

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS AND CONDITION OF
THE ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM

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The Illinois State Academy of Science is the logical body to whom an annual report should be made on the condition and progress of the Illinois State Museum, since the Academy is composed of men from all portions of the State, connected with all kinds of educational institutions, representing a great variety of occupations, and interested in all branches of science, and since the purpose of the museum is to present in concrete form all kinds of scientific knowledge for the use of all people of the State. Four out of five of the men composing the museum Board of Advisers are now members of the Academy. The Academy has from time to time made its influence felt by resolutions and by personal work on behalf of the museum. The first meeting of the Academy was held 1907 under the auspices of the museum. The financial relationship of the two institutions is intimate. And finally there is no body of men in the State more competent to pass judgment on the work of the museum than are the members of the State Academy. Hence this report.

The first and most important item of progress to be noted is the work on the new building. After many years of urging the need of a new building and of involuntary "watchful waiting" a magnificent new structure is being erected just south of the State House. The top floor of this building 270 feet long by 68 feet wide, commodious and well lighted, has been assigned to the museum, and it is thought that it will be ready for occupancy next year. It is realized that as soon as the building is completed various departments now waiting for quarters will pour into the building like sand through a sieve and hence it is very important that the museum have ready exhibits which may in a measure block out the space assigned, be worthy of their surroundings and convey some concep-

tion of the wealth of the fauna, the flora and the mineral resources of the State.

During the past few years there has been a substantial growth of our museum materials in many lines both by gift, purchase and collecting in the field.

The collections of invertebrate paleontology numbering more than 30,000 specimens, which have been in storage for many years, are being worked over and put in shape by Mr. A. W. Slocum of the University of Chicago and Dr. A. F. Foerste of Dayton, Ohio.

The mineral collections have been greatly increased until now about 50 per cent of the commonly known minerals are represented, some of them by handsome specimens, some by many pounds of material, and some by minute examples. A case 15 feet long, 3 feet deep, 10 feet high has just been filled with Illinois mineral products of major importance. A "Guide to the Mineral Collections in the Illinois State Museum," forming a book of some 300 pages, is in the hands of the printer at the University of Chicago Press.

Minor advances have been made in conchology, entomology, ichthyology, herpetology and ornithology. The ornithological collections now contain most of the species of Illinois birds and there are six handsome groups with transparent backgrounds and one group of wild turkeys.

Two cases have recently been placed in the entrance hall containing casts showing the development of the horse in North America as worked out by Prof. Osborn of the American Museum and others, and of the human race, from the time of the Pithecanthropus to the Cro-magnon man as represented by skulls found, in many places by various anthropologists and by busts prepared by Prof. J. H. McGregor.

The general plan being followed in the museum is to present Illinois materials chiefly, and when expenditures are made to do a few things well rather than many things. As the result of this plan a number of groups have been completed and others are in preparation. The deer group, with which many of the members of the Academy are familiar has been followed by the completion of

two noteworthy groups and by work on two additional groups. The bear group occupies a case 14 by 20 feet and 18 feet high. The circular background painted by Mr. Chas. A. Corwin depicts one of the canyons in Starved Rock Park. Four bears, a male, female and two cubs, occupy the foreground. Mr. Julius Friessr, head taxidermist at the Field Museum made the group.

The Indian group, made possible by the generosity of Mr. J. W. Bunn, represents an incident in the life of the Sacs-Fox Indians one hundred years ago on the banks of the Illinois river where Peoria now stands. In the foreground are arranged seven figures—two warriors returning with a captive, a chief seated by the fire putting on his mocasins, a boy with bow and arrow in hand, a maiden standing by the door of a bark wigwam within which an old woman looks up only long enough to glance at the prisoner and then resume the pounding of corn in a log serving as a mortar. The figures were cast from life at an Indian reservation in New York and are therefore correct anthropological records. The trees, vines, hawks, arrowpoints and axes of Indian manufacture, the fire; the path winding over the hill; and the Illinois river and bluffs at the Narrows, skillfully painted on the curved canvass background, present a very pleasing picture. Both the picture, figures and foreground are the work of Henri Marchand, a one time student of August Rodin and Jerome in Paris. It is thought that this group is unsurpassed by any similar group in the country in ethnographical and artistic merit.

Two other groups are in preparation; an elk group and a mushroom group. Mr. Frank H. Connor of Chicago sent a party of hunters to Wyoming in November last and they secured six handsome elk. The skins are now being prepared. They will be displayed in a case 28 feet long, 16 feet deep and 18 feet high.

The most pretentious group thus far undertaken in the museum is one which will be completed it is hoped by May 1st. It will occupy a circular case with a background 60 feet long and extending to the ceiling. The observer entering the door comes into a small hexagonal

room 12 feet in diameter. The foreground from six to nine feet in depth merges into the panorama on the canvass. On the left is a wood, on the right brush, in front is a valley. An actual stream of water trickles from a spring and flows into the river. Appropriately placed in the foreground are more than two hundred characteristic Illinois mushrooms, made in wax and plaster. They are so skilfully wrought that it is almost impossible to distinguish the models from the original mushrooms. Doubtless in no other place is there a mushroom group of such artistic and scientific merit and it is our belief that this collection will be of practical as well as scientific and artistic interest. This work was made possible by the generosity of Mr. J. W. Bunn and is being executed by Marchand. For nearly twenty years Mr. Marchand has been studying mushrooms and has made cast of many hundreds of species. Here are samples of four species—*Amanita muscaria*, *Coprinus comatus*, *Galeria tenera* and *Sparassis crispa*.