

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

In the design of animated units, it often pays to go several steps beyond the drawings before construction begins. You can make a hand operated mock-up of the mechanism, of cardboard and pins if necessary, to arrive at the simplest, easiest way of doing the job. Remember, the simpler a good mechanism is, the more difficult it is to design. Keep it simple.

Incorporated in the design should be ways and means of maintaining the mechanism. There's nothing more provoking than having to maintain a mechanism for several years after you yourself built it and be continually reminded, "If I'd only made it easier to service."

SUMMARY

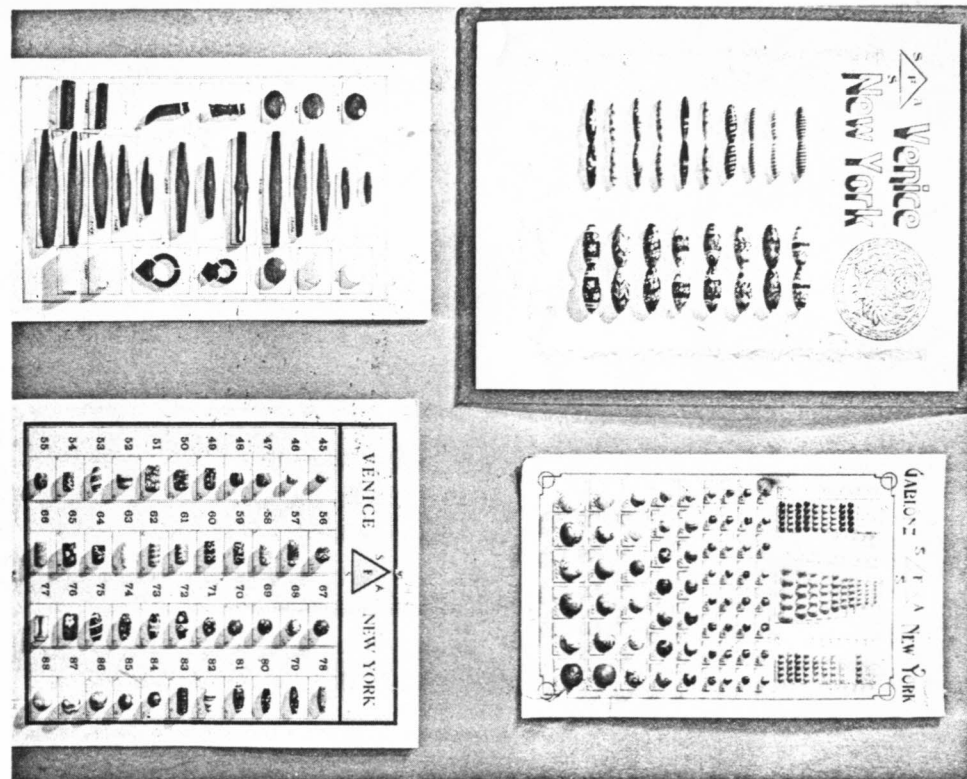
When designing and building displays and dioramas, here are a few things that might be well to keep in mind and questions you might ask yourself.

- Will the end result be worth the effort and expense?
- Will it help put across my point?
- Can it be done practically?
- Select what you wish to animate from the standpoint of human interest as well as utility.
- Keep it simple.
- Design it so it can be maintained.

THE DAN FROST COLLECTION OF TRADE BEADS AT ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM

Eight large museum cases filled with Indian trade beads, at the Illinois State Museum, take one a long step backward to forty turbulent years in the history of our western states. Colorful as they are, they are no more colorful than the last of the Indian traders, Dan Frost, who gave the collection to the Museum shortly before his death in 1943. And the bright beads are pale in comparison to the reputations of the customers who bought them. We know that Rain-in-the-Face, Yellow Robe, Sitting Bull, Yellow Tail, and Thunder Cloud have handled, admired, and bought the bright baubles now so neatly fastened to the sample cards; for Dan Frost, like his father before him, ranged over all the states, Canada, and Alaska at his profitable vocation.

Stephen Allen Frost started trading in beads and broadcloth at Fort Leavenworth in 1848 when he was twenty-eight years old, traveling, of course, with pack horses. The Indians often paid with craft work, and Stephen Frost became a connoisseur of Indian art which he sold abroad. The son, Dan, soon aided by traveling and buying collector's items for the father; and when at eighty the elder Frost retired, fifty-year-old Dan was well prepared to take over. It must have been a life filled with fascination, for Dan did not retire until he reached the age of eighty-seven in the year 1937. He gave the valuable collection to the Museum in 1941.



He lived to be almost ninety-three years old.

Dan Frost had a warm, personal relationship with his Indian customers and they trusted him, even to the redoubtable Geronimo, an Apache chief who managed to employ the attention of General Miles and a good portion of the United States Army for ten years between 1876 and 1886. If at any time Indians were in New York City, their first efforts were to get in touch with Mr. Frost. He also knew personally such men as General Custer, Col. Buffalo Bill Cody, Col. Lilly, and Wild Bill Hickok, and all those men in charge of Indian trading posts.

The beads are chiefly Italian, made before 1900. They range in size from the usual tiny ones for decorating belts, jackets, moccasins and saddle blankets, bridles and breast bands, all neatly arranged on color charts, to some that are two and a half inches long to be strung into necklaces and ear ornaments. Among them are hundreds, in all sizes, that any woman might wear with pride. When one hears the remark "for a handful of beads," such beauties were not to be sniffed at, to say the least.

It takes an old-fashioned trunk to house the large collection which was one of the features of the St. Louis World's Fair of 1903-1904.

(FRANCES S. RIDGELY, Curator of Art
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