

JOHN KANERVA



DINOSAUR MAN

BY

WAYNE ROOKE

AIB

1974

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**by**

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## • INTRODUCTION •

JOHN KANERVA IS A MAN WHO HAD A DREAM. MORE IMPORTANT, HE HAD THE IMAGINATION, COURAGE, AND DETERMINATION TO FULFILL HIS DREAM. BY DOING SO, HE MADE THE WORLD A LITTLE BIT NICER.

THIS IS THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO CARES. HE CARES ABOUT THE WORLD, HE CARES ABOUT GIVING PEOPLE JOY, AND HE CARES ABOUT BEAUTY.

THIS KIND OF INDIVIDUAL DESERVES RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY. HERE, THEN IS THE STORY OF THE MAN, HIS DREAM, AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS DREAM.



# JOHN KANERVA

JOHN KANERVA WAS BORN IN 1882 IN FINLAND. HE WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN ART, AND AS A YOUNG MAN JOHN FOUND WORK PAINTING THEATRICAL BACKDROPS. HE ALSO HAD A TALENT FOR PAINTING AND WOODCARVING. AS KANERVA HIMSELF SAYS, " I DON'T CARVE THE ANIMALS; I SIMPLY REMOVE THE WOOD THAT DOES NOT BELONG." THESE WERE TALENTS THAT WOULD LATER BE PUT TO GOOD USE LATER.

' IN 1912 KANERVA IMMIGRATED TO NORTH AMERICA, STAYING FOR A SHORT TIME IN THE U.S. ( WE, IN CALGARY, ARE REALLY VERY FORTUNATE, AS JOHN CONTEMPLATED GOING TO INDIA. HOWEVER, HE TOOK A LIKING TO THE AIR AND SOIL OF CALGARY.)

KANERVA'S FIRST JOB IN CALGARY WAS PAINTING PASSENGER CARS BY HAND. HE RECEIVED \$25 FOR EACH CAR, WHICH TOOK 3 DAYS TO COMPLETE

KANERVA THEN WENT TO WORK FOR THE CALGARY ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY. HE PAINTED MURALS AND CARVED ANIMAL REPLICAS FOR THE ZOO UNTIL 1928.

KANERVA HAS BEEN A RESIDENT OF CALGARY FOR THE PAST 60 YEARS. HE IS 92 NOW AND SHARES A SMALL ROOM AT THE BOWVIEW NURSING HOMES.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS MOMENTOS FROM JOHN'S COLORFUL PAST, INCLUDING SOME OF THE EARLY

DINOSAUR MODELS AND A PLAQUE HONORING HIM FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ZOO.

JOHN KANERVA IS A QUIET, HUMBLE MAN YET FIERCELY PROUD OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HIS HANDSHAKE IS STILL WARM AND STRONG. HE READILY AGREED TO A SHORT INTERVIEW.

QUESTION: HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW, SIR?

ANSWER: 92 YEARS OF AGE.

Q: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE CALGARY YOUR HOME AFTER LEAVING FINLAND?

A: I WAS GOING TO INDIA, BUT I LIKE AIR AND SOIL (MR. KANERVA APOLOGIZED FOR NOT BEING VERY GOOD WITH ENGLISH. HE STILL HAS A NOTICABLE ACCENT)

Q: I'D LIKE TALK ABOUT THE DINOSAURS YOU BUILT FOR THE ZOO. HOW LONG DID YOU WORK ON THE DINOSAURS?

A: THREE YEARS. MY SONS HELP ME TOO. I SAY THIS COST TOOMUCH. BUT DR. PATRICK (THE LATE O.H. PATRICK, THEN PRESIDENT OF THE ZOO). HE GOOD MAN. HE SAY DON'T WORRY ABOUT MONEY, JUST YOU BUILD.

Q: DO YOU HAVE A SECRET FOOLPROOF FORMULA FOR YOUR CEMENT?

A: NO,NO, NOT REALLY. THE SUCCESS IS IN MIXING. WELL, I NOT TELL ANYONE. YOU THE FIRST MAN I TELL; BUT YOU MUST NOT TELL EVERYONE. I STUDY THE AIR. IF THE AIR IS DRY I ADD A LITTLE SALT WITH A SPECIAL MIXTURE TO CEMENT; IF NOT I DO NOTHING. I JUST THROW HANDFUL IN.

Q: DO YOU STILL SMOKE YOUR DAILY CIGAR?

A: WELL, NO, OH MAYBE THE ODD ONE

Q: TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR LONGEVITY,  
-ER- YOUR LONG LIFE?

A: HARD WORK. I ALWAYS WORK VERY HARD.



JOHN TODAY AT HOME IN BOWVIEW NURSING HOME. HE HOLDS ONE OF HIS MODELS, WHILE "DINNY" LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER.





**DINOSAUR CREATOR THANKED.** Grade 1 students of Terrace Road School in Montgomery visited the Calgary Zoo one day last month and were so impressed by the dinosaurs, they wanted to tell creator John Kanerva, 91. The children made a book of thank-you letters

and pictures of things they saw at the zoo then presented their work to Mr. Kanerva, left, at the Bowview Nursing Home. Teacher Mary Tims and students Michael Harvey, 6, and Dale Erlen, 6, discuss the book with Mr. Kanerva.

**MORE RECOGNITION FOR JOHN KANERVA.**

**THE CALGARY HERALD**  
**FRIDAY DEC. 20, 1974.**



# JOHN KANERVA

## Master Builder

No story on prehistoric life in the Calgary Zoo would be complete without a large tip of Dinny's hat to John Kanerva, without whose vision and dedication Dinny and his buddies would probably not exist today.

