

*New York State Education Department*

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**New York State Museum**

The New York State Museum as at present organized is the outgrowth of the Natural History Survey of the State commenced in 1836. This was established at the expressed wish of the people to have some definite and positive knowledge of the mineral resources and of the vegetable and animal forms of the State. This wish was stated in memorials presented to the Legislature in 1834 by the Albany Institute and in 1835 by the American Institute of New York city and as a result of these and other influences the Legislature of 1835 passed a resolution requesting the Secretary of State to report to that body a plan for "a complete geological survey of the State, which shall furnish a scientific and perfect account of its rocks, soils and materials and of their localities; a list of its mineralogical, botanical and zoological productions and provide for procuring and preserving specimens of the same; etc."

Pursuant to this request, Hon. John A. Dix, then Secretary of State, presented to the Legislature of 1836 a report proposing a plan for a complete geologic, botanical and zoologic survey of the State. This report was adopted by the Legislature then in session and the Governor was authorized to employ competent persons to carry out the plan which was at once put into effect.

The scientific staff of the Natural History Survey of 1836 consisted of John Torrey, Botanist; James E. DeKay, Zoologist; Lewis C. Beck, Mineralogist; W. W. Mather, Ebenezer Emmons, Lardner Vanuxem and Timothy A. Conrad, Geologists. In 1837 Professor Conrad was made Paleontologist and James Hall, who had been an assistant to Professor Emmons, was appointed Geologist to succeed Professor Vanuxem, who took Professor Conrad's place.

The heads of the several departments reported annually to the Governor the results of their investigations, and these constituted the annual octavo reports which were published from 1837 to 1841. The final reports were published in quarto form, beginning at the close of the field work in 1841, and 3000 sets have been distributed, comprising four volumes of geology, one of mineralogy, two of botany, five of zoology, five of agriculture, and eight of paleontology.