

READ ALL ABOUT IT! THE INTERPRETIVE VALUE OF NEWSPAPER FROM OLD UNIDENTIFIED DINOSAUR QUARRIES AND PALEONTOLOGICAL FIELD CAMPS IN ALBERTA, CANADA

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ABSTRACT

Early fossil collectors in southern Alberta, Canada were not always environmentally conscious. Trash generated in field camps or in fossil quarries was often discarded on site. Some of the garbage was deliberately buried, covered by eroded sediments derived from nearby outcrops or through pedogenesis. Garbage, such as lumber, nails, tin cans, crockery, glassware, plaster, burlap and newspaper are now being re-exposed as the sediments erode away. The interpretive value of this trash has been exploited over the past decade. Many unidentified old dinosaur quarry sites are known to exist but what was collected, by whom, and when is often unknown. Identifying these “mystery quarries” is critical as various data learned from them can be utilized in current dinosaur biostratigraphic studies. Sourced and dateable newspaper is the most valuable garbage item left behind. Because each edition of a newspaper is completely different from all others, even small fragments recovered from mystery quarries can be identified through microfilm or online comparisons. The year and publisher of the newspaper can be directly linked to the year of the excavation and sometimes identity of the museum involved (e.g. 1927 Toronto Star newspaper = 1927 Royal Ontario Museum expedition). That information, coupled with other lines of evidence such as spatial and stratigraphic occurrence, bones left on site, and historical evidence can often lead to a rapid and accurate identification of a mystery quarry. Currently over 25% of all pre-1955 quarries in Dinosaur Provincial Park have been solved this way. A case report, dealing with the discovery and eventual identification of a WWI quarry in Dinosaur Provincial Park that yielded a rare *Centrosaurus* skeleton is outlined.