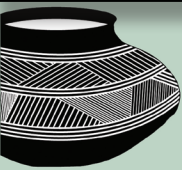


ELGIN PUBLIC MUSEUM

Of Natural History & Anthropology

COLLECTIONS

Learning Through Adventure



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Elgin Public Museum is to enhance understanding of the Natural Sciences and Anthropology through exhibits and interactive experiences.

EPM Hours

Labor Day to Memorial Day

Saturday & Sunday 12 - 4 pm

Memorial Day to Labor Day

Tuesday through Sunday 12 - 4 pm

Closed Mondays

For additional information or to register in advance for an event or program please call : 847-741-6655

Visit our website for more information at www.elginpublicmuseum.org

Our Next Exhibit **Landscapes of Mexico**



Photographic Art Exhibit on loan from the Mexican Consulate in Chicago

From the beginning of April through Memorial Day we will display some stunning photographs of Mexico's country and culture. KROW, a group of Mexican professionals, use their creativity talents to shares with us the natural beauty and the complex diversity of this country.

THE EDUCATION CORNER

JUST WHO ARE THE THREE SISTERS?

by Sara Russell



WHEN MIDWESTERNERS THINK farming, the image that comes to mind is the huge mega farm: acres and acres of one crop, usually corn, planted year after year. This type of farming is called monoculture and often relies on chemicals to keep pests at bay. Large monoculture farms produce great yields and feed larger populations. The downside? Large-scale farming contributes to environmental degradation through chemical pesticides, reduced animal diversity and top soil loss. They are more attractive to pests and blights that can destroy entire fields. Even with 250 corn species, of which there are hundreds of varieties, only a few are widely planted. In 1970, almost half of the corn crop failed due to southern leaf blight. Most

planted varieties shared a single female parent from Texas, which passed along the disease susceptible trait. And of course we can't forget the great-granddaddy of all crop failures – the 1845 Irish Potato Famine. Of the over 100 species of potatoes found in Central and South America, Europeans brought back only one.

On the other hand, companion planting, also known as inter planting, focuses on plant diversity. Planting one plant in proximity to another allows it to take advantage of the "companion plant's" benefits. For instance one plant may have insect-repelling qualities that benefits the other. Using different varieties also helps maintain diverse traits. Though not a common sight for those of us used to farms consisting of one-crop planting systems, it is a well thought out growing method used extensively in other countries and gaining some popularity on smaller farms today. Inter planting is not as attractive to pests and will not devastate a population if disease manages to take one species.

There were three sisters: the eldest standing tall with yellow hair; the second wore yellow and was eager to spread out and explore; and the youngest, dressed in green, could only crawl at first . . . These Three Sisters were corn, squash, and beans according to Iroquois legend. Corn, beans and squash are considered a gift from the Great Spirit and the well being of each crop is protected by one of the Three Sisters,

Continued on Page 4

From the Director - Margaret "Peggie" Stromberg

TIME IS FLYING BY RAPIDLY as the Museum is in its second century! Spring is definitely on its way to Lords Park, and brushing away the leaves will show the green shoots of plants and our lovely iris. Red tailed hawks are nesting in the Park, as are a lot of other birds. The fox is probably planning for her next littler of babies, as well. Animals abound in the Park, not just the obvious bison, elk and deer, but myriads of other little furry critters as well. Willow Creek trail is coming alive again, unfortunately with some wild mustard and wild garlic which will need to be removed! Come to the Park and hike the trail. We still don't know the coming status of the Children's Zoo or the hoofed animal exhibits, but Friends of the Lords Park Zoo are working with the City for the future.

