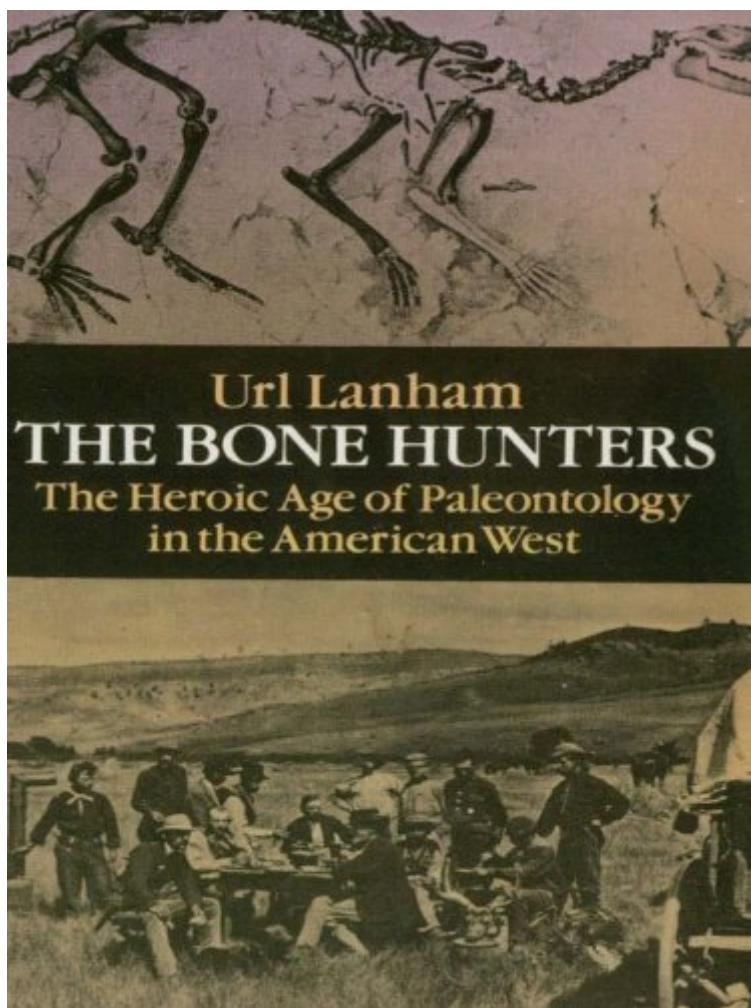


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The Bone Hunters: The Heroic Age Of Paleontology In The American West



Synopsis

"Highly recommended to all scientists and non-scientists interested in paleontology and the West." " Science Books A century after the founding of the Republic, the United States was a leader in the science of vertebrate paleontology " the study of the fossils of backboned animals. In this lucid, nontechnical study, a noted popularizer of science and former curator at the Museum of the University of Colorado first reviews the geology of the western United States and provides an overview of American paleontology since the days of Thomas Jefferson. Dr. Lanham next focuses on the paleontologists themselves and the astounding fossil discoveries that revolutionized our understanding of vertebrate evolution. You'll learn how nineteenth-century paleontologists struggled against hostile Indians, scorching summers and frigid winters, loneliness, isolation, lack of funds and other hardships as they excavated tons of fossil bones from beds and quarries in South Dakota, Kansas, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and other areas. While many eminent scientists are profiled, including Samuel Williston, John Bell Hatcher, Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden, and Joseph Leidy, much of the book is devoted to the explorations and achievements of Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope. These two brilliant paleontologists, whose discoveries revolutionized the discipline, eventually became bitter rivals and the central figures in one of the most notorious scientific feuds of the century. These and many other aspects of nineteenth-century paleontology are covered in this fascinating and readable book. Easily accessible to the layman, The Bone Hunters will appeal to any reader interested in the behind-the-scenes drama and inspired scientific fieldwork that resulted in an explosion of knowledge about the nature and evolution of the prehistoric animals that once roamed the American West.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

.Professional Rivalry gone wild!If you are expecting to learn about digs and dinosaurs, you may be surprised by this book. Although this is a good history of American digs and findings, the author focuses more on the paleontologists and explorers than on the prehistoric things they found.If you thrive on stories about business psychology, office politics, and cranky Victorian-era paleontologists, this may be your cup of tea. The search for fossils and dinosaur bones led Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh west to dig the prehistoric bone beds of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Their contributions to science and the field of paleontology were massive, and laid the groundwork for modern studies and superb museum and academic collections.This is not an adventure story. It is the story of the network of Gilded-Age paleontologists, with an emphasis on the rivalry between Cope (of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia) and Marsh (of the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale).The book may inspire you to look for the the serious-minded A&E documentary, "Dinosaur Wars," on the same topic."Bone Hunters" a very thorough and readable book. I will incorporate some of this material into my Westward Expansion/Gilded Age lesson plans for HIS 112. What could be better than throwing dinosaurs into the mix?!Kim BurdickStanton, Delaware

Informative and easy read.

As has been pointed out, this book is not so much about now-extinct mammals and dinosaurs in the American West as about the men of the 19th century, especially rivals O.C. Marsh and Edward D Cope, who discovered and classified them. However, it should be noted that the book was written in 1973. Which accounts in part for its low resolution B&W photos. More importantly, it reflects the thinking toward dinosaurs prior to the so-called "dinosaur renaissance" that has taken place in the last four decades.

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