

Voyager

For kids of all ages

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Happy Birthday SCRIPPS

By Nan Criqui

The year 2003 is the centennial, or 100th birthday year, of Scripps Institution of Oceanography. If you are in fifth grade, 100 years is 10 lifetimes for you. And 100 years may even be as much as three times longer than your parents have been alive.

One hundred years! Obviously Scripps has changed a lot in that time. So has science, especially oceanography, which wasn't even a recognized field of study in 1903. And California, including the part of San Diego where Scripps Institution is located, would likely not be recognizable to us today. Let's travel back to those days and see what was happening

The discovery of gold in 1848 had created a population explosion and California became a state in 1850. By 1900, little of the "Wild West" remained in California. Businesses were growing in the state, and an intellectual community was beginning to thrive.

In 1892, E. W. Scripps described San Diego as "a busted, broken-down boom town . . . probably more difficult of access than any other spot in the whole country."

Yet the San Diego Public Library, which opened in 1902, was the first public library west of the Mississippi, and the first modern playhouse west of the Mississippi was the Spreckels Theatre, which opened in 1912.



The Professor

Enter William E. Ritter, an 1888 graduate of the then 20-year-old University of California, Berkeley. After receiving a Ph.D. at Harvard, Ritter returned to Berkeley to chair its department of zoology. He also began his lifelong quest to study “the teeming life of the great ocean on whose margin the University is located.”

From 1892 to 1902, Ritter and his colleagues organized a series of summer sessions at sites along the Pacific coast from Alaska to Los Angeles. In makeshift laboratories, they identified and studied everything they found in the coastal waters. With very little money—a \$200 university check the first summer barely covered the price of a large tent and basic equipment—the scientists gathered important information about nearshore life.



Creating

The Marine Biological Association

Support for the 1903 summer session was looking dim when an offer arrived from San Diego. Ritter accepted.

Fred Baker, a local physician with a strong interest in the oceans, met with wealthy newspaper owners E. W. Scripps and Ellen Browning Scripps, a brother and sister with summer homes in San Diego. On September 26, 1903, they signed a charter guaranteeing \$4,500, which would cover three years of operating expenses. The San Diego Marine Biological Association was officially created, from which the Scripps Institution of Oceanography evolved.

Not only were the buildings new at the growing campus, so were the ideas. Ritter believed that organisms were best studied in relation to their environment. At that time, biological science involved mainly laboratory study of individual organisms.

Scientists would change various conditions in a lab to see how plants or animals reacted to the changes.

Ritter proposed getting out of the laboratory and into nature to study not only the organisms, but also everything in their environment.

Thus, if you studied fishes, you also needed to study other animals and plants that shared the water they all lived in, the climate and weather conditions that affected the water, and the geology of the nearby shore or seafloor.

San Diego Marine Biological Station created • first airplane flight • first anesthetic • first radio broadcast • first expedition reaches North Pole

1903-1925

plastic & Corn Flakes invented • World War I fought • U.S. women get the right to vote • rural U.S. gets electricity • Band-Aids & Popsicles invented





Oceanography

This focus led naturally to the idea of a team approach in studying the ocean that would include not only the sciences of biology and zoology, but also chemistry, physics, meteorology, and geology. Mathematics and statistics would be as important to this new science as dissecting kits were to laboratory science. The field of study created by this approach to ocean research became known as oceanography.

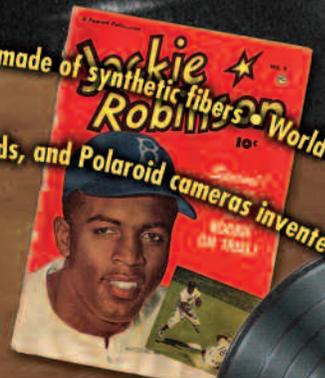
In 1912, when the institution officially became a department of the University of California, its name was changed to Scripps Institution for Biological Research. At that time, there was a zoologist and a hydrologist on the resident staff in addition to Ritter. The nonresident staff included three more zoologists, another hydrologist, a chemist, a biologist, and a specialist in fishes. By 1925—when the name was changed to Scripps Institution of Oceanography—the same diversity of interests was seen in the faculty, but five of the 12 listed their major field as oceanography.

