

prehistoric animal was about three times the size of the modern bison.

Its remains were uncovered by Burnett Day, a thirteen-year-old youth, who in attempting to pick up a rock to throw at some sheep, grabbed hold of what proved to be the tip of the bison's horn, which protruded a few inches above the ground.

The giant bison, Dr. Camp says, belonged to the great "climax" animals of the Pleistocene geologic period. It was contemporary to the saber-toothed tiger, the ground sloth, the Columbian elephant, and others of huge bulk. They reached what scientists term the climax in development, and then suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from the earth.

Science News Letter, January 20, 1934

ENTOMOLOGY

Minute Duckweed Infested By Even Smaller Insects

THE TINY plants of duckweed, that form living blankets on stagnant ponds, are visited and inhabited by insects correspondingly tiny, Dr. Minnie Brink Scotland of the New York State College for Teachers, Albany, recently reported to the Entomological Society of America.

There are six dominant insect forms, including a bug, an aphid, a beetle and a fly. One caterpillar is bigger than the individual plants it uses, but by binding them together in a raft it makes them serve its purpose.

Science News Letter, January 20, 1934

CRIMINOLOGY

Racketeer File and Statistical Machines Aid Fight on Crime

SCIENCE and the most modern business methods are serving as powerful weapons in Uncle Sam's new drive on organized criminals, kidnapers and racketeers. One of the most useful of these new defenses is a newly organized file at the Identification Unit of the U. S. Department of Justice.

In the drawers of this file are the fingerprints of known gangsters, kidnapers and extortionists—each single fingerprint filed separately. The advantage of having each finger filed separately, instead of in sets of ten as in the regular identification files, is that the search for a single print picked up at the scene of the crime, or found on a ransom note, perhaps, is made much easier by this system.

Suppose one print is found on one side of a sheet of paper or a bottle, and on the other side are noticed four smudges. Officials receiving this print may assume first that it is a thumb. Right thumb prints are filed all together in this new single-print file; but not all are of the same pattern, and they are classified and filed by pattern, not by the criminal's name.

Perhaps the "latent" print found on the paper has what is known as a loop

pattern. That narrows the search to the loop classification. The direction the loop points, whether toward the little finger or away from it, indicates still another sub-classification. The number of ridges in the loop limits the search still further. Finally, the particular section which must be searched for that type of print contains not more than about 25 cards. If not found there, the search would be continued among the left thumbs, and so on.

It is a comparatively simple task to search a bunch of 25 cards one by one until the "latent" print is identified. It would be a hopeless task to search the millions of prints in the regular files.

Sorting and Punch Cards

Statistical sorting machines and punch cards familiar in business have also been enlisted by the Federal Government's Department of Justice detectives.

As an auxiliary to the new single-print file of fingerprints of racketeers the Identification Unit is now keeping a detailed descriptive file of such criminals. Since names mean less than nothing among criminals, the index to this file is the description of the men. And this index is kept in a comparatively novel way. It is punched on the cards used in sorting machines for statistical work. A hole in one location means blue eyes, in another brown eyes, and so on. Height, weight, age, sex, scars, deformities, and peculiarities of speaking are some of the items recorded on this punch card.

Contact Man Usual

A fortunate aspect of some crimes, including kidnaping, is that there is usually some contact with at least one member of the gang, either at the time of the abduction, when the ransom is paid, or at some time during the negotiations. If a clear description of the person is sent immediately to the Department of Justice, within a few minutes the punch cards can be run through the sorting machine and all known offenders answering to that description selected.

The file records, including photographs and record of offenses, can then be shown to the person who has seen the criminal for positive identification.



CALLING CARDS OF A NATION'S CRIMINALS

Information and fingerprints concerning thousands of criminals are kept in this regular file of fingerprints of the U. S. Identification Unit. When an arrest is made or a suspect picked up, his fingerprints are rushed to Washington, where a few minutes' search in this file will reveal his past record.