Mr. Kanerva has resided in Alberta for 50 years and was born 30 years before that in Finland. He had always enjoyed an artistic

hand and throughout his life has occupied his private time carving animal replicas and painting natural scenes. But as he puts it, "I don't carve the figures; I only take away from the wood the material that doesn't belong."

In the late 20's interest in the excavations of "Dinosaur Valley", the Red Deer River

Valley, was high. Some of the Zoological Society directors began to question why these bones and skeletons being unearthed so near to Calgary could not be converted in concept into the real thing. In 1931, one of our directors returned from Hagenbeck Park, Hamburg, Germany, with miniature dinosaur models and specifications on how to build concrete creatures.

The Dominion Government loaned the services of Dr. Charles M. Sternberg of Geological Surveys to assist in the design of life-sized specimens. He was joined by Dr. L. Russell, Dr. Barnum Brown and by the renowned sculptor Charlie Bell. The latter designed and made models to be expanded to life-size design by another Finn, Arne Koskeleinen. John Kanerva came into the picture with the task of turning the designs into real life productions, which he did so admirably.

As time went along, John Kanerva assumed more of the responsibility for the design of the models as well as their conversion into the life-sized replicas and indeed there is considerable merit in the suggestion that the dinosaur area be named "The Kanerva Park".

Today he no longer takes up his knife and his paint brush. In fact, it has been over 5 years since he has created one of his works of art. But his memory of his contributions to our culture as strong; so is his modesty.

And the inspiration which he demonstrated is a living legacy for all of us who would seek to emulate his good works. Truly John Kanerva is a master builder!

# THE MAKING OF A DREAM

JOHN KANERVA EXPERIENCED SOMETHING, IN 1928, THAT WOULD CHANGE HIS LIFE FOREVER. HE WENT TO SEE A MOVIE CALLED "THE LOST WORLD". THE MOVIE DEALT WITH THE PREHISTORIC WORLD WHEN GIANT MONSTERS OR DINOSAURS ROAMED THE EARTH.

JOHN WAS SO CAPTIVATED BY THE MOVIE AND THE FANTASTIC CREATURES DEPICTED, THAT HE WISHED TO DO MANY CARVINGS OF DINOSAURS. HE BEGAN TO RESEARCH THESE GREAT BEASTS AND EVENTUALLY A GREATER IDEA EVOLVED.

KANERVA MADE STUDIES INCLUDING NUMEROUS SKETCHES AND MODEL CARVINGS, UNTIL HE WAS CONVINCED THAT LIFE-SIZE REPLICAS OF THE DINOSAURS COULD BE BUILT.

JOHN TOOK HIS IDEA TO THE ZOO ADMINISTRATION AND WITH THE HEARTY SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, DR. O.H. PATRICK, HE BEGAN TO BUILD HIS DREAM.

THIS WAS NOT TO BE AN EASY TASK AND IT WAS TO BE 3 LONG YEARS BEFORE 50 GIANT MONSTERS WERE READY TO INHABIT ST. GEORGES ISLAND, THE SITE OF THE CALGARY ZOO. THESE YEARS WERE FILLED WITH HARD WORK; YET

KANERVA WORKED FOR AS LITTLE AS 50¢ AN HOUR. HIS SON HELPED MIX CEMENT FOR NOTHING.

TO UNDERSTAND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE GOAL HE SET FOR HIMSELF, WE SHOULD NOTE SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS.

DINNY, THE GIANT BRONTOSAURUS THAT RULES OVER THE PARK, WAS THE REPLICA THAT WAS TO BECOME MOST POPULAR AND MASCOT OF THE ZOO. DINNY WAS ALSO THE FIRST REPLICA TO BE CONSTRUCTED, AND IT TOOK 6 MEN 5 WEEKS IN 1934. A REAL BRONTOSAURUS WOULD WEIGH 65 TONS AND EVEN THOUGH DINNY IS HOLLOW, HE WEIGHS 120 TONS! HE COST \$3,500. THEN AND WOULD COST AN ESTIMATED 50,000. TODAY.



*"DINNY"*  
32 FEET HIGH,  
107 FEET LONG.

To demonstrate the complexity of the task, Mr. Kanerva reports that it took 6 men 5 weeks to construct the hollow concrete Dinny in 1934, the first of the more than 100 specimens. The cost of \$3,500.00 then, for the one exhibit, would probably exceed \$50,000.00 today. Indeed, the collection is one of the most valuable assets of the Calgary Zoological Society. Incidentally, Dinny only weighs 120 tons, 55 tons more than the real brontosaurus.

# CONSTRUCTION

ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION INVOLVED A COMPLEX PROCESS TO ENSURE THE REPLICAS WERE AS AUTHENTIC AND REALISTIC AS POSSIBLE:

The pattern of the construction of our collection is as follows:

1. After the bones were excavated, they were classified and placed in position.
2. A scale model was then designed and built. Such models are usually about 1 to 2 feet in length, much as the ones in the photo of Mr. Kanerva at the commencement of this article.
3. A suitable location was selected and staked out to mark the position of legs, and tail.
4. Concrete footings were then poured

with reinforcing steel throughout and protruding in order to anchor the animal.

