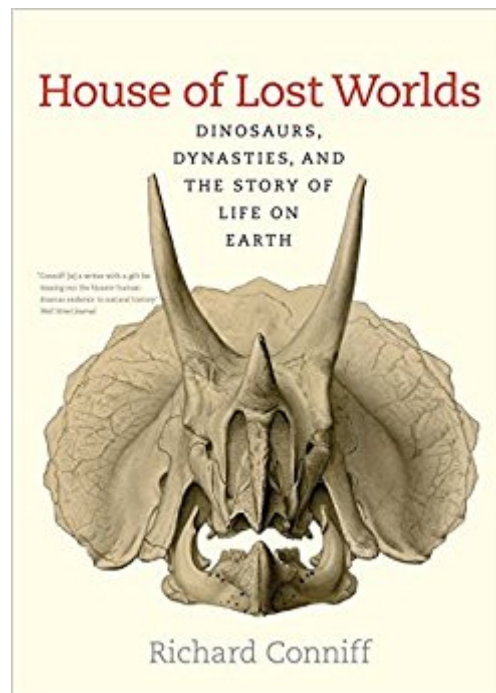




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# **House Of Lost Worlds: Dinosaurs, Dynasties, And The Story Of Life On Earth**



## Synopsis

A gripping tale of 150 years of scientific adventure, research, and discovery at the Yale Peabody Museum. This fascinating book tells the story of how one museum changed ideas about dinosaurs, dynasties, and even the story of life on earth. The Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, now celebrating its 150th anniversary, has remade the way we see the world. Delving into the museum's storied and colorful past, award-winning author Richard Conniff introduces a cast of bold explorers, roughneck bone hunters, and visionary scientists. Some became famous for wresting Brontosaurus, Triceratops, and other dinosaurs from the earth, others pioneered the introduction of science education in North America, and still others rediscovered the long-buried glory of Machu Picchu. In this lively tale of events, achievements, and scandals from throughout the museum's history. Readers will encounter renowned paleontologist O. C. Marsh who engaged in ferocious combat with his "Bone Wars" rival Edward Drinker Cope, as well as dozens of other intriguing characters. Nearly 100 color images portray important figures in the Peabody's history and special objects from the museum's 13-million-item collections. For anyone with an interest in exploring, understanding, and protecting the natural world, this book will deliver abundant delights.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A rich and enthusiastic history. . . . This book sparkles with delightful stories and anecdotes." —Kirkus Reviews, starred review (Kirkus Reviews) "A fascinating and magisterial review of the history of the Peabody Museum, and the major figures who made it. It

plunges deeply into science, objects, and the lives of the people who collected those objects and made them *come to life*, and it does so in an accessible and, indeed, page-turning way.

• Alison Richard, Yale University (Alison Richard) “An important and riveting story of how real-life scientists built a great museum and what it means for biology and natural history. Exciting from beginning to end, *House of Lost Worlds* is for anyone who loves adventurous reading.

• Bernd Heinrich, author of *One Wild Bird at a Time: Portraits of Individual Lives* (Bernd Heinrich) “Museums are not just full of fossils and minerals. They’re also packed with wonderfully human stories. *House of Lost Worlds* tells the stories of one of the world’s great natural history museums, and in the process, it becomes a fascinating chronicle of the rise of American science.

• Carl Zimmer, author of *Parasite Rex* (Carl Zimmer) “With a history that extends from the badlands of the American West to the peaks of Machu Picchu, Yale’s Peabody Museum is a national treasure. Richard Conniff brings the rich history of the Museum alive with stories of the great characters whose discoveries and ideas transformed science over the past century and a half.

• Neil H. Shubin, The University of Chicago, author of *Your Inner Fish* (Neil Shubin) “Remarkable . . . superbly written and makes the history and individuals come alive. . . . this book should have a much larger appeal than just Peabody-philes because it is so much about the role of museums in the development of American science.

• Thomas E. Lovejoy, George Mason University (Thomas E. Lovejoy) “Natural History Museums are enjoying a renaissance of appreciation as invaluable libraries of the earth’s biological and cultural diversity. Less well known is the high quality of science pursued in these institutions. Richard Conniff’s riveting account of the history of Yale’s Peabody Museum shows how scientific research is a museum’s heart and soul every bit as much as the scientific treasures stored and displayed in them.

• Niles Eldredge, author of *Eternal Ephemera* (Niles Eldredge) “What a rich history this book tells, and with such enthusiasm, humor, and attention to the oddest details! Richard Conniff makes you want to dive into the collections that have been accumulating for 150 years at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, gathered with loving scholarly attention, transforming our knowledge of the natural world and the human race.