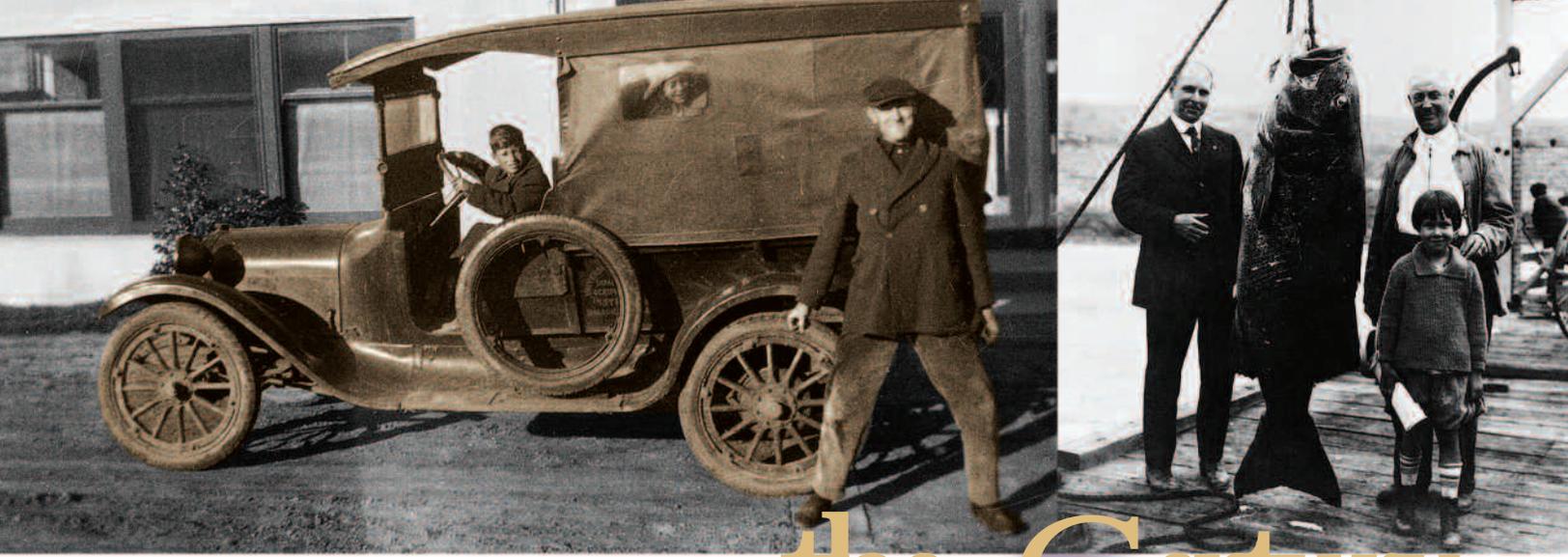


FM radio invented • U.S. stock market crashes • penicillin discovered • first TV broadcast • first clothing made of synthetic fibers • World War II

1926-1950

A-bomb invented • UN formed • first African American major league baseball player • color movies, LP records, and Polaroid cameras invented