In October we entertained the Consul General of France with a program here at the Museum about the LaSalle expedition. In April we will see the Consul General of Mexico. We are holding a reception at the Museum on April 9 to introduce our newest exhibit, Landscapes of Mexico. The Consul office asked us if we would like to host the exhibit and we are thrilled to do so. The reception will be at 2 on April 9. Guests will be the Consul General of Mexico, Mayor Ed Schock, Federal Judge Manuel Barbosa and Historian Mike Alft. LULAC council of Elgin is helping to host the exhibit. If you would like to join us, please RSVP at 847-741-6655 or epm@cityofelgin.org.

We are finding that attendance is down a little from last year. We hope the cold and snow hasn't forced you to stay indoors all winter. Please come visit us often this Spring and Summer. The Utilitarian to Abstract art exhibition runs through March. Landscapes of Mexico runs through May and a geology exhibit will be featured in the summer. Of course we have some exciting programs and plans underway as well, including a talk about a Viking Ship, a Native American beading workshop and other opportunities and surprises that may come along. Family Science night remains a strong attraction and if you have not brought your children or grandchildren, I hope you will come soon. As members, your admission is always free.

We are working on plans for our annual members/donor picnic which will also now be our annual meeting, an opportunity for the board to be involved and for the membership to approve the business of the board through the year. Hope to see you around the Museum soon. If there is anything you would like to see us do, please call me directly. If you have a group you would like to bring in, let us know. We are here to accommodate our members and visitors as much as we can.

EPM STAFF

Margaret "Peggie" Stromberg

Executive Director

Michael McGrath

Museum Coordinator

Sara Russell

Education Coordinator

Marge Fox

Educator

Amanda Wolf

Museum Attendant

Elizabeth O'Toole

Collections Supervisor

EPM BOARD MEMBERS

Martha Yochum

Gilbert Nore

Dwight Armistead

Mark Havemann

Clare Ollayos

Diane Ramsay Shedd

William Barnes

Don Quillman

MUSEUM GOLD

**A special THANKS to all those
who support our mission.
We couldn't do it without you!**

New and Renewed Membership

Mark & Lucy Elliott
Clare Ollayos
Gary & Dana Vierck
Paul & Carol Burkholder
Scott & Laura Teipe
William Degorski
Jerry & Kathy Turnquist
Terry Gabel & Sue Brigham
Sandy Martin
Harry Blizard
Mike Surerus
Robert & Deborah Sargent
Ron & Mary Conley
Carolyn & Robert Malm
Thomas & Karen Durkin
Ken & Jeri Barnhart
Janice Glintborg
John & Marty Yochum
Darlene Castelvechi
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Wayne & Jeanette Russell
Kidambi Vasudevan
Betty Meyer
Jack & Marlene Shales

The Elgin Public Museum is a public institution whose purpose is to enrich the lives of the people within our community. Your membership and donations are vital ingredients in the success of our mission. Because of your support and generosity we are able to present programing either free or at reasonable rates for all, in the hopes all our citizens can greater understand and appreciate the complexity of the world around them.

THANK YOU!

EPM's French Connection

LAST FALL, the Elgin Public Museum had the pleasure of hosting a reception organized by Reid Lewis welcoming Graham Paul, the new Consul General of France in Chicago. Representatives from several neighboring communities that have sister cities in France were invited. Reid is the gentleman who recruited the crew that recreated the 8 month LaSalle expedition of 1681, a 3,300 mile journey from Montreal to New Orleans. When the Museum's east wing was completed in 2000, Reid donated many of the original artifacts from his trip which now makes up the LaSalle II exhibit on the 2nd floor.

After an hour or so of socializing among the Museum's artifacts, the attendees were treated to a lecture by Richard Gross who was one of the crew members on the recreation of the expedition. Richard's talk was about what is believed to be the discovery of Le Griffon in Lake Michigan. The Griffon was a ship that LaSalle had built in the region of Niagara Falls for the purpose of carrying supplies through the Great Lakes. In 1676 it set sail from Washington Island at the tip of Door County, Wisconsin and was never seen again. If this vessel is truly the Griffon it will help build our understanding of that period in time, when European explorers first entered the North American interior. You can learn more about the progress of the excavation by going to www.lasalle-griffon.org.



