

Henry the Triceratops Script

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Henry the Triceratops is the main dinosaur exhibit at the Missouri Institute of Natural Science museum, which is located in Springfield, Missouri. The Triceratops measures at 30 feet long, 11 feet tall and is made up of replicated fossils and some original fossil parts. Henry is the largest male Triceratops fossil uncovered, being at least 30 percent larger than other Triceratops found. He is one of the only dinosaurs with their original fossils on public display in Missouri.

Before we dive into the story behind the largest Triceratops, let's discuss the background of Triceratops. Triceratops were large herbivorous reptiles that lived in what is now North America during the Cretaceous period about 65-68 million years ago. The first Triceratops fossil was discovered in the year 1887 by George Lyman Cannon near Denver, Colorado. The name Triceratops translates in ancient Greek to mean "three-horned face". Two of the horns were located above the Triceratops' eyes and the other one was above its nose. These horns were used for defense from predators and competition with other rivaling Triceratops. Alongside the horns, they had a large frill, a beak, and walked on four legs. The average Triceratops could grow up to 30 feet long, 9 feet tall, and weigh up to 24,000 pounds. Triceratops is one of the most famous dinosaurs, having appeared in several movies, documentaries, and other forms media.

Now that we know about Triceratops, we can begin the story of Henry. In 2013, Matt Forir, the director of the Institute of Natural Science, took a research team to an excavation site in Weston county, Wyoming, and uncovered the remains of Henry the Triceratops. The name given to this Triceratops comes from Matt Forir himself, who named the fossil after his dinosaur-loving son, Henry. The team was able to recover at least 40% of Henry's skeleton from the dig site. The bones recovered included a majority of Henry's legs, his pelvis, parts of his spine

including individual vertebrae, a few ribs, and a couple caudal vertebrae from his tail. The team also estimated that the weight of Henry could have reached 40,000 pounds based on the size of these bones. They also noticed signs of arthritis located on his spine indicated that Henry lived to an old age for a Triceratops.

There were a lot of other facts regarding the environment and Henry's life and death which were discovered at the dig site as well. The location that Henry lived in was by an inland sea stretching from the Gulf of Mexico through the northern section of America. It is noted that Henry died by a stream based on the location of the site and the fossilized evidence of a logjam as well as the presence of prehistoric gar scales. Streams have a higher depositional setting and likely buried Henry's bones rapidly. Other interesting fossils found at the site included a fossilized pinecone and several teeth, ranging from those of crocodiles, small mammals, prehistoric birds, and even Nanotyrannus, the smaller cousin of the famous Tyrannosaurus Rex. It was likely these creatures scavenged upon Henry after he died as his size would likely deter anything from picking a fight with him. It is also noted that there are no teeth marks or other markings found on the bones recovered, suggesting that Henry never received serious injury from fighting off predators or even rival Triceratops.

One of the most notable features missing from the excavation is Henry's trademark three-horned skull. This missing detail would result in the dinosaur receiving the nickname "Headless Henry". To compensate for the missing parts, hard foam replicas were made in Wyoming to complete the dinosaur. However, in 2016 a flash flood destroyed the fossil preparation lab holding the model skull, scattering the foam pieces throughout the town. After recovering the remains of the skull and reassembling them, Forir discovered that the head would need to be around 40% larger to fit with the rest of Henry's skeleton. After making these adjustments and

fixing a few details Henry finally received his head. Since then, the excavation of the dig site that uncovered Henry has ended. However, his skull and the rest of his remains could still be at the site, buried just below the surface.

And that is the story of Henry, to learn more about Henry the Triceratops and other exhibits, you can check out the Missouri Institute of Natural Science's website at www.monatsci.org, once again that is www.monatsci.org, or see the museum in person, admission is free and donations are accepted.

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