• Frans de Waal, author of *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (Frans de Waal) “From the great Bone Rush of the 19th century to biology’s genetic revolution, the Peabody Museum of Natural History has been a scientific powerhouse for a century and a half. There’s no better guide to the way this singular institution has changed the way we see nature than Richard Conniff. In warm, enthusiastic prose, he takes us

to sun baked badlands strewn with dinosaur skeletons, the sterile quiet of the modern biology lab, and beyond, drawing us back to meet the people who built the Peabody as they strove to understand life and time. — Brian Switek, author of *Written in Stone* and *My Beloved Brontosaurus* (Brian Switek) — “This book is about one of the great stories of science’s ongoing coming of age. But the best reason to read it is that author Richard Conniff can’t seem to help but do what science writing should always do: he tells a story so well that you don’t realize how much you’re learning in the sweep of every paragraph. — Carl Safina, author of *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* (Carl Safina) “In *House of Lost Worlds*, Richard Conniff tells the story of the Peabody through the curious characters connected to it. . . . Throughout the book, [He] emphasizes the discoveries yet to be made and the pleasure of finding out something new.” — Science News (Science News) “Conniff [is] a writer with a gift for teasing out the bizarre human dramas endemic to natural history. . . . While *House of Lost Worlds* chronicles the Peabody’s achievements and luminaries quite thoroughly, it also takes a hard-nosed look at its debacles.” — Jennie Erin Smith, *Wall Street Journal* (Jennie Erin Smith *Wall Street Journal*) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

What do you hope readers will learn from their encounter with your book? I want readers to come away feeling that this is a ripping good yarn of exploration, with big engaging characters taking enormous risks and bringing back great discoveries that make us think in new ways about the world. — If you were to embark on an expedition with one of the scientists you discuss, who would that be? It would be the 1870 expedition by paleontologist O. C. Marsh and a dozen Yale students into an American West that was still wild, still home to millions of bison, still under the control of Native American tribes. That expedition launched Marsh’s remarkable career, bringing to life unimaginable creatures from lost worlds. And it opened the eyes of a bottom-of-the-class Yale graduate named George Bird Grinnell, who went on to become one of the most influential figures in the American conservation movement, a savior of the bison, and an anthropologist of vanishing tribal cultures. — Which scientists intrigued or surprised you the most? James Dwight Dana and his poignant struggle to reconcile his commitment to science with his deep religious faith. Dana was among the first people to whom Darwin confided about his work on the theory of evolution by natural selection. (— “I groan when I make such a confession,” — he wrote to Dana.) Dana’s struggle took place as the scientists of the Peabody Museum were delivering to his doorstep convincing fossil evidence. --This text refers to

the Hardcover edition.

An interesting "back-stage" look at the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale and how it changed ideas about dinosaurs, dynasties, and even the story of life on earth. For anyone with an interest in exploring, understanding, and protecting the natural world, this book will deliver abundant information and delights. I've been volunteering there for 28 years and still learned a lot of new "stuff" about the people and collections.

Superb and vivid writing about a subject that is far more of an adventure story than one might anticipate. I visited the Peabody Museum just before I bought the book and feel I understand the place much more than before. I have recommended the book to friends, one of whom turned out to be a distant relative of O.C. Marsh! Fine book.

Wonderful and interesting book - if you're a natural history lover, read this!

I have visited the Peabody Museum, but I knew only a little about the men who brought this museum to life. I had heard about Cope and Marsh and their famous rivalry over dinosaur bones, but there is so much more to know. I am only half way through the book because the book is dense with information, but information presented in an absorbing way. I find myself lingering over the book and reading it slowly. The author succeeds in presenting the men and women who figure in this true story and in bringing them to life for the reader, not just as historical figures but as admirable and sometimes flawed human beings. I hope to visit the museum again one day to see all that I missed before.

Writing is enjoyable and historically fascinating. I loved the glossy pages and the great old photos. Such interesting anecdotes about the old dinosaur hunters and the world famous Marsh/Leidy feud. Could not put the book down! As a kid I spent lots of time at the Peabody as I lived in Hamden.

Interesting book.

One of the most interesting books ever written about the history of a museum. The research was first rate. I would recommend the book highly.

Excellent writing - along with important information on the Bone Wars - very helpful in my work at Royal Gorge Dinosaur Experience in Canon City.

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