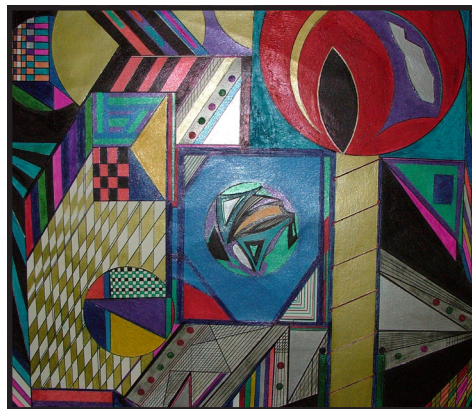
Rene-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de LaSalle at EPM

A Farewell to Abstract to Utilitarian: African American Artists in Elgin

THANKS TO THE TALENTS of Ina Dews, Ivan Mayo and Freddrick Wimms our walls were adorned with imaginative and colorful artwork the past two months. This temporary exhibit, **Abstract to Utilitarian** was supplemented by two successful events. On February 19th we held a "Meet the Artists" reception where the public had the opportunity to talk to these 3 delightful masters. We even got to meet Keenan, Freddrick's 2 year old son who has a prominent place in several of his pieces. Then on March 11th, Ina brought a dozen more of her quilts to the Museum and spent the evening talking about different styles and techniques of quilting. It was sad to take this exhibit down but another colorful display is right behind it titled: **Landscapes of Mexico**.



Keenan .6 by Freddrick Wimms



Untitled No. 37 by Ivan Mayo



YoYo Quilt by Ina Dews

WE HAVE MORE TRADITIONS THAN TOUCHING ON TRADITIONS

TOUCHING ON TRADITIONS, our yearly recognition of the diversity of cultural holidays from around the world, celebrated its 25th anniversary this past holiday season. When first presented it was located at Hemmens auditorium with just several displays. It soon grew too big for that space and had to be moved to the Lords Park Pavilion where we were able to display the cultural traditions of 62 different countries. Two years ago the exhibit moved into the Elgin Public Museum and we received many compliments as to how well it looked in the Museum setting. This past year we had about 300 people visit the exhibit and just under 40 school and scout classes sign up for educational programs.

But our traditions don't end there. We have been conducting two events for over 20 years, which are still on our schedule, and continue to draw large crowds. Natural Egg Dyeing on the Saturday before Easter was started in 1987. Even though the city decided not to conduct the Easter Egg hunt in Lords Park we still have a crowd of close to 100 come to the Museum for this annual event. Before supermarkets, pioneers used native plants for the dyeing eggs on this holiday. When a parent can entertain their children and educate them at the same time, it's a plus for all.

Another tradition is Bubblefest, what more can I say. Tons of slippery fun that has also been around for over 20 years. With tubs of water and loads of glycerin and soap it's not a program that can be done indoors. Last year it was storming out and the event had to be cancelled at the last minute. Hopefully, that won't happen again this year. Here we have another event that draws many families. There is a science behind bubbles and you can educate the kids while getting them clean. It can't get any better!



Touching on Traditions at the Museum



Moms and Dads lend a hand at Natural Egg Dyeing



Bubblefest - A kid can't have more fun than this!

3 Sisters, continued from page 1

spirits that are collectively known as De-o-ha-ko. The Iroquois use a system of companion gardening whereby the three crops are planted together in mounds, which supports the base of the plants, shielding them from wind damage. The corn stalks act as a stake for the bean vines to grow up. The beans injected nitrogen into the soil, adding extra nourishment, especially for nitrogen greedy corn. Large squash leaves provide living mulch and protection from scavenging animals.

