

VITAL STATISTICS

**The Older the Father
More Likely Baby Is Girl**

► **WHETHER IT** will be a boy depends on how old the expectant father is. The older the father, the more likely the baby is to be a girl.

This finding has been calculated from U. S. Bureau of Vital Statistics records for the years 1947, 1948 and 1949 by Dr. Edward Novitski of the University of Missouri.

That older mothers have fewer boy babies than younger mothers is well known. But, Dr. Novitski finds, this is because when the mother is older, the father is also usually older.

The fact that later children are more likely to be girls than the first children of a marriage also can be explained on the basis of the father's older age when the later children are born.

Why the changing age of the father, rather than the mother, affects the sex ratio is not known. A genetic factor is not necessarily involved. There might, Dr. Novitski suggests, be conditions of a physiological nature which change with the age of the father and thus tend to shift the sex ratio.

Or, he suggests, on the basis of fruit-fly studies, it might be a decreasing level of interchange of factors or genes within the chromosomes with increasing age that accounts for the sex ratio shift with the father's age.

The mathematics by which Dr. Novitski found that the father's rather than the mother's age affects the sex ratio is reported in detail in *Science* (May 15).

Science News Letter, June 6, 1953

PHYSICS

**Observe Cosmic Rays
From Alaskan Mountain**

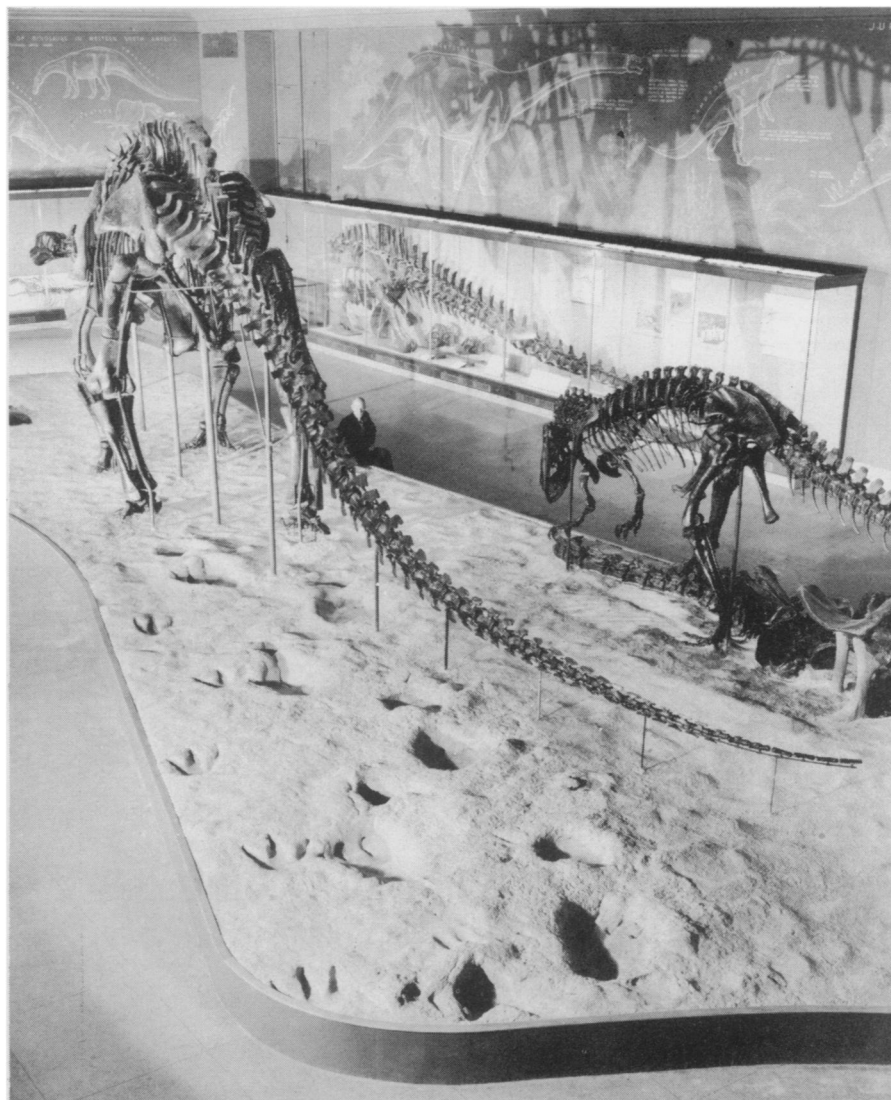
► **A TEAM** of scientists from New York University and the University of Alaska will probe the mysteries of cosmic rays this summer from Alaska's lofty dormant volcano Mt. Wrangell.

Financed by the Office of Naval Research, the project is aimed at revealing more about the origin and nature of cosmic rays that bombard the earth from somewhere in space. The cosmic particles are believed to affect radio communications. They also are believed connected somehow with the shimmering northern lights of the Arctic.

The expedition will be led by Dr. Serge A. Korff, New York University physics professor.

Dr. Terris Moore, president of the University of Alaska, will supervise establishment of the station. Philip Bettler and Charles Wilson, both of the University of Alaska's geophysical institute, will work closely with Dr. Moore in setting up the station near Mt. Wrangell.

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HISTORICAL EARTH DAYS—View of the newly redesigned Jurassic Hall in The American Museum of Natural History showing footprints made millions of years ago by a dinosaur similar to the *Brontosaurus*.

These tracks were discovered in a river bed in Texas by Roland T. Bird.

PALEONTOLOGY

Early Days Recreated

► **A 100,000,000** years of prehistory that began over 200,000,000 years ago have been recreated and telescoped into the new Brontosaurus Hall of the American Museum of Natural History, now open to the public for the first time.

The Brontosaurus Hall, which took over a year to prepare, includes fossils of the first animals to invade the dry land, ancestors of the modern frogs and salamanders, and continues with a progressive series of fossils leading to the 66-foot long Brontosaurus, a master in the Age of Reptiles.

The amphibian fossils represent the first

of the backboned animals to crawl onto the land from the rivers and oceans. This migration occurred about 225,000,000 years ago. The giant reptiles, which arose from the amphibian ancestors in the course of evolution, dominated the earth for 100,000,000 years before their mysterious disappearance.

Brontosaurus Hall sets forth in visual terms what is known about the evolution of early land-living, backboned animals, said Dr. Edwin H. Colbert, curator of fossil reptiles and amphibians for the museum.

Science News Letter, June 6, 1953