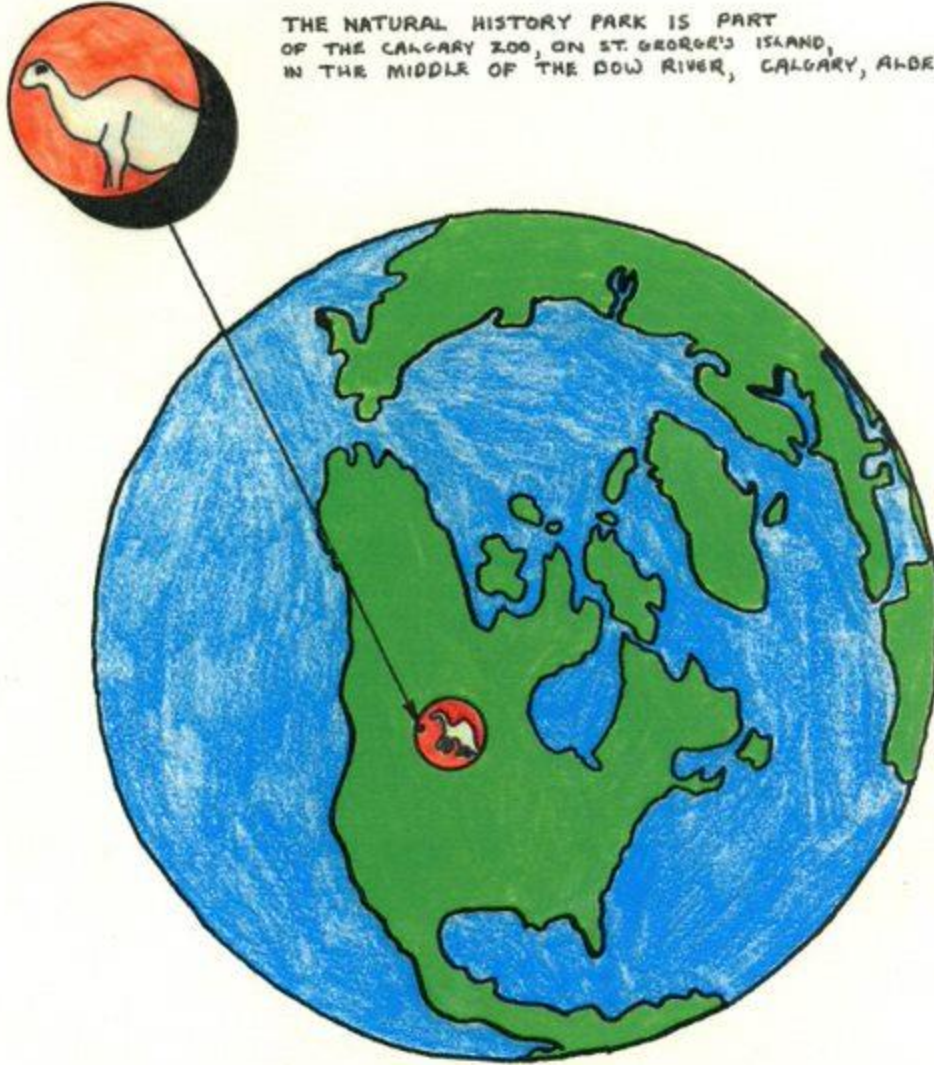
5. More steel rods were then added above ground to create the general line of the creature.
6. Metal lath was attached to these rods to give a more definite shape to it.
7. Concrete was then poured and moulded around the lath to give the correct shape and detail.
8. The facial features and muscular development was then added, much as a contractor would parge a wall.
9. Based upon the best available advice, colours were then selected and the specimen was painted.

Today the process of repainting our collection is certainly a bi-annual one, and in some cases annual, in order to keep the beasts "spruced-up".



# CALGARY THE NATURAL HISTORY PARK

THE NATURAL HISTORY PARK IS PART OF THE CALGARY ZOO, ON ST. GEORGE'S ISLAND, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOW RIVER, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA.



## A Beautiful and Educational Park

Calgary is justly famous for its beautiful floral parks and natural beauty spots, and of these St. George's Island Park seems to be the most popular with the public. Situated on the confluence of the Elbow and turbulent Bow rivers, it is a constant attraction for thousands of people each year.

On entering this unique park, one is immediately impressed by the grandeur of the stately old trees and the life-sized models of Dinosaurs surrounding the "Fossil Houses". The Zoo is of course an endless source of delight to adults and children, with its many and varied specimens of wild life, from the mighty king of the beasts to the meek white mouse.



As the visitor wanders through the "dead exhibits" part of the Zoo grounds, he will encounter such items as Saltopsuchu, Triassocheley, Ptilodus, Allosaurus, Merychippus, Pachyrinosaurus, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Gorgosaurus, Paleoscincus, and many other equally unpronounceable names, but all with a record of having played their parts in the evolution of this planet's living things. The massive undertaking of the design and construction of all of these has to be seen to be recognized. And much of this goes to the credit of Mr. Kanerva.



Credit for these models is due to many people, but no few notes on this unique exhibit would be complete without mention of:

Dr. C. M. Sternberg, National Museum, Ottawa, one of the world's outstanding Paleontologists.

Dr. Barnum Brown, of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Dr. L. S. Russell, Curator, Toronto Museum.

Dr. W. E. Swinton, British Museum.

Dr. Charles Gilmore of the U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Charles Biel, Banff, Alberta.

