

- The tan-mottled stone on the floor, entry halls, stairs, walls and pillars is Mesozoic-age limestone imported from southern Germany
- The Mesozoic Era (65 to 250 million years ago) was the age of dinosaurs
- This limestone contain abundant fossils, from marine creatures, but not dinosaur fossils
- When the marine creatures died, they fell to the sea floor at different angles with the soft part of the sea creatures quickly rotted away or were eaten, leaving behind the harder parts
- Stone filling the some of the chambers have different color than that of the stone surrounding the fossils, which shows that mud filled the hollow spaces of the shells after the creatures died
- Many of the shapes seen in the limestone are from the same types of fossils. The stone surfaces have been cut so different slices through fossils, can make different looking fossils.

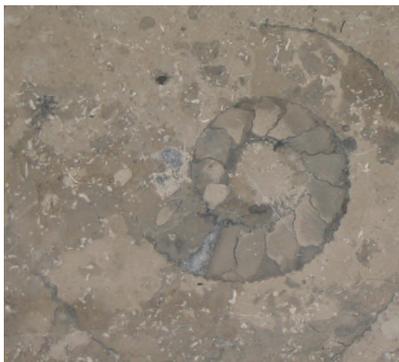
FOSSILS AT THE WILLIAM T. YOUNG LIBRARY



Quick Facts

FOSSILS AT THE WILLIAM T. YOUNG LIBRARY

- The circular, U-, V- and straight shapes are mostly fossils of sponges
- Some of the horn- and circular-shaped fossils may also represent rudistids, a horn-shaped, thick-walled mollusk (clam-like)
- Another common fossil at the library has a spiral shape
 - The chambers in the spiral shapes are similar to the shell of the modern Nautilus, which belongs to the phylum Mollusca, class cephalopoda, which includes the octopus and squid
 - Details of the modern Nautilus shells are similar to these fossil shells, the fossils are inferred to be the remains of ancient cephalopods
 - Fossil cephalopods are called ammonites



- Less common fossils at the library are shiny, dark brown and cigar-shaped, which are shells of fossil belemnites
 - The shells represent the internal chambers of another type of ancient cephalopod
 - These straight-shelled squids share similarities with the modern cuttlefish
 - A thin coating of skin covered the entire shell
- A rare type of fossil in the library stone is nut-shaped, which are shells of brachiopods
 - Brachiopods were not common in the Mesozoic Seas, although they were abundant during the Paleozoic

- Mesozoic sandstones, shales, clays and unconsolidated sediment occur in the Jackson Purchase Region of western Kentucky, but fossils in these strata are few
- Limestones in Kentucky were formed during the Paleozoic Era and are much older than the limestone from Southern Germany
 - Central Kentucky's limestones (~450 million years old) also contain cephalopod, sponge and brachiopod fossils, although different types than those in the library
 - Brachiopods are the official state fossil

