



Mummy of Harwa, overseer of the storehouses of a wealthy estate; 22nd dynasty (9th-8th century, B.C.). Cat. No. 31839.

The Case of the Screaming Mummy

Gerda Frank's article on "Pharaoh" Hatshepsut, which appeared in the September, 1974, *Bulletin*, brought to mind the following incident related by Henry Field, a Field Museum curator in physical anthropology from 1926 to 1941:

"Those who work in museums have strange experiences. One wintry night the guard making the rounds was startled by a blood curdling scream in the Egyptian Hall in the basement. He switched on the lights in the hall and blew his whistle for help. The guards came rushing downstairs. No one was in the hall.

"They walked about flashing their lights into the sarcophagi. In one deep case, about 125 feet long, a line of mummies is chronologically arranged. A single door gives access. It is always locked; it was locked on this night. To prevent moths or other pests from destroying the mummies, this case is airtight and always kept poisoned.

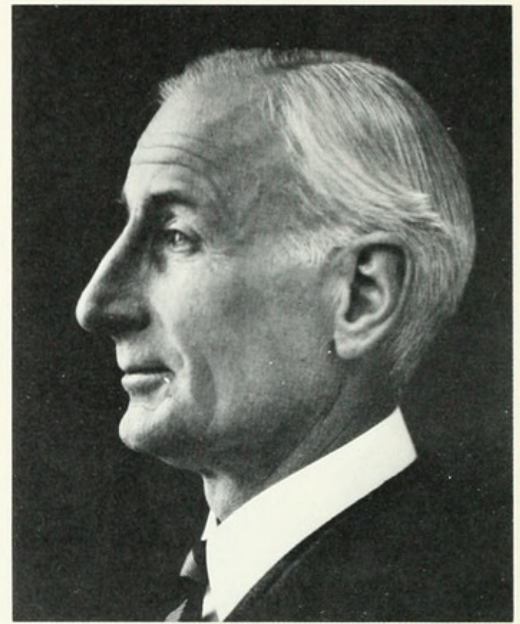
"One of the guards peered into this case. He shouted, 'Look here, this mummy is off its base.' One of the naked withered bodies had fallen from its base and was lying face down on the linoleum inside the poisoned case. I studied it carefully the next morning. The base extended at least four inches on each side of the dried skin and bones. No living person could have entered the poisoned case. No vibration in the building could have knocked it off the base without rending the walls, for the museum floats on an island of concrete, there being no hardpan on the filled-in land along the lake front.

"There is still no explanation of the scream or of the fallen mummy. It is just one more example of things we cannot explain."

—*The Track of Man*, by Henry Field, Doubleday & Co., © 1953, p. 233.

Stanley Field (1875-1964)

October 28 will mark the tenth anniversary of the death of Stanley Field (1875-1964), who served as president of Field Museum for more than 56 years. As its chief administrator during that extraordinary length of time, he is recognized as the most important single individual in the institution's development.



Stanley Field

Born in England, Stanley Field came to Chicago in 1893 to work at Marshall Field & Company, of which his uncle was founder and president. Although he remained associated with the company for the rest of his life, Field resigned as vice president of the store in 1918 to allow himself more time for the Museum.

Having been made a Museum trustee in 1906, he was elected president two years later. It was during his tenure that the Museum, a small and relatively unknown institution when he began its guidance, grew to maturity and worldwide distinction. His monetary gifts to the Museum exceeded \$2 million, but he gave of himself in even greater measure.

The largest responsibility Field assumed for the Museum was the construction of the present building, which was opened to the public in 1921. When his uncle's original bequest of \$4 million proved to be far short of the amount required, Stanley Field personally assumed the responsibility of securing the additional funds required. Later, when he saw an outstanding need at the Museum for which funds were not available, he often authorized the expenditure and paid the cost out of his own "pocket."

Today, more than half a century later, the Museum is again faced with the need for enlarged, improved facilities; and it is toward this end that the Museum's \$25 million Capital Campaign is directed. So it is a good time to reflect on how one man gave of himself toward the Museum's betterment. Stanley Field's gifts to the Museum, as well as his wisdom and guiding influence, will be felt as long as the institution endures.



1974. "The Case of the Screaming Mummy." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 45(9), 18–18.

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