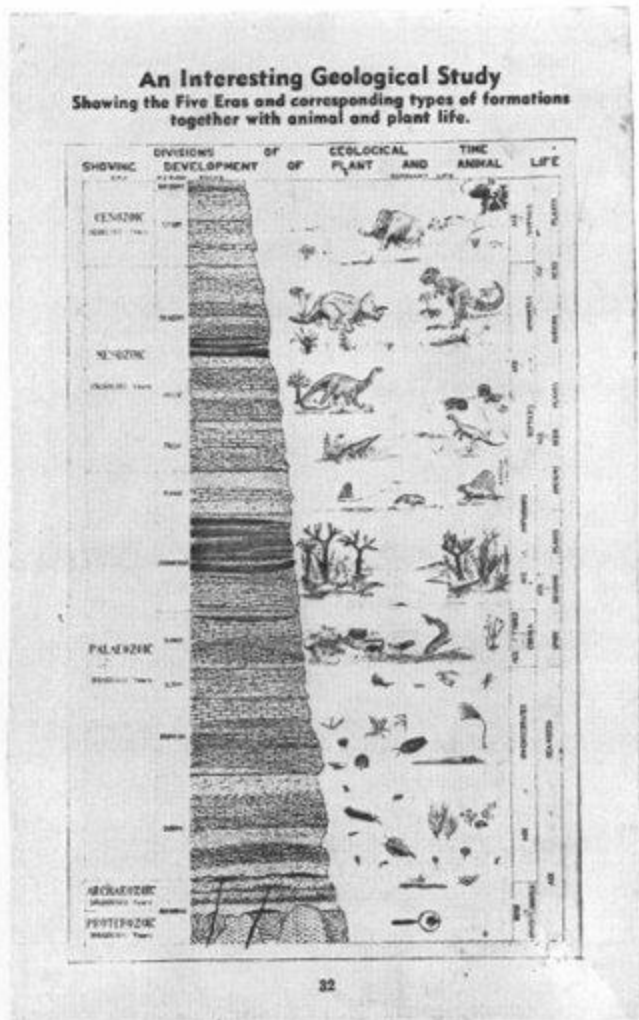
Mr. John Kanerva, of Calgary, was responsible for the construction of the life-size models.

DR. O.H. PATRICK, PRESIDENT-ZOO

DEDICATION PLAQUE INSIDE  
THE PARK ENTRANCE.



## THE ERAS OF THE PARK'S DINOSAURS (GEOLOGICAL)





**Life Size Models of Dinosaur and Other  
Extinct Animals in St. George's Island Park  
Natural History Park.**

**PRIMITIVE REPTILES**

**PERMIAN (190 to 225 million years ago)**

1. **SEYMOURIA** (See-MOOR-e-ya)—Known range\* Red Beds of Texas. This animal is the "grand father" of reptile life. It is intermediate between the amphibians and reptiles.
2. **DIADECTES** (dye-a-DEKT-eez)—Known range North America. Weight 400 pounds, length 6 feet. Plant eater.
3. **EDAPHOSAURUS** (e-daf-o-SAWR-us)—Known range Canada and U. S. A. Plant eater, weight 400 pounds, length 6 feet.
4. **DIMETRODON** (dye-MET-ro-don)—Known range Southern U.S.A. Weight 800 pounds, length 9 feet, height 3 feet. Food habits omnivorous. Name recalls the creature's type of teeth, long tusks in front, short cutting teeth behind. Sail on back.

**TRIASSIC (155 to 190 million years ago)**

5. **SALTOPOSUCHUS** (sal-to-po-SOOK-us)—Europe. From this type of animal all dinosaurs developed.
6. **TRIASSOCHELYS** (try-as-o-KEEL-is)—Known range Europe. One of the first true turtles.

**JURASSIC (120 to 155 million years ago)**

7. **BRONTOSAURUS** (bront-o-SAWR-us)—North American. One of largest dinosaurs to 80 feet in length, plant eater, marsh dweller.
8. **HYSILOPHODON** (hips-i-LOF-o-don)—Europe, a dinosaur with feet adapted for grasping branches and climbing trees.
9. **COMPSOGNATHUS** (comp-sog-NATH-us)—Europe, a dinosaur of graceful build, carnivorous, lived on small reptiles.

\* Range—Range given does not mean that the animal did not exist elsewhere. It gives the locality where the skeleton has been found.



10. **CERATOSAURUS** (ser-at-a-SAWR-us)—North America, carnivorous dinosaur. One of the striking features of this animal is the prominent horn-core over the nasals. Was first described by Marsh in 1884.

11. **ALLOSAURUS** (al-lo-SAWR-us)—North America, meat-eating dinosaur, most fierce of Jurassic age.

12. **STEGOSAURUS** (steg-o-SAWR-us)—North America, a dinosaur as large as an elephant but with a brain the size of a walnut.

**CRETACEOUS (70 to 120 million years ago)**

13. **PROTOSERATOPS** (prot-o-SER-at-ops)—Asia. The first of the "horned" dinosaurs. Skeletons have been found with their nests of eggs, a plant eater.

14. **THECELOSAURUS** (the-sei-o-SAWR-us)—North American. Plant-eating dinosaurs.

15. **CHASMOSAURUS** (kas-mo-SAWR-us)—North American. A plant eating "horned" dinosaurs.

16. **CORYTHOSAURUS** (kor-ith-o-SAWR-us)—North America. Another "duck-billed" dinosaur which spent much time in the water. The crest on the head contains a "S" shaped nasal passage forming an air storage chamber.

17. **PALEOSCINCUS** (pale-o-o-SKINK-us)—North America. The most completely armoured of all known dinosaurs. The "tank" of Cretaceous times.

18. **PARASAUROLOPHUS** (par-a-SAWR-AH-lof-us)—North America. Plant-eating dinosaurs. This animal spent much time in the water. The high crest above the head is a greatly elongate nasal passage forming an air-storage chamber.

19. **PACHYRINOSAURUS** (paki-ri-no-SAWR-us)—North America. Plant-eating dinosaur.

20. **STYRACOSAURUS** (sty-rak-o-SAWR-us)—North America. One of the "horned" dinosaurs. This is an example of the elaborate skulls of some of the "horned" dinosaurs.

21. **GORGOSAURUS** (gor-go-SAWR-us)—North America. Meat-eating dinosaur. One of the mighty hunters of the Cretaceous age.