The Iroquois are not the only native people who plant some variety of the Three Sisters, but they are perhaps the most well known. Called among themselves the Haudensosaunee, meaning "people of the longhouse," the term Iroquois was used by the French and is generally used today. Found in the northeastern region of the United States, the democratic confederacy originally consisted of five nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. The Tuscarora became the last member to join the Iroquois league in the 18th Century.

That De-o-ha-ko means "our sustainers" or "those who support us" is telling. Eaten together the Three Sisters provide essential nutrients and vitamins for a balanced diet. Corn, beans and squash were Iroquois staples for everything from puddings to soups. In addition to food, the Three Sisters also met other needs, especially corn. The stalks were used to store medicine and make toys. Husks were used for kindling, pillows, mattresses, clotheslines, bottles, baskets, sandals, door mats and dolls. The cobs were used for scrapers and container stoppers.

Are smaller companion planting led farms the solution to all the world's food problems? Probably not - picture all that weeding! The large monoculture farm is most likely here to stay. But for the at home gardener who wants to take an eco-friendly approach to growing their own food or connect with a native culture, the Three Sisters are a natural fit.

UP COMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

The Carbon Footprint of WAR

Thursday, April 7th, 6:30 pm

The Elgin Climate Change Organization will be presenting this program which examines the environmental impact of war. Its destructiveness has consequences for all life on our planet.

ECCO's monthly meeting is Free and open to the public.

Natural Egg Dyeing

Saturday, April 23rd, 12 - 2 pm

Come to Lords Park for a GREAT Easter experience We use a variety of natural dyes such as onion skins, Turmeric, beets, blueberries and much more. This technique comes from Native American and Pioneer days when chemical dyes and food coloring were not available. Use modern techniques such as crayons and rubber bands to complete amazing designs! Explore the Museum while the eggs are dyeing. Recipes for the dyes are provided so you can try natural egg dyeing at home. No registration required.

\$2 Gets You 2 Eggs to Dye

Chicago's Viking Ship

Friday, May 6th, 7 pm

In 1893, a Viking ship sailed from Norway to Chicago for the World's Columbian Exposition. This ship was a replica of the famous Gokstad ship that sailed North Atlantic around 800 AD. Hear about the story of the daring voyage in 1893 and the recent preservation efforts after being moved from Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago by the "Friends of the Viking Ship," presented by Lorraine Straw. The ship is now at Good Templar Park in Geneva, IL.

**Admission \$6, Members \$4
Reservations Required.**

F - Family Program

Science Night Schedule

Our monthly hands-on education experiences for children.

Earth Day

Friday, April 15th, 6-8 pm

Join us for a night of experimentation and fun as we look into the science of protecting our planet. Discover how the natural world heals itself – how we can take clues from wetlands and forests to make the Earth a better place. Different stations will be set up around the Museum for kids and their parents to conduct experiments, experience demonstrations and partake in discussions about this month's topic.

Mammals

Friday, May 20th, 6-8 pm

Curious about the natural world around you? Bring your family to Elgin Public Museum's Science Night! Different stations will be set up around the museum for kids and their parents to conduct experiments, experience demonstrations and partake in discussions about this month's topic: Mammals! See the website for more details.

\$2 per person and another FREE program for EPM members
Science Nights are Drop-In Programs so no registration is required.

Bison Feeding Schedule

You have no idea how big and impressive these creatures are until you're nose to nose with them. April 30th, May 28th and June 25th. **Programs start with an introduction at the Museum at 7 AM**

**\$2 per person, \$5 per family
EPM members FREE
Reservations Required**

A - Adult Program

3 Sisters Garden

Saturday May 28th, 2 - 3 pm

Elgin Community Garden Network and Elgin Public Museum invite you to enjoy the Spring season by planting a Three Sisters Garden.

Native Americans were the original companion gardeners, realizing that placing certain plants closely created better results. Corn, beans and squash – the Three Sisters – thrived when planted together. Discover the people who used this method of farming, their legends behind the Three Sisters, and the natural history of the plants.

