

## Chicago Natural History Museum

FOUNDED BY MARSHALL FIELD, 1893

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

## FOSSILS ARE FASCINATING WHEN SHOWN ATTRACTIVELY

Gems and minerals commonly possess attractions of their own, but fossil invertebrates and plants probably because of their stone-like appearance and lack of coloration, manifest little appeal for the public at large. Museum visitors often go past the fossil exhibits, completely ignoring them or casting but a cursory glance at the cases. What has been the reason for this seeming indifference? Was it that we had failed to bring to light the message that could be read in a fossil? We believed we had, readily accepted the challenge that our failure had brought about, and thought of ways and means by which we could do justice to the fossils and restore them to their rightful place. It has not been easy, but we believe we have found a satisfactory solution. The new exhibits in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37), detailed descriptions of which will be found on page 3 of this issue of the BULLETIN, may well be the answer to our problem.

We have not sacrificed scientific accuracy but we have found that pleasing and appealing exhibits are not incompatible with it. We have further learned that a few carefully selected specimens can tell a story more eloquently and with greater clarity than a crowded assemblage of many. We have permitted some latitude and indulgence when confronted with specimens that

are otherwise unattractive except to the charmed, often bewhiskered and bespectacled, circle of paleontologists, but even then we have never lost sight of the importance of the subject matter.

We feel that the new exhibits will dispel much of the indifference heretofore manifested in fossils, and that they will lead to a greater interest in, and a more appreciative use of them. To bring out in bold relief the fact that fossils are not just masses of disinterred stony remains of the past, but are documentary evidence of vanished oceans and forests, of the life that has appeared and disappeared, and of the vastness of history before the dawn of man, has been our main purpose. By this, we do not imply that the new exhibits are the last word in interpreting the message fossils bring to us. The story set forth in the hall of today will remain only until it appears that it no longer serves its purpose.

SHARAT KUMAR ROY  
Chief Curator of Geology

### STAFF NOTES

Miss Harriet Smith, of the Museum's Raymond Foundation lecture staff, is on leave of absence until February 15, to make a lecture tour in schools throughout the Middle West under the auspices of The School Assembly Service. Her lecture, entitled "Treasure House," accompanied by the Museum's color film "Through These Doors," will carry the message of this institution to thousands of children and teachers in many states. . . . **Dr. Sharat K. Roy**, Chief Curator of Geology, has returned from his expedition of several months to El Salvador. On his way back, he stopped in Mexico to make preliminary studies of the volcano Paricutin. . . . **Henry S. Dybas**, Associate Curator of Insects, recently joined Dr. Eliot Williams of the faculty of Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana, on an insect-collecting trip in caves of southern Indiana. They were accompanied by Rodger Mitchell, Harry Nelson and Eugene Ray, who were temporarily employed in the Museum's Division of Insects during the summer. . . . **George I. Quimby**, Curator of Exhibits in Anthropology, has been appointed representative of the Society for American Archaeology in connection with the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association to be held in Chicago in November. . . . **Donald Collier**, Curator of South American Ethnology and Archaeology, has been appointed chairman of the nominating committee for the Society for American Archaeology. . . . **Dr. Robert H. Denison**, Curator of Fossil Fishes, has returned from a successful collecting trip to various areas in the eastern United States. . . . **Dr. Rainer Zangerl**, Curator of Fossil Reptiles, Eugene S. Richardson, Jr.,

### THIS MONTH'S COVER

Our cover shows a restoration of eurypterids, extinct crustacean-like creatures that lived about 350 million years ago. This is one of the new groups in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37). The hall, completely reorganized and new, is to be reopened October 1 with a preview at 8 p.m. for Members of the Museum. Unlike mounted animals in Zoology or the plants reproduced in Botany, restorations illustrating geologic history are the product of "scientific detective work." It is not possible to mount a freshly-killed eurypterid, as a taxidermist would mount a tiger, nor can the artist work with a specimen or accurate illustration, as in the plant reproduction laboratory. Instead, a paleontologist, studying fragmentary fossil specimens of extinct plants and animals must guide a sculptor in making what is literally a re-creation. The restorations in Hall 37 were made by sculptor George Marchand under the direction of Dr. Irving G. Reimann, of the University of Michigan.

Curator of Fossil Invertebrates, and Curator Denison spent several days last month in paleontological reconnaissance work near Mecca, Illinois.

### NEW MEMBERS

The following persons became Museum Members from August 16 to September 7:

#### Associate Members

Miss Eva Josephine Jolly, Colonel Edward N. Wentworth.

#### Annual Members

Charles W. Allen, Sidney M. Boss, Terry Caselli, Valentine H. Christmann, Lyle B. Cline, Gordon R. Close, Hugh S. Cloud, Kenneth C. Eade, Arthur A. Ehrlich, James P. Ferrall, John A. Ferry, Mrs. Frank Fink, Walter J. Goettsch, Dr. Bernard A. Kamm, Sam Laud, Harry F. Liebrock, F. B. Rowe, Edward Shafer, Harold A. Stahl, T. N. Stensland.

### Exhibit of Bird Paintings Continues Until Oct. 15

The special exhibit of "Song Birds of America," a series of twelve painting by the well-known artist, John Atherton, placed in Stanley Field Hall in September, will remain available to Museum visitors until October 15.



Roy, Sharat Kumar. 1951. "Fossils are Fascinating When Shown Attractively."  
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