**MAMMALS**

**EOCENE (50 million years ago)**

22. **EOHIPPIUS**—North America—"Dawn horse", the four-toed ancestor of modern horses.

23. **UINTATHERIUM**—Herbivorous mammal, very small brain. The largest animal of its time.

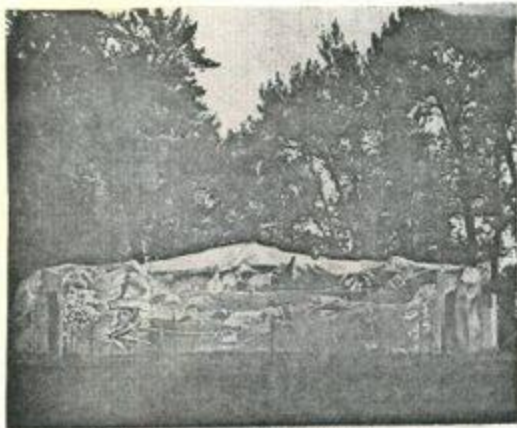
- OLIGOCENE** (40 million years ago)
24. **MESOHIPPUS**—North America—early three-toed horse, but much advanced over Eohippus.
25. **BRONOTOPS** (a Titanotheres) North America. 8 feet high. Largest land animal of its time.
26. **TITANOTHERIUM**—North America. Plant Eaters. These animals died out rapidly in middle Oligocene time.
27. **MASTEDON**—U. S. and Europe. Gave rise to true elephants from Oligocene to Pleistocene.

- MIOCENE** (30 million years ago)
28. **MERYCHIPPUS**—North America. Late Miocene, horse. Still retained three toes but only used one for walking, with two dangling at the side.

- PLIOCENE** (15 million years ago)
29. **PLIOHIPPIUS**—North America. Pliocene. First one-toed horse.
30. **AMEBELEDON**—North America. Pliocene. Lower jaws to 6½ feet long.

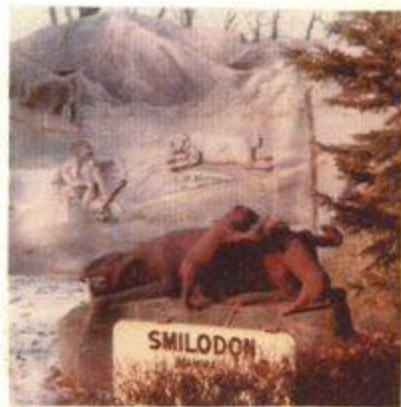
- PLEISTOCENE** (2 million years ago)
31. **AGROTHERIUM**—North America. Pleistocene.
32. **SABERTOOTH TIGER (SMILODON)**—Pleistocene. North America.

WITHIN THE NATURAL HISTORY PARK THERE ARE ALSO 2 FOSSIL HOUSES WHICH CONTAIN FOSSILS, CHARTS, ROCK SAMPLES, PATRIPIED ROCK AND STORIES. THESE HOUSES SERVE AS INTERESTING BACKDROPS TO KANERVA'S ANIMALS AND ARE VALUABLE HISTORICAL DISPLAYS AS WELL.



Mural on No. 1 Fossil House.

1.



Fossil House No. 1 contains an almost complete skeleton of a duck-billed Dinosaur. This skeleton was unearthed by Charles Sternberg, noted paleontologist of the National Museum, Ottawa. There are numerous bones of various Dinosaurs as well as exhibits of fossilized fish and plant life. The background is painted to show the formations in the Red Deer Valley where dinosaur remains are found.



**This Fossil House demonstrates the five eras of life.**

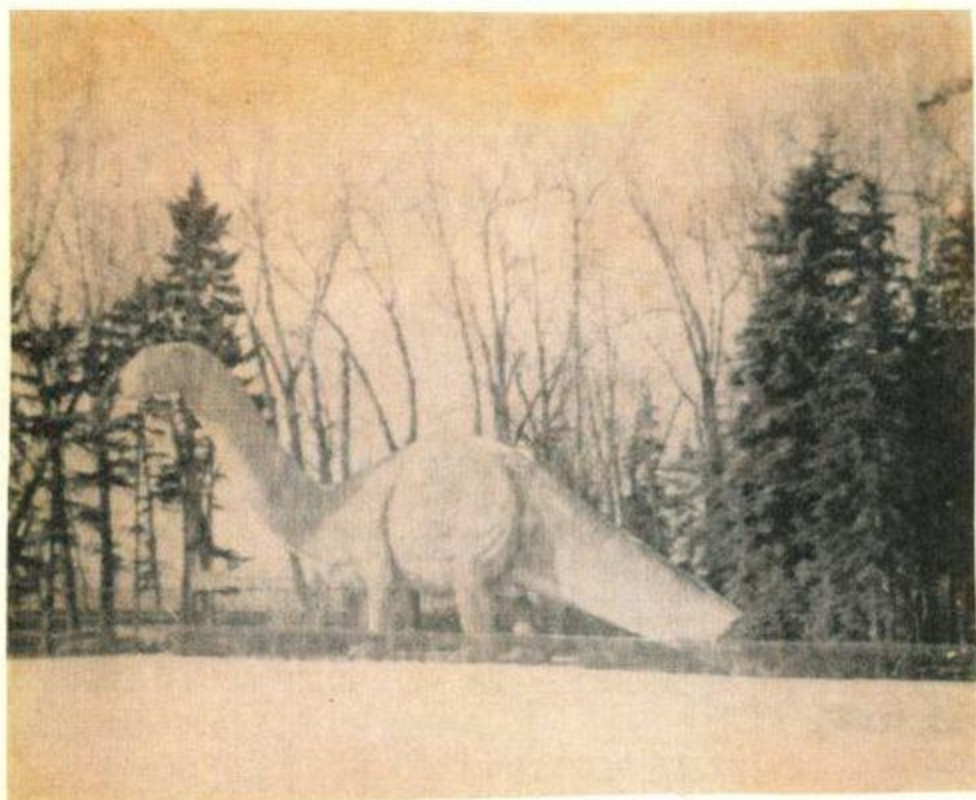
2.