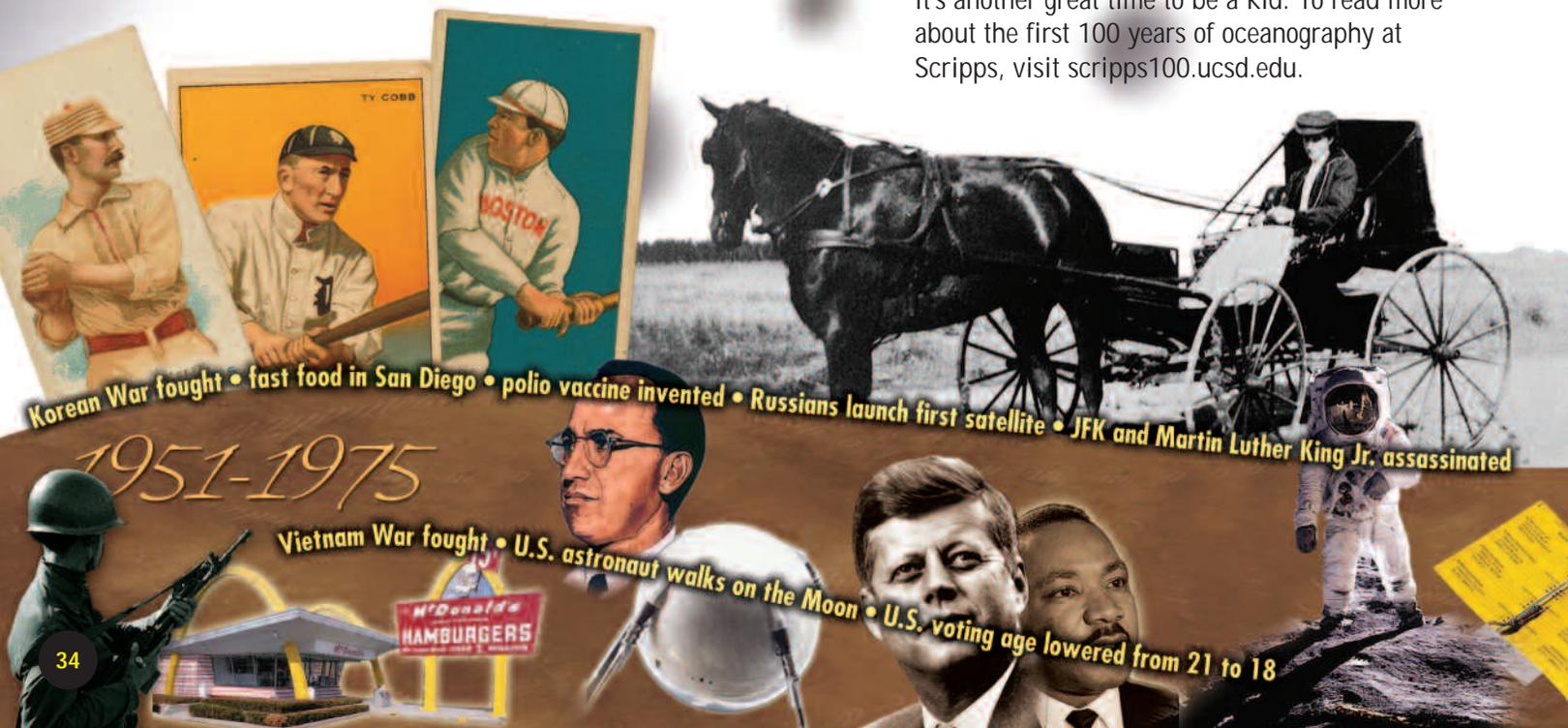
Life at the Turn of **the Century**

What was life like 100 years ago? In 1903, Jell-O, hot dogs, teddy bears, and baseball cards with bubble gum had been around for less than 10 years. So had X rays, aspirin, automobiles, book matches, the Olympic games, and the Nobel prize. The American flag had only 45 stars and the solar system had only eight planets. The Wright brothers piloted the first airplane in 1903. The flight lasted 12 seconds and covered 120 feet.

During the 10 years following 1903, ice cream and Ford Model T cars would be marketed for the first time, Albert Einstein would develop the theory of relativity, vitamins would be discovered, the first anesthetic would be invented, the first radio broadcast would take place, humans would reach the North and South poles for the first time, and Arizona, Oklahoma, and New Mexico would become U.S. states. (Alaska and Hawaii would join the U.S. later in the century to complete our 50 states.)

It was a time of excitement and optimism. It was a great time to be a kid.

