at the request of that institution. The Trailside Science Clubs meet every Saturday afternoon in a special laboratory. Some of the groups are for children, some for adults.

The purpose of the clubs is to foster, by means of laboratory projects and field trips, a deeper interest in the sciences of botany, geology and zoology. Those joining the clubs first take a three weeks' course in laboratory technique to become familiar with the use of microscopes and other necessary equipment and materials, after which they receive the designation "Junior Scientists." At a recent meeting, Miss Elizabeth Best, also of the Raymond Foundation staff, demonstrated dissection and taxidermy methods. Miss Virginia Moe, Curator of the Trailside Museum, co-operates in promoting the club work.

Ancient Rome and Etruria

Roman and Etruscan antiquities in great variety are to be found in Edward E. and Emma B. Ayer Hall (Hall 2). Truly worthy of admiration are the simple, strong, and yet highly artistic and utilitarian qualities of many of the objects. The Roman bronzes, and the Etruscan sarcophagi and funerary couch merit special attention, and the Roman wall paintings are unique among American collections. Especially attractive also is a fine exhibit of ancient glass objects.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT FIELD MUSEUM

Field Museum is open every day of the year (except Christmas and New Year's Day) during the hours indicated below:

November, December,	9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
January, February	9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
March, April, and	9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
September, October	9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
May, June, July, August	9 A.M. to 6 P.M.

Admission is free to Members on all days. Other adults are admitted free on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays; non-members pay admission on other days: Established price 25 cents, Federal tax 3 cents, total 28 cents. 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 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 at 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.

Free courses of lectures for adults are presented in the James Simpson Theatre on Saturday afternoons (at 2:30 o'clock) in March, April, October, and November.

A Cafeteria serves visitors. Rooms are available also for those bringing their lunches.

Chicago Motor Coach Company No. 26 busses provide direct transportation to the Museum. Service is offered also by Surface Lines, Rapid Transit Lines (the "L"), interurban electric lines, and Illinois Central trains. There is ample free parking space for automobiles at the Museum.



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