Fossil House No. 2 demonstrates the five eras—Archaeozoic, Proterozoic, Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic. A window is devoted to fossilized remains of each era.

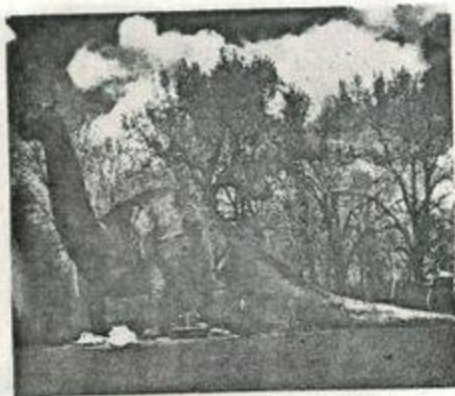
Study of the Fossil Houses in conjunction with the life sized models is, we believe, an interesting and accurate manner in which a layman can study the world as it was many thousands of years ago. The canvas background is painted to depict fauna and flora of the periods represented.

Coming back to more modern times Fossil House Number Two also contains maps and charts showing the connection between these early Eras and our present natural resources. The canvas background is painted to depict fauna and flora of the periods represented.





"DINNY" LARGEST OF THE REPLICAS AND  
GUARDIAN OF THE NATURAL HISTORY PARK.



**Our Brontosaurus — the biggest thing in town.**

Alberta has possibly the world's most abundant remains of giant reptiles who roamed the marshy shores of a tropical sea many years ago. Calgary has the only Park in America where more than 30 life sized models of these can be seen.

One of the largest of all Dinosaurs is the Brontosaurus a vegetarian and marsh dweller. In natural life he would weigh as much as 65 tons. One hundred and twenty tons of material was used in the construction of this model.





The Stegosaurus has the doubtful honor of having had the smallest brain of all the Dinosaurs.



THE PARK IS NOT ONLY A GREAT ARTISTIC  
ACHIEVEMENT. BUT SERVES ALSO AS AN EXCELLENT  
HISTORICAL EXHIBIT.







AT TIMES THE MONSTERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS  
SEEM SO REALISTIC, THAT IT ALMOST SEEMS  
AS IF YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO JOURNEY BACK  
INTO TIME, OR ARE ENTERING A LOST WORLD DREAMT  
OF LIKE AN EDGAR RICE BURROGHS NOVEL.....



.... THEN YOU HAPPEN TO NOTICE THE WIRE  
MESH AND OVERHEAD FLOOD LIGHTS SURROUNDING THE  
TOWERING TYRANNOSAURUS, AND YOU ARE INSTANTLY  
"TRANSPORTED" BACK TO THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY.