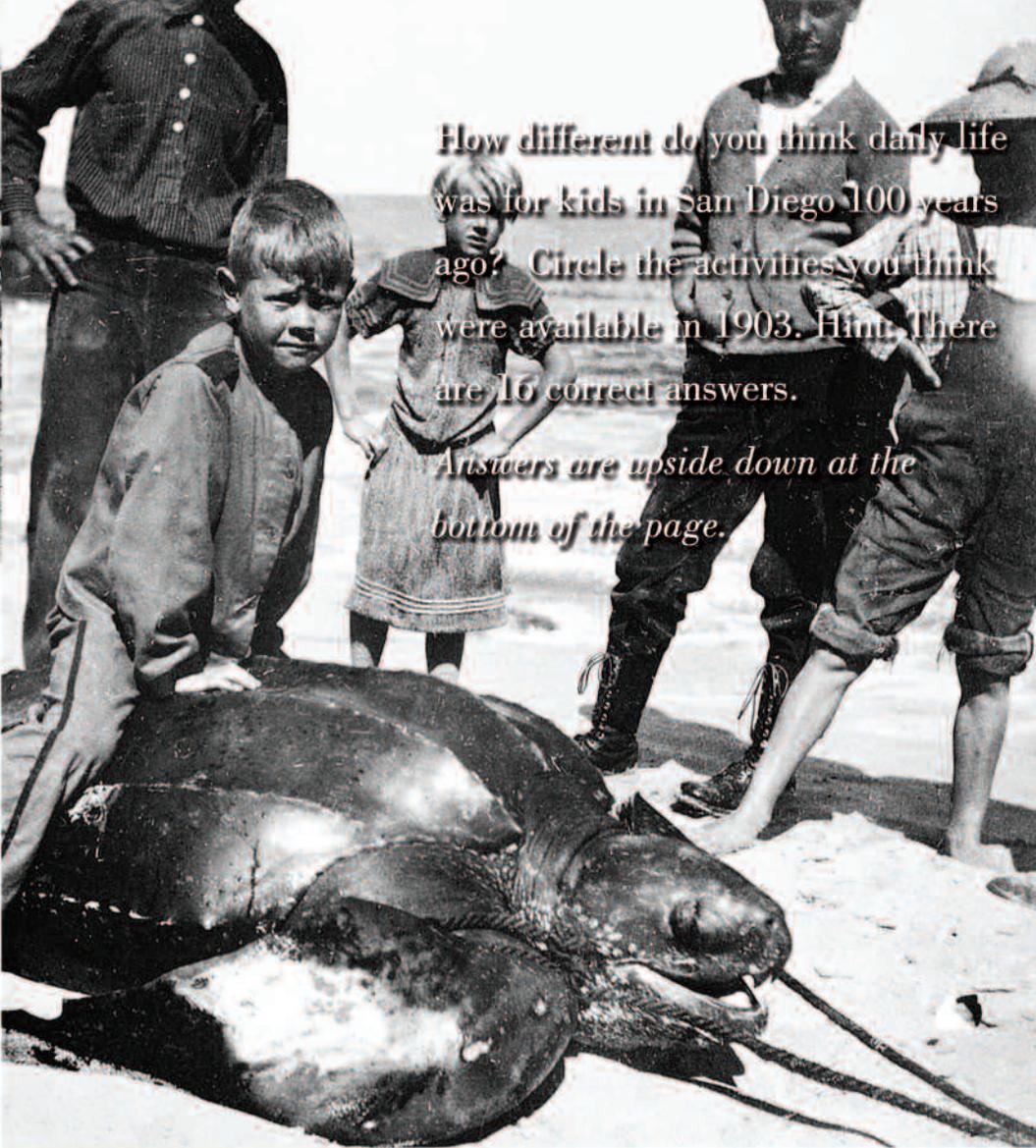
Now, in 2003, the century has turned again, and it's another great time to be a kid. To read more about the first 100 years of oceanography at Scripps, visit scripps100.ucsd.edu.



Korean War fought • fast food in San Diego • polio vaccine invented • Russians launch first satellite • JFK and Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated

1951-1975

Vietnam War fought • U.S. astronaut walks on the Moon • U.S. voting age lowered from 21 to 18



How different do you think daily life was for kids in San Diego 100 years ago? Circle the activities you think were available in 1903. Hint: There are 16 correct answers.

Answers are upside down at the bottom of the page.

In 1903 kids could

1. take a trip by train
2. watch television
3. ride a bicycle
4. ride a horse
5. listen to the radio
6. read a book
7. swim at the beach
8. send an e-mail to a friend
9. picnic in a park
10. eat a Popsicle
11. send a letter to a friend through the post office
12. attend a concert
13. plant a garden
14. go fishing
15. go to public school
16. eat Corn Flakes cereal
17. play video games
18. play baseball
19. listen to music on a CD
20. call a friend on the phone
21. put a frozen pizza in the oven
22. visit the San Diego Public Library
23. play Scrabble while eating M&Ms
24. turn on an electric light at home
25. eat a peanut butter sandwich
26. drink a bottle of Coke while wearing Levi's jeans
27. visit the San Diego Zoo
28. visit Yosemite National Park
29. put a Band-Aid on a cut
30. take an ocean liner to Europe
31. ride in a car to the supermarket
32. get a glass of milk from the refrigerator



Answers: If you chose numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 26, 28, and 30, you are correct. Surprised by some of these? Check an encyclopedia or go on-line to learn more.

first video game for TV • personal computer & mouse introduced • ozone hole discovered • Berlin Wall falls • Soviet Union dissolves • WWW created

first public use of the Internet • Dolly the sheep cloned • World Trade Center attacked • Scripps Institution of Oceanography celebrates 100 years