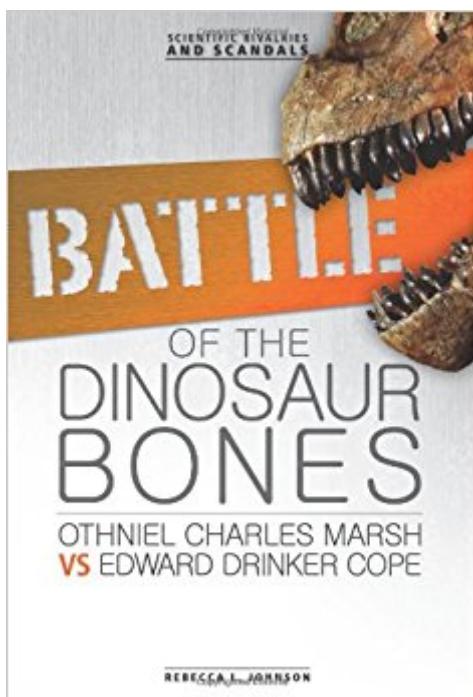


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Battle Of The Dinosaur Bones: Othniel Charles Marsh Vs Edward Drinker Cope (Scientific Rivalries And Scandals)



Synopsis

In the 1880s, science witnessed a major shift: Charles Darwin proposed his theory of evolution. People dug up the first dinosaur fossils. And the field of paleontology--the study of ancient plants and animals--emerged. Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope became enthralled with these new ideas, discoveries, and developments. Both were determined to become world-famous paleontologists. When they met in 1863, they started off as friends. But within a few years, competition drove the men apart. Each fought bitterly to discover more fossils, name more species, and publish more papers than the other. In their haste to outdo each other, they both produced some shoddy work. The resulting confusion took many years to discover and correct, and their toxic relationship crippled the field of paleontology for decades afterward. However, the competition also produced a wealth of fossils. These laid a firm foundation for the field of paleontology and supported Darwin's theory of evolution. Marsh's and Cope's discoveries generated keen public interest in prehistoric life and rich data for future generations of paleontologists. This book explores the great rivalry between Marsh and Cope, showing how it brought out the best and the worst in them--while bringing humankind a brand-new view of life on Earth.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up-These books showcase major scientific developments and the brutal competition behind the scenes. They are highly engaging accounts of researchers resorting to cheap shots, spying, and double crossing to take credit for pivotal discoveries. But they are also disturbing documentation of how ego can trump the greater good, as in the battle between Luc Montagnier and Robert Gallo over the discovery of the virus that causes AIDS. Proprietary arguments and fraud delayed progress in its identification, which undoubtedly came at the cost of lives. Written cleanly and fluidly, these titles let the drama and occasional absurdity of the players' actions speak for themselves. Captioned photographs and diagrams correspond well to the texts, while sidebars contribute additional facts. In-depth time lines are the most noteworthy of the strong supplementary features. This fascinating set would be equally useful in history and science classrooms.  (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

This entry in the Scientific Rivalries and Scandals series focuses on the bitter antagonism between two pioneering nineteenth-century paleontologists, Marsh and Cope. Their contentious rivalry to discover the largest and most unusual dinosaur fossils of the American West became known as the Bone Wars and was at the forefront of American science for decades. The moral of the story is clear, revealing how rivalry can be positive and detrimental. Both Marsh and Cope made several important discoveries in the race to preeminence, but they also made critical classification errors in their haste. Packed with photos, maps, and diagrams, this orange-and-gray-heavy book emphasizes the importance of the scientific method on evaluating hypotheses and the misconceptions that arise with shoddy research. Dinosaurs are a topic of interest for many kids, and this well-researched book provides a rare glimpse into the historiography of biological science via a strongly narrative style. Grades 5-8. --Erin Anderson

Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh met in Berlin in 1863. One would think that because they were both "rising stars in the new scientific field of paleontology" that they would somehow be destined to become close friends. On the contrary, in time they became contentious rivals and enemies. Initially Marsh had little interest in anything when he was young, including an education. An inheritance made him rethink his life and at the age of twenty, he resolved to improve his lot in life and return to school. On a rock-hunting trip he found "two fossil fish vertebrae" that would alter his life. The money continued to flow as did his career. Cope, on the other hand, was a child prodigy who loved to walk the halls of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. He

was so impressed by what he saw "he started his own of rocks and fossils." Despite his father's insistence that he become a gentleman farmer, Cope pressed on, eventually becoming a student of Joseph Leidy, "the foremost U.S. anatomist and vertebrate paleontologist." By the time he met Marsh in Berlin he was already well established in the field and was "an expert in vertebrates, both living and extinct." What should have been a superb collaborative team quickly escalated into what became known as the "Bone Wars." The competition began when Marsh found an unusual bone, a bone that turned out "to be one of the most exciting discoveries" anyone had ever made in the field. It was from a pterodactyl, but not to be outdone, Cope headed for Kansas and "found a pterodactyl bigger than Marsh's." On and on they went. Cope however, was a more prodigious writer than Marsh, but Marsh had better funding for his expeditions. Many of their discoveries supported Darwin's theories and filled in those missing pieces needed to support his theory of evolution. Just how far would these two men go with their battle. Would the Bone Wars help much needed work in the field of paleontology or hinder its progress? This is an amazing look into the history of the scandalous rivalry between Marsh and Cope and their "Bone Wars." Not many young people are aware than these two men even existed, let alone the importance of their discoveries. The reader will be fascinated with the blow-by-blow account of their intense rivalry. Marsh and Cope gave us a valuable look into the past, but they also made "mistakes that other paleontologist took years to correct." The history of the field of paleontology in this book will be of high interest to anyone interested in the field, especially those interested in dinosaur fossils. The book has numerous black and white photographs and informative sidebars. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a timeline (1831 to 1899), source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore.

Scientific Rivalries and Scandals

Battle of the Dinosaur Bones:
Othniel Charles Marsh vs Edward Drinker Cope

Decoding Our DNA: Craig Venter vs the Human Genome Project

The Race to Discover the Aids Virus: Luc Montagnier vs Robert Gallo

War of the Currents: Thomas Edison vs Nikola Tesla

This book courtesy of the publisher.

The infamous "Bone Wars" refers to the period in American history from the 1870's through to the 1890's when two paleontologists, Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope, engaged in a bitter rivalry to discover the most dinosaur fossils (each working at the expense of the other, often using bribery and theft) and become the nation's leading paleontologist. The rivalry was dramatic, bitter and legendary. It also led to some of the most important discoveries about dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures.

Rebecca L. Johnson's new book, *The Battle of the Dinosaur Bones*, presents the Marsh-Cope feud in an easy to follow, well-illustrated book that would be appropriate

for children (and adults) of all ages. As someone who lives with an armchair paleontologist and is surrounded by dozens of dinosaur books all the time, I must say I LOVED this book. I don't find dinosaurs quite as intrinsically interesting as my partner Mike does, but I've always been completely fascinated with the characters of Marsh and Cope. I love how their rivalry partially started when Cope incorrectly assembled the fossil remains of the Elasmosaurus and put its head on the end of its tail instead of its neck (see below). Marsh saw it and ridiculed his colleague ruthlessly, sparking a professional animosity between the two men that reminds me of the rivalry between Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla. Which reminds me... Why isn't this a movie? I'm still amazed that the infamous "Bone Wars" hasn't been made into a major motion picture. It would make a great movie! It's already been the subject of books, graphic novels, a card game (!) and a PBS documentary called "Dinosaur Wars," but it needs to be a movie. Seriously. Just look at these two. So cinematic! I could picture them being played by David Bowie (circa The Prestige, when he played Tesla) and Paul Giamatti, no? Oh, one tiny little point of order: At one point in the book, Johnson refers to the Bay of Fundy, where Marsh discovered early fossils, as "in northeastern Canada." It's not. Trust me. That's actually where I grew up and it's in eastern Canada for sure, but it's absolutely not in the "north" by any means. A small point. For more reviews, please visit my blog, CozyLittleBookJournal. Disclaimer: I received a digital galley of this book free from the publisher from NetGalley. I was not obliged to write a favourable review, or even any review at all. The opinions expressed are strictly my own.

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