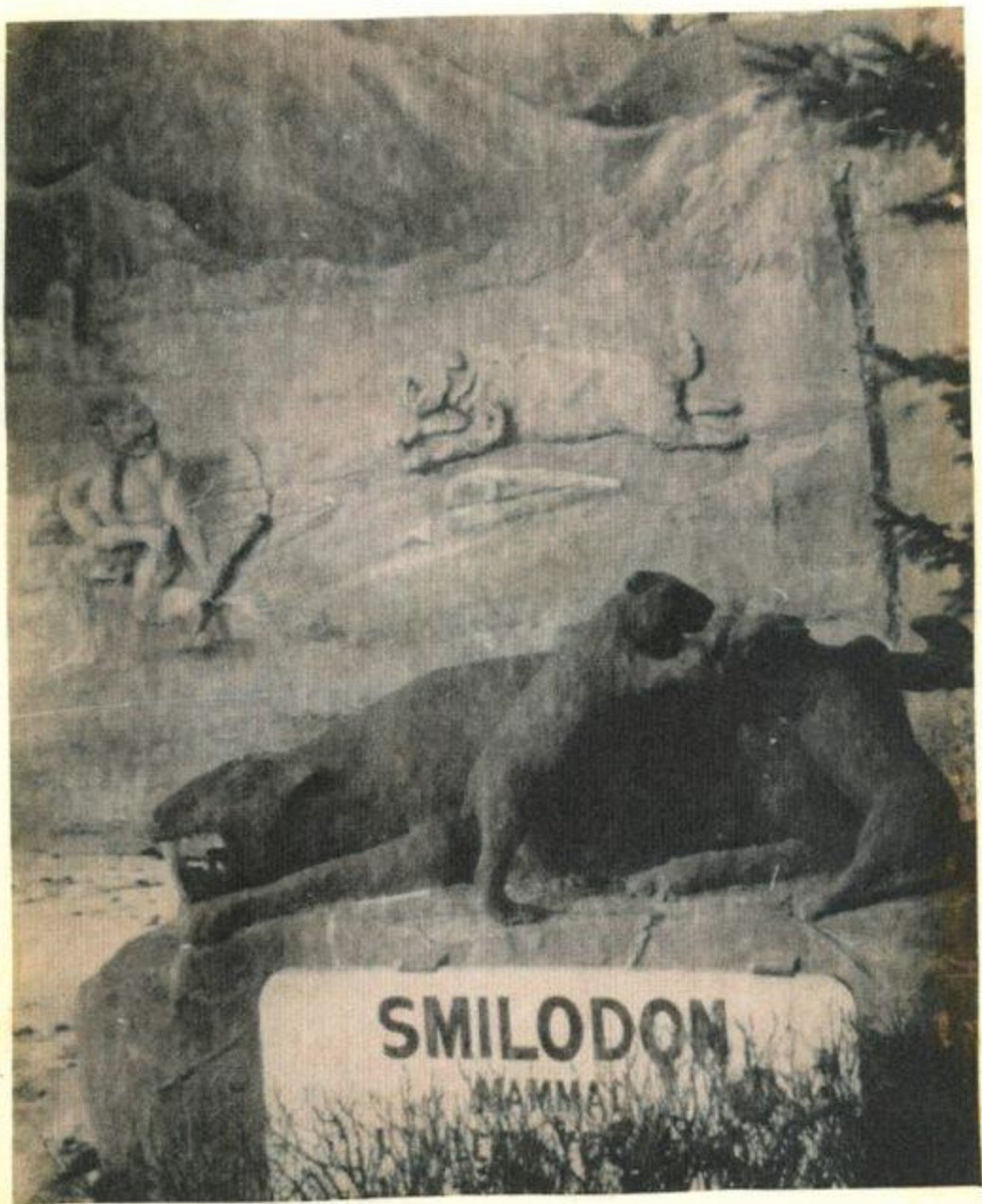






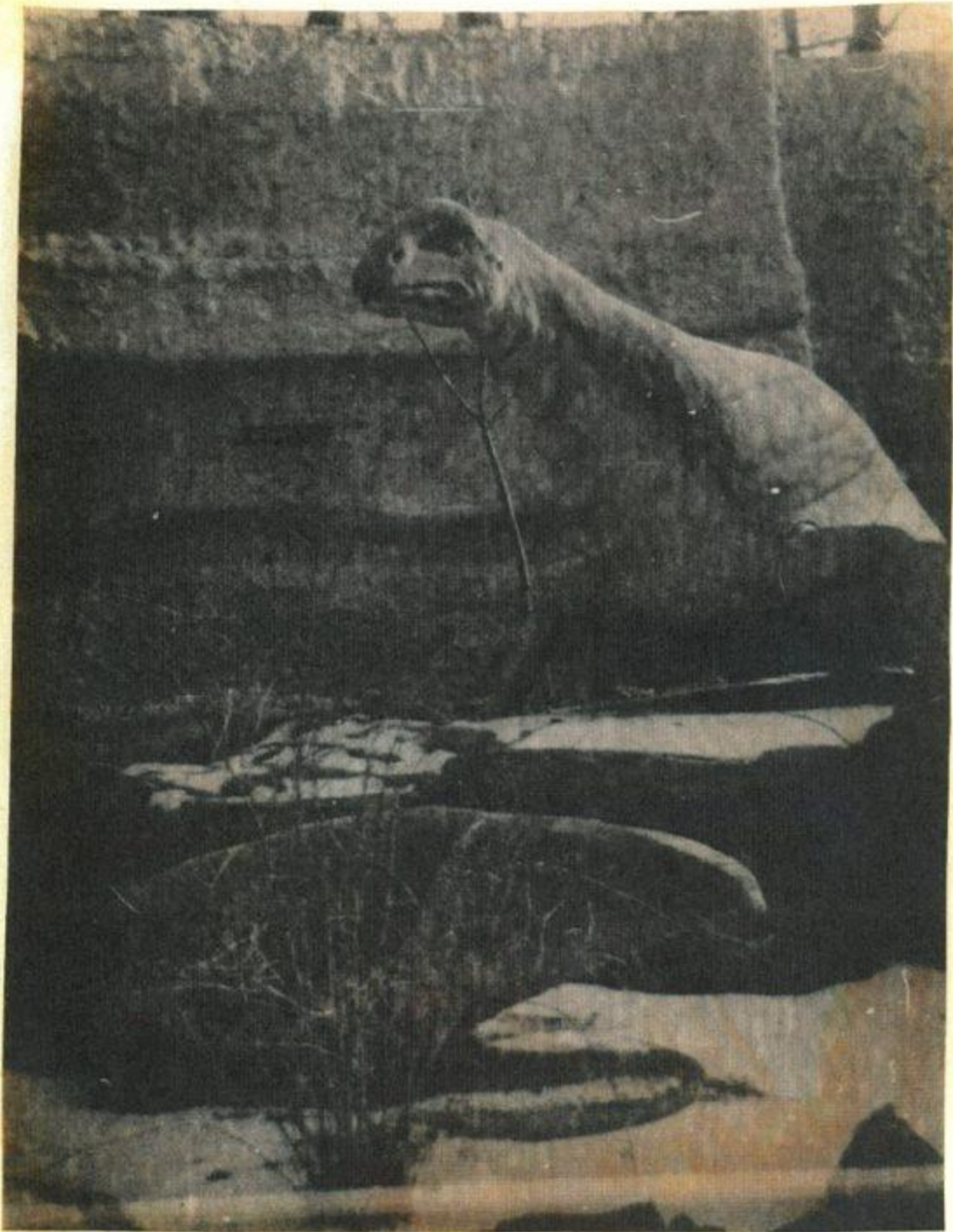


SPECIAL ATTENTION WAS PAID TO THE PAINT  
AND BASED ON AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE, THE  
COLORS ARE AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE.



ONE OF THE SMALLER MAMMALS WITH THE MURAL  
OF NO. 1 FOSSIL HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND.





It is a tribute to the planning and skill that went into these replicas that after twenty years they are still structurally sound and little criticism is heard as to their accuracy.



