Curtain Lifts On Dark Era's Giant Dragon

WASHINGTON (U.P.) — An armored dragon, most fearsome of beasts known to have lived on this continent, crawled down out of the Rockies to the Great Plain—35,000,000 years ago.

Records of these giant lizards, whose bodies were completely covered with bony plates which over-lapped in even rows like tiles on a roof, have been found by scientists of the Smithsonian Institution.

Appearance of the dragons on the plains probably frightened the earliest pigmy horses and camels, the institution report said. The species, related to crocodiles and snakes, is extinct now.

Specimen Nearly Complete

The most complete fossil specimen of one of these creatures yet found has been assembled from collections of the U. S. National Museum by Charles W. Gilmore, Smithsonian paleontologist. Heretofore it has been known only from a few broken specimens that gave only a fragmentary picture of what it really looked like.

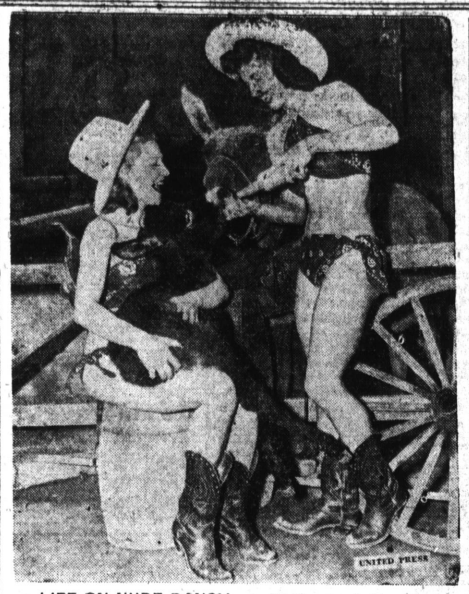
It was the "giant glyptosaurus," a member of the family of lizards which flourished and vanished in the Oligocene geological period. Its bones have been found in Colorado, Utah and Montana. Except for one questionable specimen found in France, it has never been reported outside North America.

Perhaps the living animal coming closest to it is the Gila monster of the Southwest, to whose remote ancestors it may have been distantly related. It probably depended for survival on its fearsome appearance and its unique type of bony armor, Gilmore said.

Armor Construction Unique

No other animal, living or extinct, had anything approaching this sort of protection. The tiles were laid in geometrically straight rows and each row overlapped the other about an eighth of an inch These tiles were scales turned to bone, a reverse development from their transformation into feathers in some other reptile family from which the birds rose.

But no reptile has such regularly arranged scales, nor any bird such regularly arranged feathers, Gilmore said.



LIFE ON NUDE RANCH . . . Birth of a hefty daughter to "Nudie," prized donkey of the Sally Rand nude ranch at the San Francisco world's fair created a sensation and the infant became an attraction. Two of Sally's "Nudies" help "Randy-Dandy" to breakfast.

"Trailer Vagabond" Visits Casa Grande Arizona

By WARREN BAYLEY

There were more people living in the state of Arizona when Christ was born than are living there today.

* * *

During the past 15 years, scientists at work in the Salt and Gila Valleys have laid bare the remains of an ancient civilization that are startling in their significance. In a region no larger than the average county, prehistoric Americans created a civilization and achieved some extraordinary engineering triumphs.

On a cactus-guarded desert they moved 15,000,000 cubic yards of earth and dug 230 miles of main trunk canals to divert the river water and irrigate their farms. They had no beasts of burden, their implements were the crudest imaginable, yet they built an empire which had flourished, declined and been forgotten before civilization came to northern Europe.

So long ago did this period of civilization exist that there is no knowledge of its origin. As a result its people are known to us only as the "Canal Builders." To the Indians they were known as "Ho-Ho-Kum," meaning "people who were here before."

Had Novel Calendar

Probably the most outstanding and best preserved ruins of this period are at Casa Grande, which is Spanish for "Big House." Here is located America's first "sky-scraper." It is a four-story structure, still standing 40 feet high, made of native concrete and plaster. Besides being the most picturesque remain of the Canal Builders, it is perhaps the most picturesque remains of the agreed that it was last abandoned less than 1,000 years ago.

Some say the last lingering tribes of dark-skinned farmers, starved out by drought, be-deviled by nomadic enemies, finally left the building and city it commanded just a few years before Columbus started to the new world.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this building is the calendar used by these early people. It is less detailed no doubt, however it is as accurate as anything we have in use today. Through the outer walls and through the walls of the inner room are holes, so placed in line that on every March 7 and October 7 at sunrise the sun's rays stream through the two holes to the inner room. As these holes are only an inch in diameter and the overall distance about 30 feet, these two days are the only ones that the sun's position is such that the rays line up.

To irrigate the Salt River Valley in the current century, man has had to spend millions of dollars of Federal money, has built Roosevelt and other great storage dams, has used thousands of horses, mules, trucks, cranes and steam shovels. The ancients, the "Ho-Ho-Kum", used just two things to do a similar job—man power and little stone hoes. So expertly engineered was their project that modern surveyors were able to follow the old canals for many miles.

Some years ago the ruins of America's first "sky - scraper" was created a National Monument. Over it has been built a large shelter so that future generations may see it and be humble.

"Trailer Vagabond" is sponsored and appears in this newspaper thru the courtesy of **HOWARD G. LOCKE**, fire and automobile insurance agent, 1405 Marcelina, telephone 135-M.

Local Independent Stores Report 20 Pct. Gain

Californians spent nearly 22 percent more for automobiles during April, 1939, than during April of last year, the bureau of the census reported this week in its monthly survey of independent retail stores.

Business done by independent merchants during April was on the whole only 1.2 percent higher than a year ago and no better than last March. Automobile dealers reported the largest increase, with lumber and building supplies next. Only two other business lines showed increases of more than 1.6 percent—furniture and plumbing.

Torrance stores reported a gain of 20.5 percent.

Burbank reported greatest gains with a total increase of 34.8 percent over the year period. Pittsburg was close with 30.2 percent gain. Santa Paula took the hardest drop, a loss of 28.4 percent. Anaheim, Hanford and Orange reported decreases of approximately 20 percent.

Damage Asked of City For Effects of "Flu"

SEMINOLE, Okla. (U.P.)—Mrs Addie Womack thinks the city of Seminole should pay her $5,075 damages, because, she says, it is the cause of her being susceptible to colds.

She filed a damage suit for that amount against the city, and cited the following events to "prove my claim":

Municipal workmen dug a ditch across the back lot of her home. She alleges that the workers broke a gas line running to her home and that she was without heat for 2½ days.

Mrs. Womack, 44, contends that she contracted influenza during the period the gas line was broken. This caused her, she alleges, to become susceptible to "exposure."

Junk Dealer Is Frank

KEOKUK, Ia. (U.P.)—A little thing like a jail sentence didn't discourage a Keokuk junk dealer. He advertised: "Will reopen my place of business, having completed my 60 days in our county jail. Old and new customers appreciated."