

MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAM

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This was a year of continued growth and development for the Oriental Institute's Museum Education Program. Services of long standing were maintained with continued success; an important special project was completed; and two innovative programs with great potential for future development were begun.

Members' courses have been a popular Education Department program for many years. This season a total of 276 participants attended the wide variety of courses offered on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Frank Yurco's Egyptian history sequence, requiring six quarters to complete, continued into its second year, with many students enrolled for the whole cycle. Other courses included *Egyptian Odyssey: Up the Nile on a Wing and a Chair*, an armchair travelers' tour, taught by John Larson; *Coptic Egypt*, by Terry Wilfong; *Exploring the World of Ancient Nubia and Sudan*, by Bruce Williams; *An Introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Stuart Creason; *Valley of the Kings: A Survey of Archaeological Work in the Royal Necropolis at Thebes*, by John Larson; *The Amarna Period in Egypt*, by Frank Yurco; *Literature and*

Propaganda: Middle Kingdom Egypt, by Frank Yurco; and *Introduction to Hieroglyphs*, by Peter Piccione.

Another adult education program of long standing has been the symposium sponsored jointly by the Education and Membership offices. *Literacy and Scribal Traditions in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia* was the topic of the fifth annual symposium, which attracted nearly 200 participants on November 9, 1991. Presenters for the day-long event were Oriental Institute faculty and staff members Matthew Stolper, Martha Roth, Lanny Bell, Jan Johnson, and James Armstrong.



Youngsters repair broken pottery during the children's workshop, "What an Archaeologist Does," one of the many Museum Education programs offered for the general public

Outreach to the general public has been an important component of the Museum Education Program, with the summer season offering special opportunities to attract adults and young people. Summer Special Interest Tours for adults, offered by the Museum Docents each Friday during July and August, invited visitors to learn about such topics as “Women, Queens, and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt,” or to discover collection highlights during tours entitled “The Treasures of the Oriental Institute.” Summer Special Interest Tours for children were given on Thursday mornings in July and August, as they have been annually since 1982. Docents introduced more than 100 youngsters to the Museum’s exhibits, inviting them to view artifacts related to such special topics as “A Child’s Life in Ancient Egypt,” or “Egyptian Magic.” All children’s tours were followed by optional pen-and-pencil activities that encouraged the youngsters to explore the galleries and learn more about the tour’s theme.

Children were invited to take part in special hands-on museum experiences during the winter season. Saturday morning Winter Workshops engaged seven-to-twelve year old youngsters in craft activities related to museum objects. Children in the 1992 workshops created replicas of ancient crowns, including the double crown of Egyptian kings and the blue crown of Queen Nefertiti; they also constructed an Egyptian pyramid and decorated its interior. More than 40 youngsters took part in these workshops that attracted participation from throughout the Chicago area.

As part of its goal to reach a wider community and regional audience, the Education Department developed a new series of Family Programs in 1991–92. Offered in conjunction with the Sunday afternoon film series, these programs provided children and their parents with the opportunity to create and take home special craft projects related to artifacts on view in the museum’s galleries. Over the year, participation in these programs grew, with many families returning again and again. The Education Office and the museum also offered a similar family program on Saturday, February 8, 1992, in conjunction with the opening of the exhibit “Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia.” Hundreds of visitors came to take part, with more than 250 Education Program craft projects completed that one afternoon.

Developing resources for students and teachers has been a Museum Education priority since the program’s founding in 1980. This past year saw the completion of a video production for educators, the offering of a special course for teachers, and the piloting of a new outreach program for Chicago public school classes.

Two years in the making, the video production “*The Oriental Institute: Its Collection and Its Work*” provides an overview of ancient Near Eastern history

and culture as represented in the collections of the Oriental Institute Museum. The video also includes photographs of excavation sites and computer-animated maps. Sold to teachers and the general public through the Suq, *"The Oriental Institute: Its Collection and its Work"* has generated interest nationwide.



High school students study the museum's Amarna House exhibit using gallery guide sheets from study kits prepared by the Education Office

In the fall of 1991, the Museum Education Office offered "Ancient Egyptian Math and Science," an eight-session evening course taught by Frank Yurco especially for teachers. Ten Chicago-area educators explored the nature of the number system in ancient Egypt, concentrating on the many sophisticated uses mathematical computation served; they also discussed Egyptian mathematical and scientific influence on Greece and later western culture. The course emphasized ways the teachers could incorporate this material into their classroom curriculum.

The Museum Education Program received a special gift in 1991 to develop a curriculum enrichment project for elementary school teachers in the Chicago Public Schools. Funded by Oriental Institute Visiting Committee members Albert F. Haas of Chicago and Maurice D. Schwartz of Los Angeles, the Ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian Civilizations Curriculum Enrichment Project provided specially designed educational materials to help teachers give their students a better appreciation of ancient civilizations. Materials included the Oriental Institute Museum Teachers' Kit, Art Projects Manual,

and the new Oriental Institute video. Teachers used these materials to enhance their classroom lessons and to prepare their students for a visit to the Oriental Institute Museum. Also included was the program's most innovative feature—a visit to each classroom by an archaeologist, who discussed the history and archaeology of the ancient Near East. All aspects of the program were funded by the special grant, which enabled teachers and students who had not previously visited the Oriental Institute to derive maximum benefit from the museum's unique resources. Teacher evaluation of this pilot program was designed to serve as the basis for development of expanded curriculum outreach by the Museum Education Office.

Participating in various community and University events has often been part of the agenda for Education Program staff. This past year, the Museum Education Program was once again a sponsor of the second annual University of Chicago Arts Day on Campus, an event to acquaint Chicago Public School art teachers and students with campus organizations. The Museum Education Program also took part once again in the annual 57th Street Children's Book Fair, where graduate students operated a booth at which children could learn to write their names in hieroglyphs and make cartouches in ancient Egyptian style. Outreach events such as these have served to widen the museum's circle of friends and visitors

In March, 1992, after 12 years of dedicated service to Museum Education, Joan Barghusen, the Program's founder, retired. She leaves a legacy of extraordinary accomplishments that provide a firm foundation for the continued growth and development of educational programming at the Oriental Institute Museum. At the end of her *Annual Report* in 1991, Joan expressed her appreciation for the expertise, inspiration, and steadfast support of people who were indispensable to the many projects of the Museum Education Program. Those special friends and colleagues are listed again here: Terri Barbee, Programs Assistant; Janet Helman, Volunteer Coordinator; the Museum Docents, with special thanks to Kitty Picken and Peggy Grant; volunteer Joan Hives; and the entire staff and faculty of the Oriental Institute.
