

OUR ANCIENT PAST

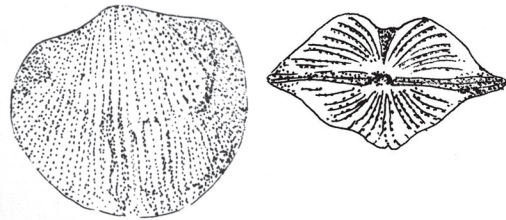
The fossils you'll find in MetroParks are remains of animals who lived only in warm sea water. What this tells us about Ohio's past is amazing. When you spot these fossils, realize that millions of years ago, the very spot you are standing on was in the southern tropical latitudes and covered with ocean water teeming with life!

Although no longer covered with sea water, the surface of Ohio is still slowly but constantly being changed by wind and water.

If you are unable to find some of the fossils mentioned in this brochure, visit the fossil exhibit at Germantown MetroPark Nature Center for examples of these fossils.

BRACHIOPODS

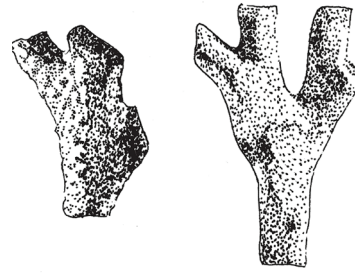
At first glance, brachiopods look a little like clam shells. They are one of the most abundant kinds of fossils found in Montgomery County. The animals that lived in these shells burrowed in the mud on the sea bottom or attached themselves to the sea floor by means of a fleshy stalk. Brachiopods can still be found in the oceans of the world today.



BRYOZOANS

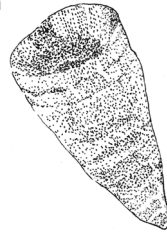
Bryozoan fossils are abundant in Montgomery County's Ordovician rocks. Bryozoans ("moss-animals") were tiny animals that joined together by the thousands to form colonies resembling fans or twigs. Like brachiopods, they too were

sea creatures. At times, the bottom of the sea in Ohio was covered with huge colonies occupying every available surface.



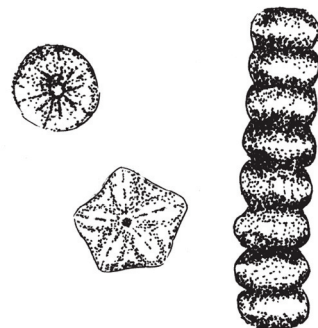
HORN CORALS

This common Ordovician coral resembles a cow horn. Unlike most corals which live in colonies, horn corals were solitary creatures. They lived attached by their pointed end to the ocean floor. Extending from their upper end were fleshy tentacles that waved food into their mouth. Although horn corals are extinct today, their relatives include modern corals and sea anemones.



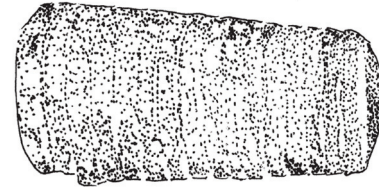
CRINOIDS

Although crinoids are often called "sea lilies," they were not flowers but animals. A stem anchored the animal to the sea floor and fleshy arms helped guide food into its mouth. The stem, which resembles a stack of tiny life-savers, is most commonly found crinoid fossil. "Flower heads" are rarely found. Crinoids that exist today are often beautifully colored and grow in colonies on the ocean floor. They are related to the starfish and sand dollar.



CEPHALOPODS

Cephalopods lived inside straight or coiled shells divided on the inside into compartments. Modern day squid, octopi, and devilfish are related to these once abundant predators of Ordovician and Silurian seas.



TRILOBITES

The trilobite has the honor of being Ohio's state fossil. Trilobites were sea creatures characterized by a hard outer skeleton divided into three sections by two grooves which ran from head to tail. One of the largest complete trilobite fossils ever found was discovered near Huffman Dam. The "Huffman Trilobite" measures 14 1/2" x 10", but most trilobite fossils are less than an inch in length. When found, they are often curled up in to balls. Although for many years the Huffman Trilobite ranked as the largest complete trilobite fossil, it has been eclipsed by the 1998 discovery of a 70 cm. (about 28") trilobite in northern Manitoba. Crabs, spiders and insects are the present-day relatives of the now extinct trilobite.



GASTROPODS

Gastropods are simply fossil snails. They had a single shell that was usually coiled, a broad muscular foot and a well-developed head with eyes, mouth and tentacles. The land and water snails of today are related to these inhabitants of ancient seas.



FOSSIL COLLECTING IN METROPARKS

Collecting a limited number of fossils by the general public is permitted with the following restrictions:

- Fossils cannot be collected with the use of tools (e.g. hammers, picks, etc.).
- No more than 3 fossils per day per person may be collected from a MetroParks facility.
- Collected fossils can be no larger than the palm of your hand.
- Fossils cannot be collected from MetroParks for sale.
- No climbing is permitted on rock ledges or outcroppings.
- Fossils can only be collected from designated fossil collection areas OR under the direction of a MetroParks interpreter leading a public program.
- Those wishing to conduct scientific research that does not comply with these restrictions may apply to the MetroParks office for a research permit.

FOSSIL COLLECTION AREAS ARE:

- Below Germantown Dam at Germantown MetroPark
- Below Englewood Dam at Englewood MetroPark
- Near stepping stones across Sugar Creek at Sugar Creek MetroPark