

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:

November, December, January	9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
February, March, April, October	9 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
May, June, July, August, September	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.

THE MUSEUM HERBARIUM

BY PAUL C. STANDLEY

Associate Curator of the Herbarium

When the press announces that Field Museum has acquired an important collection of plants, interested persons often visit the Museum expecting to see a display of living plants. Unfortunately, such collections usually consist of pressed and dried specimens, dreary enough to the uninitiated, but a joy to botanists studying the relationships of the plants of the world.

While it would be impracticable to collect living individuals of the several hundred thousand different flowering plants that inhabit the earth, it is possible to assemble in relatively small compass dried specimens, although no museum can boast a representation of all the plants that are known. For study, such dried plants are almost as useful as living ones. Small herbs can be preserved entire, and even the largest trees can be adequately represented by leafy branches or twigs, flowers, and fruits. Properly dried herbarium specimens often exhibit accurately even the colors of delicate flowers. To study the internal structure of smaller flowers, dried ones may be soaked in water, whereupon they resume some semblance of their original form.

The dried specimens are attached with glue and strips of adhesive plaster to heavy sheets of paper (11x16 inches), and labeled with their geographic origin, collector, date of collection, color of flowers, and other information. Placed in protective covers, these sheets are arranged by genera and families, making it possible to locate quickly any plant represented.

Often it is asked how long such dried plant specimens will last. If properly protected from dust, insects, and careless handling, they should last indefinitely. Wreaths of flowers and foliage placed in Egyptian tombs three or four thousand years ago are still perfectly preserved, some in as good condition as specimens dried only ten years ago. Herbaria of Europe possess specimens three centuries old, which still retain their natural colors.

As Field Museum was founded only forty years ago, its Herbarium consists chiefly of recent collections, but from older institutions it has acquired many specimens more than a century old. The Herbarium, consisting of 660,000 mounted sheets of plants, fills a large hall on the third floor of the Museum. Every country of the globe is represented by specimens of its plants.

The Herbarium is particularly rich in plants of the United States, Mexico, the West Indies, and the Andes of South America. The floras of Peru and the Yucatan Peninsula are illustrated here more completely than in any other museum of the world, largely because of exploration conducted by Field Museum in those areas. There is maintained, also, a special herbarium of Illinois plants, their segregation making them more easily accessible to those interested primarily in the flora of the state and the Chicago area.

The Herbarium is used constantly by the staff of the Department of Botany and others, for reference in the determination of specimens and as a basis for the preparation of monographs and floras.

Specimens are often lent for study to botanists in other parts of the United States and in Europe, and the Herbarium is visited frequently by botanists of other cities. Although there are several large herbaria in the United States, there is no other within several hundred miles of Chicago,

hence the great utility of one placed in so central a location.

European herbaria possess thousands of type or historic specimens upon which were based the earliest descriptions and the Latin names of American plants. Since in classification and naming of plants it is important to have access to these specimens for comparison, Field Museum, with the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, has engaged in photographing some thousands of them. In this work it has had the cooperation of the European herbaria. Such photographs often serve for study almost as well as the specimens. Field Museum has thus acquired representation of probably more South American plants than any other museum of the United States. Since South America, with its vast unexplored areas, is the region in which American botanists are most intensely interested, Field Museum has an enviable equipment for current work in systematic botany. As a result, it receives large additions to its tropical American collections, presented by collectors to be named by comparison with the authentic material here available for the purpose.

"MINERAL MOONLIGHT"

BY HENRY W. NICHOLS

Associate Curator of Geology

Owing to their exceptional size and beauty, two selenite crystals have been given a case by themselves in the mineral collection in Hall 34. These crystals have the form of prismatic columns about twenty inches high. They are transparent and have a soft luster which suggests moonlight. This luster is like that of the selenite column in the fabled temple of the oracle of the "Dives Bouteille" which Rabelais said has "a splendor like that of Hymettian honey."

The suggestion of moonlight in the luster of selenite has been recognized from remote antiquity. The Chaldean astrologers attributed selenite to the moon. The Greeks named the mineral "selenites," which means "belonging to the moon."

Selenite is the pure, transparent form of the common mineral, gypsum, which in its ordinary occurrence is a common-looking rock used for making plaster of paris. So attractive a mineral should find use as an ornamental stone, but selenite is far too soft and easily marred for such use. It can be scratched easily by the finger nail. The attractive luster is lost when the crystal is cut in certain directions and it is difficult to cut without opening cracks, owing to a strongly developed cleavage. Two other varieties of gypsum, alabaster and satinspar, although equally soft, are used for ornament. These are not transparent, so that marring on account of their softness is not so readily seen.

The exhibited crystals grew in a cave in the Braden Copper Mine in Chile, a mine dug in the crater of a volcano which is probably extinct. They were collected by the Marshall Field Brazilian Expedition of 1926.

Completing Stone Age Hall

Frederick Blaschke of Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York, the sculptor commissioned to prepare the restorations of prehistoric peoples for the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C), arrived at the Museum in May, bringing with him the various figures for the groups. Mr. Blaschke is now working upon the installation of this hall which, it is expected, will be completed in a few weeks.



Nichols, Henry W. 1933. "Mineral Moonlight." *Field Museum news* 4(6), 2-2.

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