

## ARTS OF NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA SHOWN

**"AUSTRALASIAN NATIVE ARTS"** is the next special exhibit scheduled for visitors at Chicago Natural History Museum. It will be on view from August 8 to September 28 inclusive, in Stanley Field Hall.

The display is in two sections: Part I, devoted to New Zealand, affords an opportunity to inspect the traditional art forms of the Maori people—forms which in recent years have largely vanished or changed as the people have succumbed to the absorptive processes of Western influence. Part II, dealing with the aboriginal tribes of Australia, offers an example of a living people whose culture remains on what we consider an ultra-primitive level. It presents art forms in which we can find something equivalent to the beginnings of art among our own early ancestors.

### PHOTOGRAPHS AND OBJECTS

A major part of the exhibit will be a collection of about fifty large photographs made by Cyrus Townsend Brady, Jr., of New York City, a retired civil engineer and businessman who spent five years in the countries "down under." Mr. Brady will also show his collection of wood carvings, paintings and other original art objects produced by the natives of New Zealand and Australia. This material will be augmented by other objects from the Museum's own collections. Visitors are urged, after inspection of the special exhibit, to make a tour of the Museum's permanent exhibits from these lands (Hall A-1 and Hall F on the ground floor). The New Zealand exhibit in Hall F is particularly notable for its inclusion of a complete large Maori council house erected just as it originally stood in New Zealand. Only six such houses are known to remain in existence.

### POLYNESIAN CULTURAL APEX

When New Zealand was first visited by Europeans, the Maoris had brought Polynesian culture to one of its summits. They are the largest branch of the Polynesian race, and have in great measure assimilated Western civilization. They are now playing a proportionate role in the activities of their country. They number today about 100,000 in a total population of approximately 2,000,000.

However, under the changed conditions of their new life, their traditional art forms have been abandoned or altered, and are preserved only as relics or in museums. Articles manufactured to serve as souvenirs for tourists hardly count. The Maori art forms have not especially stimulated artists of European origin. Yet, though they may appear grotesque to unaccustomed Western eyes, they were so highly developed technically as to excite the admiration of art critics everywhere.

In Australia the aborigines were at the opposite pole of primitiveness from the Maoris, and the gap between their culture and that of the Europeans has proved very difficult to bridge. Most of the 50,000 who remain upon the mainland are now protected in reservations, while from the island of Tasmania they vanished generations ago.

The art forms of these aborigines are childlike in quality, but they are still alive and practiced widely, although with diminishing fervor and frequency. Yet their primitive quality and the eclectic aesthetic



MAORI MEMORIAL

This wooden figure carved by tribesmen of New Zealand is a departed chieftain named Pukaki. It antedates the arrival of Europeans in the country, and is now preserved in the Auckland Museum.

temper of our times have inspired painters, sculptors, composers and industrial designers among the 8,500,000 white Australians, who perceive in these forms something like the beginning of our own arts. There has resulted, among other developments, a school of aboriginal water-colorists who are now producing in a semi-European manner that offers high promise. Some of the work of the latter is included in the present exhibit.

Mr. Brady's exhibit was recently shown in the American Museum of Natural History in New York. After the Chicago showing, it is scheduled to go to the University of Philadelphia and the Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts. Mr. Brady was a railroad-bridge engineer in Chicago during the early days of his engineering career.

Highly polished armlets of green soapstone, made by rubbing away the center of a stone disk with sand and water, are displayed in Hall E with other personal ornaments of the Tuareg of the Sahara.

## MUSEUM MEN TO HUNT FOSSILS IN WYOMING

During August, a paleontological expedition will visit a mountainous section of northwestern Wyoming to collect Devonian fossil vertebrates for the Museum. Orville Gilpin, Chief Preparator of Fossils, will be in charge. He will be accompanied by William D. Turnbull, Preparator. They will work at Beartooth Butte, a familiar landmark to those who have approached Yellowstone Park via the spectacular Red Lodge-Cooke City highway.

Most of this part of Wyoming is formed of very ancient metamorphic and igneous rocks, while the butte itself is an isolated remnant of a mantle of younger Paleozoic sediments that must have covered much of the present Rocky Mountain region at one time. The vertebrates occur high in Beartooth Butte in a thin deposit of shales and limestone that is lens-shaped in section. Because of its red color, it is conspicuous even at a distance among the grayish limestones that form the rest of the butte. It was probably deposited in the estuary at the mouth of an ancient river, about 300 million years ago.

Because of the inaccessibility of the outcrop of the red shales and limestones, most of the collecting is done in the fallen rock that accumulates in a talus slope below. Remains of vertebrates are not uncommon here, and occur in considerable variety. Many belong to the early armored, jawless vertebrate stock, known as ostracoderms. Another group important in Devonian faunas, the arthrodires, have jaws and many other basic structural similarities to living fishes, although with their heavy skeletal armor they show little obvious resemblance to the fishes we know. Only a few fragments have been discovered that can be referred to groups still extant. They belong to lobe-finned fishes, and are related to the ancestors of the living coelacanths that have been discovered recently on the African coast.

ROBERT H. DENISON  
*Curator of Fossil Fishes*

## NATURE COURSE PROVIDED FOR GIRL SCOUTS

Mondays this summer are Girl Scout Days in the Museum. A course of instruction in subjects which will aid the young members of Girl Scout troops in gaining nature proficiency badges was begun on July 6 and will continue through August 31. The Museum's co-operation in this study is made available through the services of the lecture staff of the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation.

Cases containing exhibits relative to specific subjects about which questions occur in the Girl Scout handbooks are marked on Mondays for the guidance of the girls.



Denison, Robert H. 1953. "Museum Men to Hunt Fossils in Arizona." *Bulletin* 24(8), 3-3.

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