

next expedition and Su-Lin became a permanent resident.

As Su-Lin grew fat and happy at the zoo, Mrs. Harkness was hot on the trail of a mate for the famous panda. Assuming that Su-Lin was a female, Mrs. Harkness searched the mountains of Szechuan for three months for a male panda. She finally returned with Diana, apparently a buddy, not a sweetheart. Unfortunately, Su-Lin and Diana's friendship was short-lived. In April 1938, six weeks after Diana's arrival, Su-Lin died when a piece of wood became lodged in the animal's throat.

On dissection it was discovered that Su-Lin was a male and zoo officials despairingly believed that they had had a breeding pair in Su-Lin and Diana. However, when Diana died in 1942 they found that she, too, had been a he.

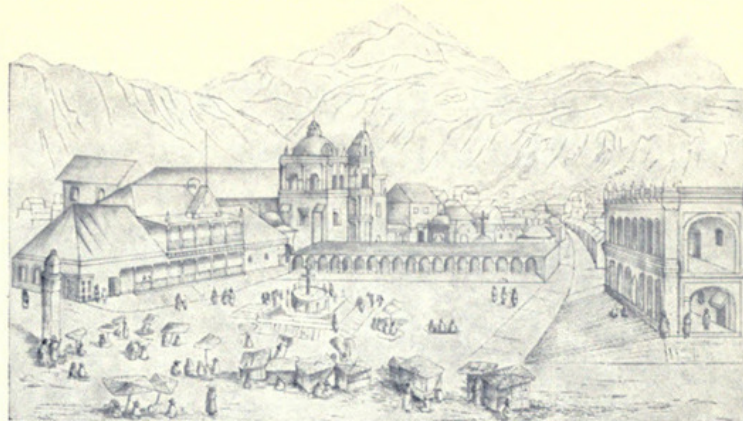
Dead but not forgotten, Su-Lin was more than just another furry face. D. Dwight Davis, of the Field Museum staff, had often observed the panda at the zoo and on its death began a study of the panda that was to last the rest of Davis' life.

Using the embalmed and injected body of Su-Lin, Davis began his meticulously detailed and researched study of the internal and external anatomy of the giant panda. The original problem that motivated Davis' research was the determination of the giant panda's proper taxonomic position. Some workers insisted—and indeed still do—that the panda was a member of the racoon family, while others placed it in the bear family. As Davis stated, "the proper taxonomic position of *Ailuropoda* (the giant panda)—was soon settled; *Ailuropoda* is a bear and therefore belongs in the family Ursidae."

Davis made this statement in the Introduction to his enormous monograph "The Giant Panda" (*Fieldiana: Zoology Memoirs*, Volume 3, Dec. 7, 1964), but went on for 327 pages, making this one of the largest of the *Fieldiana* series, to a brilliant study in comparative anatomy. Davis made the work a test "based on the anatomy of the giant panda, of whether the comparative method can yield information that goes beyond the customary goals of comparative anatomy."

In achieving this goal, Davis gave careful consideration and discussion to each structure and organ of the giant panda. He worked with five artists and used 159 accurate and, in many cases surprisingly beautiful, figures to illustrate his subject. Almost all of Davis' illustrations and statements regarding the panda's soft anatomy were based on Su-Lin.

As Davis worked on his study, Su-Lin's hide went to the Museum taxidermists. And now, thanks to the taxidermists' skill, you can stroll down the Museum's Hall 15 and come face to face with one of the most famous characters of the thirties. (Continued on page 8)



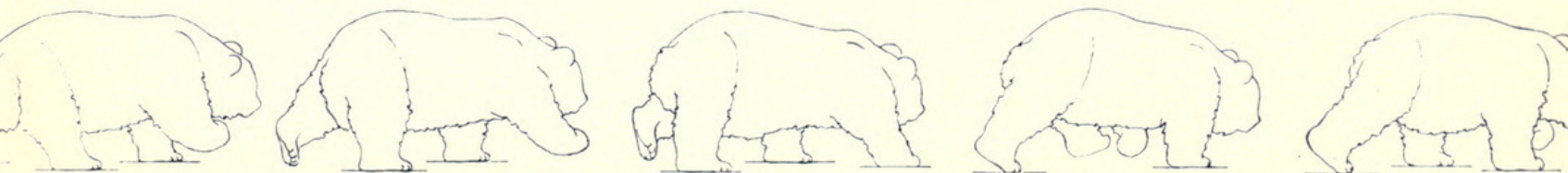
From Travel Book to Christmas Card

A rare travel book much sought after by collectors is John L. Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*. There were a number of "editions" of this work,—probably only printings rather than editions. The copy in the library of the Field Museum is said to be the twelfth edition and is dated 1855, while my personal copy of the work is the "new edition" of 1842,—but in the preface mentioned as the tenth edition and issued three months from the time of publication of the work. The differences between these two "editions" are minor.

Mr. Stephens was a traveler and author, and I am sure that his *Incidents of Travel* must have been immensely popular, for he travelled in and wrote about a part of America that was not well-known in his day. The book was in great enough demand more than 100 years after its original publication so that a reprint edition of it was prepared.

Stephens took the artist Frederick Catherwood with him on his travels to Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan. Catherwood sketched with great skill the ruins and artifacts of the Mayan civilizations long since disappeared, a few cities, and other things of interest. Steel engravings of Catherwood's sketches are to this day some of the finest and most artistic representations of Mayan "antiquities" to be found in any work. Certainly these engravings are responsible for much of the popularity of Stephens' *Incidents of Travel* and are what makes of it a collector's item.

Looking for a suitable subject for a Christmas card, we decided to have a sketch made after one of Catherwood's engravings. To simulate antiquity the sketch was engraved on copper with a mezzotint screen. It is of the highland Guatemalan city of Quezaltenango as it appeared about 130 years ago. Today Quezaltenango is one of the fascinating old cities of Central America. The city, its surrounding mountains and its Indian peoples are well worth a day or two of your time when next you go to Guatemala.—by Louis O. Williams Chief Curator, Botany





Williams, Louis O. 1970. "From Travel Book to Christmas Card." *Bulletin* 41(1), 7-7.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/21713>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/374779>

Holding Institution

University Library, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

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>.