
Science at Work

► Sixteen paintings by O. B. Jacobson, director of the School of Art, were on display in the Art Building during the first two weeks in October. The exhibition included western landscapes done by Professor Jacobson during July and August at a retreat in the Rocky Mountains of northern Colorado. The paintings were produced from sketches taken while traveling in Wyoming, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico during the summer.

► Erma Bickett, assistant to the dean of the Graduate College and a member of the University staff since 1932, has resigned to become secretary to Homer L. Dodge, president of Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont. Miss Bickett was assistant to Dr. Dodge, former dean of the Graduate College, for several years before he took a leave of absence in 1942 to accept a position in Washington, D. C. Recently Dr. Dodge resigned to become president of Norwich. Alberta McCann, secretary of the department of history, will succeed Miss Bickett as assistant in the Graduate College office.

► Capt. Barre Hill, professor of music on leave for military service, was reported in Normandy working with civilians who have claims against the Allied armies. Captain Hill spent several years in France as a voice student and was assigned to his present duty because of his knowledge of the French language.

► Announcement was made of the engagement of Miss Ina L. Griffith, assistant professor of pharmacy, to Joseph Brundidge Black, Cyril. The wedding was set for mid-November. Miss Griffith, a member of the University faculty for 15 years, has worked toward a Ph.D. degree at Purdue University, LaFayette, Indiana. She is affiliated with various pharmaceutical and scientific organizations, including Sigma Xi honorary research society, of which she is an associate member. Mr. Black attended Central State College, Edmond, and received his bachelor's degree from Southwestern Institute of Technology at Weatherford. He has been in the drug business for the last 20 years and recently has retired.

► Pfc. Truman Pouncey, assistant professor of journalism on leave for military service, was last reported in Belgium as head of a Civil Affairs team which moves to liberated towns as the Germans are driven out, establishes contact with the local authorities and helps keep order until quiet is restored. Private Pouncey landed in Normandy shortly after D-Day.

► Cortez A. M. Ewing, director of the School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, was re-elected president of the Norman Forum at the first meeting of the organization in October. Speakers at the meeting were Congressman Mike Monroney, '24ba, of Oklahoma's fifth congressional district, and Herbert Hyde, '18, Oklahoma City attorney, who spoke on the issues involved in the 1944 election.



CLICKS AGAIN

Harold Keith, O. U.'s prolific sports writer, is author of an article in the November issue of Esquire.

► Pvt. Leslie H. Rice, journalism professor on leave for military service, has been designated feature editor for *Sage*, magazine of an Army Air Force unit at Normoyle Quartermaster Depot near San Antonio, Texas.

► Lt. Herschel G. Elarth, associate professor of architecture on leave, was one of the first four American soldiers to enter Versailles with the Army, according to word received by friends at the University.

► Dr. Paul B. Sears, professor of botany at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, lectured there at the first autumn meeting of Sigma Xi honorary research society held October 23. Before the lecture Dr. Sears was honored at a dinner given at the Oberlin Faculty Club. Former botany professor at O. U., he is the author of the best-seller *Deserts on the March*.

► Charles Elson, former University drama professor now in New York City, has been working under the Navy Department in the development of training aids devices. Mrs. Elson, under the name of Diana Rivers, has been appearing in the Broadway production of *Chicken Every Sunday*, a comedy about boarding house life in Tucson.

► Helen H. Hamill, assistant professor of home economics, was one of a committee of three Oklahoma home economists appointed to work out a manual of directions for food preservation, including canning, drying and freezing. This manual will be used by home economics teachers, home demonstration agents and others who have to do with food preservation.

WAR is rapidly diminishing the oil supply of the United States, necessitating an intensive search for new fields. In this search fossils rank among the scientists' greatest aids.

Fossils are evidence of ancient life. If like fossils occur in widely separated rocks, it follows that the rocks are the same age. This is known as correlation. Since rock formations are laid down in chronological order and the evolution of a species of plant or animal can be traced through fossils, the relative age of a formation may be determined.

New regions can be dated by comparing their fossils with those of a district of a known age. Oil is more likely to be found in rock formations of certain ages than in others; therefore, companies save thousands of dollars by drilling only in rock formations whose age indicates a definite possibility of oil.

To be valuable in correlation, the fossil represented must have had a relatively short time range and been widely distributed. Graptolites fill these requirements admirably. Coming from the Greek words, *graptos*, written, plus *lithos*, rock, graptolites were marine organisms which attained world-wide distribution during the upper Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian and early Mississippian periods of geologic history. That means they floated around in the seas more than 320 million years ago.

They aren't very significant looking fossils. At first glance, they might be careless pencil-marks left on rocks by prehistoric doodlers. They range from a fraction of an inch to four or five inches in length.

With the aid of a tailor-made microscope manufactured in England however, Dr. Charles E. Decker, O. U. research professor in geology, has become an international authority on graptolites. He is in constant communication with paleontologists of many countries, including Great Britain, Australia, China, and before the war, several European nations.

It is largely through Dr. Decker's efforts that Sylvan shale, a rock outcropping in Oklahoma's Arbuckle Mountains, was credited to an earlier geological period. For years, geologists had placed the Sylvan shale in the Silurian period. The presence of certain graptolites indicated that it was laid down in the upper Ordovician, and as such it is known today.

To illustrate the value of graptolites to geologists, Dr. Decker tells of a section of China under investigation. All the fossils discovered were new genera; there-

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fore, they were of no use in finding the age of the outcrop. Then some graptolites were sighted. These enabled the paleontologists to classify the region quickly and accurately.

Dr. Decker was born in 1886 at Dixon, Illinois. He received his B. A. in 1906 from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, his master's degree from Chicago University in 1908 and his Ph. D. there in 1917.

Organizations of which he is a member include American Association for the Advancement of Science, Sigma Xi honorary science fraternity, American Association of Petroleum Geologists of which he was secretary-treasurer 1919-26, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists of which he was president 1931-32, and Sigma Gamma Epsilon honorary geology fraternity of which he was president 1924-32.

Dr. Decker taught at Northwestern University and Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, before coming to the University in 1916 as an instructor in geology. He was appointed professor in 1925 and a research professor in 1943.

Nearly fifty papers have been published by Dr. Decker in his field, including *Studies in Minor Folds*, University of Chicago Press, *The Simpson Group*, Bulletin of the American Association of Geologists, and *Two Lower Paleozoic Groups, Arbuckle and Wichita Mountains, Oklahoma*, Bulletin of the Geological Society of America.

A portrait of Dr. Decker, painted by the late Patricio Gimeno, famous painter and professor of Spanish at the University, was presented to the University in 1933 for his outstanding work and services.

—ELIZABETH LEES.

Debate Topic Announced

The subject for debate by Oklahoma High School teams this year is "Resolved: That the legal voting age be reduced to eighteen years," Dr. M. L. Wardell, acting director of the Extension Division, has announced.

The state tournament of the Oklahoma High School Public Speaking League, held at the University every spring, is sponsored by the Extension Division and is open to all schools who are members and who have participated in elimination meets in their various districts prior to the state contest.

Besides debate, events of the tournament will include extemporaneous speaking, one-act play, standard oratory, original oratory, oral interpretation of poetry, radio play, dramatic declamation and humorous declamation.

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