

ATTENDANCE IN 1937: 1,292,023; EXCEEDS 1936 BY 100,000

Field Museum received 1,292,023 visitors during 1937, an increase of 100,586 over the 1936 attendance of 1,191,437. This was the first large gain since 1933, first year of A Century of Progress exposition. In 1934 and 1935 there were declines; the 1936 attendance was only 9,088 above that of the preceding year.

Of the 1937 attendance, 1,197,806 were admitted free, either due to coming on the free days (Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays), or because as children, students, teachers, or Members of the Museum, they were entitled to free admission any day of the week. Thus the 25-cent admission fee was paid by only 94,217 persons, or approximately 7 per cent of the total. This compares with about 6 per cent in 1936, and less than 5 per cent in 1935. It is encouraging, therefore, to find not only an increase in total attendance, but an increase also in the proportion of persons sufficiently interested in what the Museum has to offer to pay for the privilege of admission.

Apart from those actually coming into the building, the influence of the Museum was carried to many others by extra-mural activities. Lecturers sent out to the schools by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures spoke, and showed stereopticon slides, in classrooms and assembly halls before 469 audiences aggregating 169,337 children. Traveling natural history exhibits circulated among more than 400 schools and other institutions by the N. W. Harris Public School Extension, were repeatedly brought to the attention of more than 500,000 children, exhibits at each institution being changed every two weeks. An audience of incalculable proportions, but undoubtedly numbering millions, was reached by the series of thirteen dramatic radio programs, "From the Ends of the Earth," broadcast under the joint auspices of Field Museum and the University Broadcasting Council. Other radio programs in which the Museum participated, publications issued by Field Museum Press, releases of news articles and photographs, and other methods of transmitting information, brought millions of others into indirect contact with the Museum's activities.

In addition to its work outside the Museum, the Raymond Foundation presented 19 free motion picture programs for children in the James Simpson Theatre in its spring, autumn and special series, with an attendance of 27,775 children; and also conducted 975 groups aggregating 33,564 children on guide-lecture tours of the exhibits. Similar lecture tours for adults numbered 409 with a total of 8,115 individuals. The Sunday afternoon lecture-tours conducted by Mr. P. G. Dallwig, the Layman Lecturer, inaugurated in October, were given for 13 groups comprising 905 persons. Audiences totaling 16,494 persons were drawn to the Simpson Theatre by the 17 lectures, illustrated with motion pictures and slides, given in the annual spring and autumn courses. Large numbers of persons, chiefly students, teachers, visiting scientists, and others engaged in research, were served by the Library of the Museum, and the study collections maintained in each of the scientific Departments.

A large specimen of lodestone, weighing 400 pounds, is exhibited in Clarence Buckingham Hall (Hall 35). It possesses magnetic power, which is illustrated by attached metal objects.

PREPARING EXHIBIT OF MOUNTAIN MEGATHERIUM SKELETON

By ELMER S. RIGGS
Curator of Paleontology

A fossil skeleton of the mountain species of ground-sloth, *Megatherium lundii*, is now being prepared for exhibition by Mr. Phil C. Orr, Assistant in Paleontology, who has reconstructed many other specimens of the sloth tribe.

This skeleton was collected by the Marshall Field Paleontological Expedition to Argentina and Bolivia in 1927. Twenty specimens of the genus were collected, and it is planned to mount skeletons of two different species for the exhibits in Ernest R. Graham Hall (Hall 38).

The specimen currently in preparation was buried in a bank of clay for perhaps a million years. Moisture of the earth had leached out the glue, and the process of decay had weakened the original hard texture of the bone. Weight of earth lying above had compressed and distorted many of the bones. Later, the clays which had

had entered and further damaged the specimen. Nevertheless it was a practically complete skeleton with all parts more or less in place, and lacking only a few joints of the toes. As fossils go, this is a good specimen, since it makes possible a mounted skeleton all of one individual, and with but little replacement of missing parts.

Before the accompanying photograph was taken the bones had gone through hardening, fitting, and mending processes, and had been reinforced with iron rods. They are now being assembled on temporary supports. When the pose to be given the skeleton has been determined, permanent supports will be installed, and the specimen will be transferred to the exhibition hall.

This is the first skeleton of this species to be mounted anywhere, and the second skeleton of *Megatherium* to be mounted in a North American Museum. The first was the great skeleton of *Megatherium americanum*, also in Field Museum, mounted in



Assembling Rare Specimen

Only known complete specimen of a mountain type of South American prehistoric ground sloth (*Megatherium lundii*) now being prepared for exhibition by Mr. Phil C. Orr in Field Museum's paleontological laboratories.

covered it were washed away until the skeleton was exposed at the surface. Softened by rains, the clays had "crept" or slid on a sloping surface after the manner of a glacier moving down its valley course. In this process vertebrae were broken and displaced, the flat bones of the pelvis were cracked into many pieces, and plant roots

1935. It is from the Pampean formation of Argentina and is of a heavier, lowland species. Remains of ground sloths of this genus have been found in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, but for the most part they are known from South America. There they were apparently quite numerous during Pliocene and Pleistocene times.

LINCOLN AND WASHINGTON FILMS FOR CHILDREN

The James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures will present programs of commemorative motion pictures for children this month, on the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. These will be given in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum, and children from all parts of Chicago and suburbs are invited. There will be two showings of the films on each day, one at 10 A.M., and one at 11.

The Lincoln program, on Saturday, February 12, will include the films "My Father," "My First Jury," and "Native State."

"Washington, the Boy and the Man," a multiple-reel feature, will be presented on Tuesday, February 22.

Museum Technique Mystifies Many

Many visitors to the Museum have been observed stooping, bending, standing on their toes, and assuming other unusual positions in endeavors to discover how the Florida manatee, exhibited in a habitat group in the Hall of Marine Mammals (Hall N), is suspended to produce its lifelike floating appearance. They look for "invisible wires" and other devices, but seldom guess the correct solution, which is actually very simple. Go and see for yourself.



Riggs, Elmer S. 1938. "Museum Technique Mystifies Many." *Field Museum news* 9(2), 3-3.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/25714>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/364419>

Holding Institution

Field Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the Chicago Field Museum.
For information contact dcc@library.uiuc.edu.

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.