Then take up a trowel and help us create a Three Sisters Garden for everyone to enjoy!

Please contact the Museum for reservations and cost.

Bubblefest

Saturday June 4th, 12 - 2 pm

For over 20 years the Elgin Public Museum is hosting a Bubblefest party. Make a bubble blower, shake hands in a bubble, stand in a bubble, and make your own bubble art. Museum staff will guide you in fun bubble activities. Learn how to make some of your own bubbles for home fun too! This event will take place outdoors, so please dress for the weather.

**This is a Drop-In event.
Admission is \$2 per person**

Make sure you're kept informed about upcoming events and programs. We send out emails as reminders as to what's going on at the Museum. To get on that list email me at mike_epm@cityofelgin.org

Continue to check our website for the latest in *Learning Through Adventure.*

www.elginpublicmuseum.org

Chicago's Viking Ship: an endangered historic treasure.

by Michael McGrath

ON FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 6TH, Lorraine Straw from **Friends of the Viking Ship** will be here presenting an adult lecture seeped in Chicago's history and the means of transportation the first Europeans used in discovering the continent we presently occupy.

In 1893, Chicago was the host city for the World's Columbian Exposition. For this country, the purpose was to showcase America's progress, and to peek at its future on the 400 year anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the America. Yet even though Christopher Columbus gets most of the glory for the discovery of this continent, it was the Norsemen who first set foot on North American soil.

One of Norway's contributions for the exposition was a replica of an 7th century Viking vessel. In 1892 they constructed a hand-built replica of the Gokstad ship. The Gokstad was discovered and excavated near the town of Gokstad, Norway, in 1880 and dates back to 800 AD. This replica was sailed from Norway to New York City and then to Chicago via the Erie Canal and Great Lakes. After its presentation at the exposition, where it was a big hit, it was moved from Jackson Park to Lincoln Park Zoo in 1919, where it remained until 1994.

800 AD was a time when the Viking's civilization dominated most of Europe, or terrorized depending on your point of view, most of Europe. Master shipbuilders, merchants, raiders, warriors, artisans and their culture has a rich and fascinating history that still intrigues us today. During that period in time, for a boy to be worth anything in life, he must have been a warrior willing to accept all hardships and even sacrifice his life for their way of life. Viking religion, myths, and folklore cultivated this passion from birth.

I myself grew up on the northwest side of the city and remember, as a child in the 50's viewing this ship under a canopy enclosed by a chain link fence at the zoo. But alas, a 9 year old can't appreciate the significance of history. Today I ask myself, how much courage would it take to set off in a ship like this, for months on end in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic. And I am intrigued to understand what could possibly motivate these men to undertake such a perilous journey?

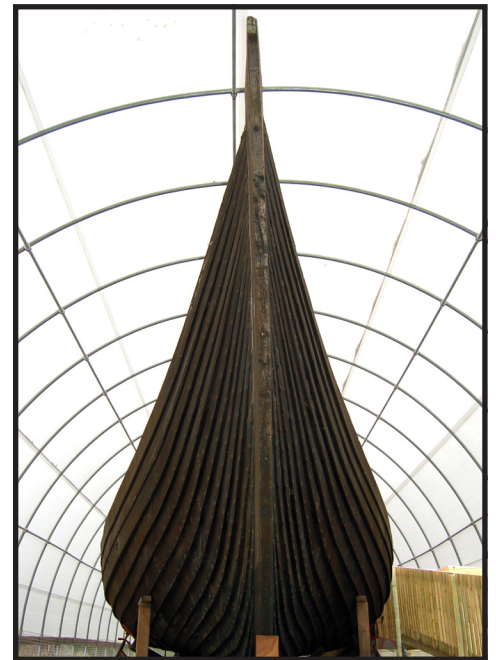
Mother Nature takes her toll on everything, especially organic matter like wood (not only on us). This Viking ship was not an exception. If we treasure something as an important educational link of our past, rather than turning it into fireplace kindling, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication. There are many organizations who think this effort to preserve historic objects



The Gokstad ship under cover in Good Templar Park, Geneva



The Gokstad entering New Your Harbor in 1893



The Gokstad ship restoration project.

is important. Because of their determination, this vessel from the past is now being restored to its former glory and is currently located at the Good Templar Park in Geneva.