LOOKING



Reptile Group Beside the Lagoon

AHEAD



THE ALBERTA SOCIETY OF PETROLEUM  
GEOLOGISTS STILL CONTRIBUTE TIME  
AND ENERGY TO THE NATURAL HISTORY  
DISPLAY.

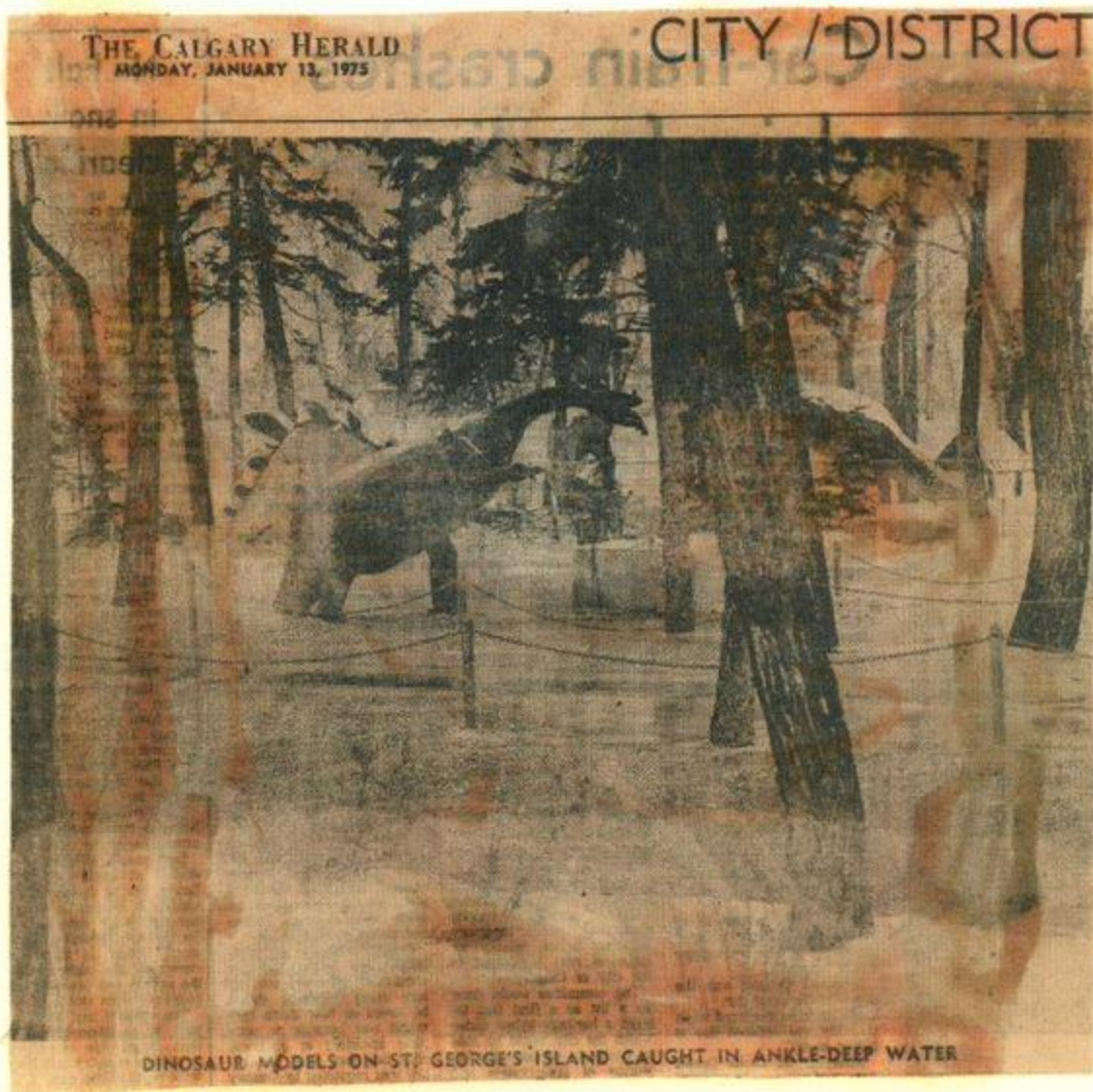


KANERVA'S DINOSAURS HAVE NOT ONLY MAINTAINED VAST POPULARITY WITH THE PUBLIC; BUT HAVE ALSO ENDURED THE HARSH CLIMATIC CONDITIONS OF CALGARY. (SOME HOUSES AND ROADS SHOULD BE AS WELL DESIGNED AND BUILT). IT IS IRONIC THAT THE DINOSAURS, WHO HAVE BEEN EXTINCT FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, MIGHT OUTLIVE US AS TOWERING CEMENT REPLICAS. THIS IS PERHAPS THE GREATEST TESTIMONIAL AN ARTIST COULD HAVE..... WORK THAT ENDURES TIME!





THE SEVERE WINTER WEATHER IS ALMOST AS BAD AS  
THE CONDITIONS INFLICTED ON THE REAL DINOSAURS BY  
MOTHER NATURE.



THE ADVENT OF FIBREGLASS HAS OPENED NEW HORIZONS FOR THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY AS WELL AS THE FUTURE OF THE PARK. THE FIRST REPLICA COMPLETED WAS A GIANT PLESIOSAUR THAT NOW INHABITS THE PARK LAGOON.



PENELOPE THE PLESIOSAUR

JOHN KANERVA WAS THE DRIVING  
FORCE BEHIND THIS ARTISTICALLY  
AND HISTORICALLY BEAUTIFUL PARK.  
MAY IT CONTINUE TO BRING JOY  
AND KNOWLEDGE TO THOUSANDS OF  
PEOPLE EACH YEAR.



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