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Fossil Facts

- The first sauropod, or long-necked dinosaur, found in the U.S. was discovered on March 26, 1877, on the banks of the Missouri River near Golden, Colo. It was named *Apatosaurus ajax*.
- The first known horned dinosaur was found in Denver in 1887. The fossil was examined by Yale paleontologist Othniel C. Marsh and thought to belong to an extinct bison species. When a more complete specimen was found, Marsh realized it was a *Triceratops*.
- In 1992 the 15th known *T. rex* fossil was discovered in a half-built suburb in Littleton, Colo. A right leg, 10 teeth, a shoulder blade and tail bone were recovered by the Denver Museum. It was the first *T. rex* to have its own street address.
- During the Great Depression, the Denver Museum used a team of Work Projects Administration workers to excavate a quarry. Between 1931 and 1933, they recovered 70 34-million-year-old rhinos from the site.
- The state of Nebraska has 93 counties and elephant skeletons or bones have been found in 90 of them.
- The first flowering plants appeared during the Cretaceous period, between 125 and 95 million years ago.
- In 1990 a *Maiasaura peeblesorum*, or duck-billed dinosaur, became the first dinosaur in space when it went on an eight-day NASA mission. The second dinosaur in space was *Coelophysis*, a carnivorous species who traveled on the space shuttle Endeavor in 1998.
- The Cleveland-Lloyd formation has an uncommon abundance of carnivorous dinosaurs -- 49 have been recovered from the site: 44 *Allosauruses*, two *Marshosauruses*, two *Stokesosauruses* and one *Ceratosauros*. Only 14 herbivores have been found at the site: five *Camptosauruses*, four *Stegosauruses*, three *Camarasauruses*, one *Barosaurus* and one *Ankylosaurus*.

- The first Ceratosaurus, a large carnivorous dinosaur that lived about 150 million years ago, and Brachiosaurus, a long-necked dinosaur, skulls ever found were uncovered in the Marsh-Felch quarry in Garden Park Colo.
 - Triceratops is among the most common dinosaurs fossils found in the American West.
 - Until recently scientists believed the front legs of Triceratops were widely set, similar to crocodiles and Komodo dragons. Scientists now know the legs were attached underneath the body like modern elephants.
 - Sea scorpions, which roamed the earth 416 to 423 million years ago, could be as large as 4 to 8 feet long, making them the largest arthropods, or joint-legged animals like crabs or insects, that ever lived.
 - The sea scorpion, or Eurypterus remipes, is the state fossil of New York.
 - The hell pig, Archaeotherium species, first appeared in the late Eocene, about 37 to 34 million years ago, and went extinct after about 14 million years, during the Miocene, about 23 to 16 million years ago.
 - The first ammonites emerged about 400 million years ago during the Devonian Period. The last of the ammonites died about 65.5 million years ago during the great Cretaceous-Tertiary Period.
 - Trilobites, hard shelled creatures, first appear about 526 million years ago during the early Cambrian Period. For more than 275 million years trilobites swam or scurried about the world, only to succumb to the great extinction event at the end of the Permian Period.
 - Based on petrified wood samples, scientists estimate trees in Arizona reached heights of 150 to 200 feet tall 227 to 210 million years ago.
- * The above facts can be found in the book "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway" by artist Ray Troll and paleontologist Kirk Johnson, informational text from the exhibit "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway" and Discovery.com.