Lorraine Shaw will be here at the Museum to tell us about this relic's past history and the efforts to keep it preserved for future generations.

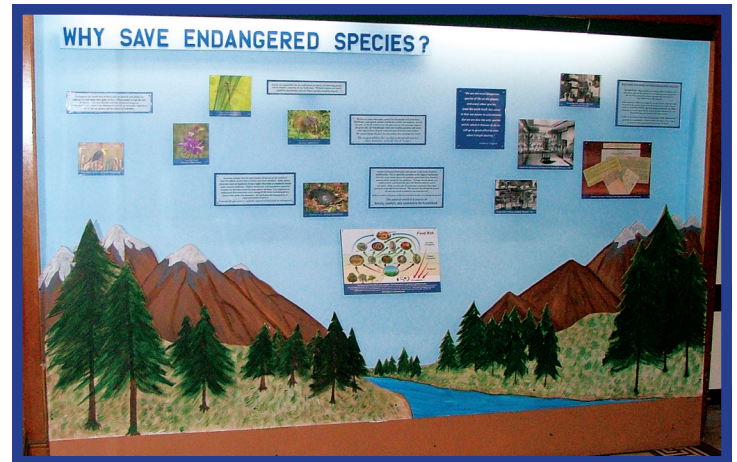
This is just one of the many programs we have lined up this coming year to stimulate the curious mind.

A MUSEUM EXHIBIT FACELIFT ENDANGERED SPECIES

by Michael McGrath



Exhibit as it looked for the past 15 plus years



Today's Endangered wall on the 2nd floor

WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING A BEATING, the planet we live on is very resilient, or so it seems. Yet, we must continually ask ourselves, how healthy is our home? What are the warnings that we might have trouble brewing? A century ago, coal miners took canaries into mines with them. Canaries are very sensitive to poisonous gases, and if the canary died it was an indication that there was a danger. If a miner ignored this sign he would most likely suffer life threatening consequences. So when we see thousands of species on our planet, our home, going extinct every year: insects, amphibians, birds, fish, plants, do you think this is an indication that there is a danger lying in wait for us. Is the environment we depend on for our survival deteriorating? And we must ask the tough question: Are our actions causing these problems?

The green sky is now blue, the line drawings are now replaced with images of locally threatened species, the text panels are more relevant to our present situation, and archival pictures tell a better story of where we've been. We're attempting to get things more up to date. Yet the basic message remains the same. The health of all other life on this planet has a direct affect on *your* health and well being, and that of our children and grandchildren. We must take responsibility.

I would like to thank Joanne Ehert for her creative graphic talents in creating the Food Web diagram and the revisions she did on the turn of the century articles in the exhibit. Next time you're here make sure to stroll up to the 2nd floor and take a look. And we love feedback, both positive and negative. After all, this is your museum.

As I was examining ways to improve our Endangered Species exhibit and make it more attractive and relevant, I came across this quote by Wallace Stegner (historian and Pulitzer prize winning novelist) and could not get it out of my mind. The power and compassion of the human species in its relationship to the rest of the world laid out in a two sentences.

"We are the most dangerous species of life on the planet, and every other species, even the earth itself, has cause to fear our power to exterminate. But we are also the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy."

