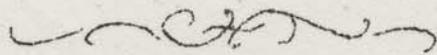


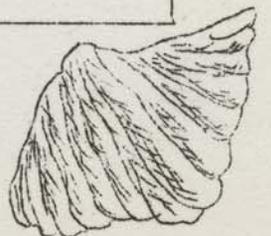


FOSSIL

TRAILS



*Miracles of design  
Limestone Tokens of the past*



## INTRODUCTION TO FOSSIL OR GEOLOGICAL TRAIL

The embedded fossils tell a story of a long upward struggle toward higher types of life, from shells of the sea to low land forms of plant and animal life.

A fossil must be some kind of organic remains or impressions of the same preserved from the geological past by burial in the Earth's crust. Preservation and antiquity must be evident according to Prof. Schuchert. Even the frozen carcasses of the woolly mammoths of Russia from the ice age may be considered a fossil as well as the bones of a mastodon that is buried under the basement of a residence near the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Fossils may be formed from bones and shells. 1) By infiltrating mineral into the pores of the original. 2) By dissolving the original and replacing with another mineral, such as petrified wood. 3) By distilling part of the original but leaving a remnant of carbon to give the form of the object. This form or mold may be filled by some mineral, generally quartz, forming casts or imprints.

### FOSSIL TRAILS

#### Geological and Fossil Trails:

It is upon these trails that we may find the earth's autobiography. These rocks can be as enthralling as a novel if we but know how to read them. The fossils are life stories sealed up in the past ages.

It is these fossils that give the archeologist the order of the strata.

Probably some chart (illustrated) of the three periods containing fossils i.e. Cenozoic, giving the man and mammal fossils.  
Mesozoic, giving the reptile fossils.  
Palaeozoic, giving the amphibians, fish and invertebrates as fossils, could be placed upon the bulletin board.

The geological trails may have rocks of water or heat or water and heat formation. If possible, one of each type should be found and labelled. Then if the variations of a few of the most common ones could be explained and named, again, it might inspire more thought and study along the trail.

First a scale of hardness, illustrated by rocks beginning with chalk and ending with diamond, should be placed on the master sign. Then every one could equip themselves with a few simple devices to ascertain the kind of rock by hardness.

#### Activities for Geological and Fossil Trails

1. The common kinds of rocks can be exhibited and labelled at the entrance of the trail and at the exit of the trail, there can be some questions which if answered correctly, would demonstrate an interest started.

2. If layers of rock are exposed and the trail marker has the knowledge of origin and formation, labels should be placed on each strata.

3. Everyone is enthusiastic about the beauty of rocks and stones and even petrified wood. If tools for cutting and polishing are obtainable, there is a great deal of satisfaction derived from the skill of a lapidist.

4. Working with the metals such as hammering brass and copper, the sawing of silver and aluminum into many articles of use and beauty affords a real recreational activity.

5. Cast of fossils are made from plaster-of-paris. They often have to be made for a missing link when mounting a fossil animal. The interesting story of the German professor in 1700 who believed the casts made by his students were real fossils, is told in the January, 1938, Nature magazine under the name of "Lying Fossils." Some of the humor of this situation might be put on a label near the real and man-made kind.