

National Geographic Treasures of the Earth

National Geographic Treasures of the Earth, the newest permanent exhibit at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, provides a way for all children and families to investigate amazing treasures and artifacts from the past. The \$4.3 million, 7,400 square-foot exhibit features three famous excavations. Guests travel to the dig site of China's Terra Cotta Warriors, explore the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Seti I, and examine



the wreck of Captain Kidd's ship, the *Cara Merchant*. They investigate actual artifacts and find themselves immersed in the real science of archaeology.

The museum partnered with global experts to develop each exhibit component. The Xi'an Municipal Museum aided in the creation of the Terra Cotta Warrior exhibit,

and Dr. Zahi Hawass, Egypt's Minister of Antiquities, ordered a photographic survey of Seti's actual tomb, allowing an accurate recreation. Professor Charles Beeker, director of the Indiana University Office of Underwater Science, partnered with the museum to bring real science and artifacts to the exhibit, including a cannon from the *Cara Merchant*.

Tomb of Seti I

The tomb of ancient Egyptian pharaoh Seti I is the longest, deepest, and most ornate in the famed Valley of the Kings. In the *Treasures of the Earth* exhibit, families become part of the excavation team as they enter a recreated portion of the magnificent burial chamber.

In the exhibit, families experience real science and culture. As they walk through the tomb's opening passageway, clues etched into the walls alert them to the mummy's identity. Children and families search for these clues, learning about the royal identity of the mummy and deciphering hieroglyphics. They observe ancient artifacts from the time of Seti I and learn that thieves opened the tomb, and stole Seti's treasure. Families work together to reassemble the sarcophagus lid.

The Archaeology Lab becomes a great resource in this exhibit, and families can scan a replica of the pharaoh's mummy and try to find amulets in its wrappings and other clues to the past.



The Terra Cotta Warriors of China

The first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huangdi (259–210 B.C.), built an army of more than 8,000 life-size baked clay warriors to protect him in the afterlife. The warriors were forgotten for nearly 2,000 years, until 1974 when a group of farmers digging a well unearthed part of a clay warrior, launching one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century.

Children and families can discover a small army of replicated Terra Cotta Warriors, each with a unique face, in *Treasures of the Earth* exhibit. The archaeological search continues as families use real tools to unearth fragments of clay warriors in the exhibit's excavation pit. Families can problem-solve as they piece together broken fragments and reconstruct a replicated warrior.

In the Archaeology Lab, children and families can examine shards of broken clay and scan them for mineral pigments. The data helps them virtually repaint the figures and understand the ancient artistic process.

The Captain Kidd Shipwreck

National Geographic Treasures of the Earth features one of the most fascinating underwater discoveries in recent history—the wreck of Captain Kidd's *Cara Merchant* from the Caribbean.

Children and families can experience the real science of the Captain Kidd shipwreck. They hear Kidd's story and study old maps to discover where the ocean currents took the *Cara Merchant* on its last voyage. They investigate the intricacies of the underwater world in which the ship rests and discover how to repair the coral reef so it can continue its growth. The exhibit also features a simulation of a dredge machine, allowing families to remove sand to uncover examples of treasures the ship might have carried.

The Archaeological Lab contains the only cannon recovered from the *Cara Merchant*, and families can investigate the scientific conservation required to remove encrustations from the cannon and stabilize the iron.

National Geographic Treasures of the Earth is a partnership between The Children's Museum of Indianapolis and the National Geographic Society, Dr. Zahi Hawass and Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, China's Shanxi Provincial Institute for Archaeological Research and Xi'an Municipal Museum, and Indiana University Bloomington and its Department of Underwater Science. The exhibit is made possible through generous support from the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, The Enid Goodrich Fund for Educational Initiatives, R.B. Annis Educational Foundation, Marilyn and Jim Bartlett Family, and Virginia Tutterow.