AND MORE

We've updated a couple of more labels in this area of the museum. The tragic history of the Passenger Pigeon and the success story of the Double Crested Cormorant are told. These are 2 completely different stories about our power to exterminate and what we are capable of doing if we so choose. On the next page I've attached a little piece on tragedy of the Passenger Pigeon. I'd also like to recommend

a book I just finished reading about the plight of the American Bison. The book is *Last Stand: George Bird Grinnell, the Battle to Save the Buffalo and the Birth of the New West*, by Michael Punke. It explains this country's expansion westward during the 1800's, historic consequences for Native Americans, and the slaughter of the bison. It also deals with the growing pains we had in the development of our first National Park. A well annotated account of Western American history. Highly Recommended.

Lessons of the Passenger Pigeon

This country's most tragic story of the destructive effects of uncontrolled hunting and habitat loss is not the story of the American Bison.

On the second floor of the Elgin Public Museum is a specimen of a bird whose population was estimated to be 5 billion strong in the year 1800. At that time, the Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), may have accounted for 40% of all the birds in North America. 100 years later, the last wild Passenger pigeon was shot in Ohio.

The very last individual, a bird named *Martha*, died in the Cincinnati Zoo at 1:00 pm, on September 1, 1914. At that time it was the only instance in history we knew the exact date and time when a species became extinct. Sadly, since then, there have been way too many more instances.

In order to comprehend how a large a number 5 billion is, let's pretend you had a job counting pigeons. Let's say that you could count 2 pigeons per second. At your job as a pigeon counter, you would perform your duty 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year (Sorry, but pigeon counters don't take vacations). In order to complete counting 5 billion pigeons this year, 2011, you would have had to begun counting in the year 1676, 5 years before LaSalle encountered the Illiniwek as depicted in our LaSalle Expedition II exhibit on the second floor!

How could this happen? The bird's survival strategy relied on immense numbers of individuals and an ability to fly great distances in very short periods of time. A majority of the population was concentrated in about half a dozen flocks. They were marathon flyers, capable of speeds in excess of 60 miles per hour for hours on end. A flock of several hundred million could be seen feeding in northern Michigan one day and be in the middle of Ohio the next day.

In the early 1800's there were accounts by many eyewitnesses of the stunning sight of millions of birds passing overhead in flocks 1 mile wide and 300 miles long. Even John James Audubon, on a trip in 1813 wrote *"the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse...the pigeons passed in undiminished numbers and continued to do so for 3 days."*

Flocks flew in search of beechnuts, acorns, chestnuts, seeds and berries, found in the vast hardwood forests that blanketed the country east of the prairies. Because they were constantly on the move (the scientific name, *Ectopistes*, translates as wanderer) there was no local predator population that impacted Passenger pigeon numbers. Even man had little effect until the western expansion of the railroads and telegraph. Communicating where the pigeons could be found plus a means of transporting them to the ever-growing cities on the east coast allowed professional hunters to exploit this seemingly inexhaustible food source. However, because the pigeon raises only one offspring per year, it did not take long for this slaughter to have an effect on the population size. Another major cause of the pigeons' demise was the clearing of the forest for farmland, which eliminated the pigeon's food supplies and nesting sites.

With billions of Passenger pigeons, the mindset of the American people in the mid 19th century was that it would be impossible for hunting to have any effect on this unlimited natural resource. This mindset is still prevalent in society today in many areas concerning our natural environment. Visit the museum and take a close look at what was possibly the grandest species of bird that ever graced the North American skies. Carefully consider the lessons it can teach us.

Excerpt from *On a Monument to the Pigeon* by Aldo Leopold (1947)

Men still live who, in their youth remember pigeons: trees still live that, in their youth, were shaken by a living wind. But a few decades hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know. We grieve because no living man will ever see again the onrush of victorious birds, sweeping a path for spring across the March skies, chasing the defeated winter from all of the woods and prairies. There will always be pigeons in books and in museums but they are dead to all hardships and to all delights. They cannot dive out of a cloud, nor clap their wings in thunderous applause. They know no urge of seasons; they feel no kiss of sun, no lash of wind and weather, they live forever but not living at all.