

COLORADO SCIENTIST HUNTS TEN MILLION YEAR OLD INSECTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Insects buried some ten millions of years are the game to be hunted in South America this summer by Prof. T.D.A. Cockerell of the University of Colorado, one of the world's authorities on fossil insects.

With Mrs. Cockerell, he is now on his way to newly discovered beds of fossils which lie near the Andes in Argentine at Jujuy, and Mendoza. Mrs. Cockerell, who has the discovery of many fossil insects to her credit, will assist him in this search for the "bugs" of long ago.

Nature at times was a good undertaker, often preserving in strata of rocks the molds or actual bodies of insects that lived and died many milleniums ago. These fossils, and others of vegetable life and animal forms, allow the scientist to read from the record of the rocks the story of the development of life on this globe.

Prof. Cockerell is eager to investigate these new natural graveyards of insects since fossil insect deposits are found in only a few places. One of these new fields was laid down in tertiary times, not over five million years ago, when man was only beginning his upward climb to his present estate. The other is of older age and dates back to early Mesozoic times, the age of reptiles, when huge dinosaurs and great flying reptiles roamed and flitted over the face of the earth.

No part of the world affords richer deposits of fossil insects than Colorado. Here the oldest ant and the oldest wasp yet known have been found by expeditions under Dr. Cockerell's direction. The present prospecting for oil shale in Colorado and Wyoming brought these insects to the light of day for they were found in the waste dirt thrown out of miners excavations. The world's oldest ant represents a very primitive type allied to certain ants of Australia, but the wasp has a very modern aspect. It does not differ materially from those that do their stinging in Colorado today, and this makes it certain that the wasps originated very much earlier in the life of the earth. In these oil shale beds of Eocene age no butterflies and bees have yet been found, but Dr. Cockerell has unearthed many beetles.

From another Colorado locality, the Miocene Florissant beds, near the base of Pike's Peak, more than a thousand kinds of fossil insects have been disinterred.

Insects are among the oldest forms of life found in the rocks laid down in past ages. The first trace of insect life so far discovered was in the Ordovician period of the Paleozoic era, some twenty million years ago.

U.S. RADIUM LABORATORY PRACTISES "SAFETY FIRST"

Radium, charged with several deaths in an Eastern industrial city, has no terrors for the little staff of young women at Washington who handle more of the powerful stuff probably than any one else in the world.

The entire radium supply of the United States has passed through the hands of the testing corps at the U.S. Bureau of Standards for the past five years without a casualty, due to the use of proper precautions in its handling, according to Miss C.L. Torrey, assistant physicist at the radium laboratory of the Bureau. The work of testing the country's radium supply is under the direction