

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IT'S NOT YOUR AVERAGE DINOSAUR LUNCH BOX BUT IT'S GOT QUITE A HISTORY

## On display through May 3

PHILADELPHIA—Sometimes treasures turn up when and where you least expect them. Just ask Crosby Brown, a Montgomery County train buff who taught art and art history for many years in Philadelphia.

About 10 years ago, Brown's friend saw an odd-looking tin lunch box in an antique store outside of York. The friend bought it and presented it to Brown for his collection of railroad memorabilia. Attached to the box was a brass plate with the name "W. Parker Foulke, Haddonfield, N.J."

"It's a beautiful box. I've had it for 10 years and assumed that it belonged to a railroad worker because my friend presented it that way," said Brown, a Wyndmoor resident who taught drawing, painting, ceramics and art history at area schools, including a Quaker school.

Years passed as Brown tried to find out something about this mysterious railroad worker with the cool lunch box. He found nothing on Foulke in terms of railroads, but enough on the lunch box to know that it was typical of its day—the mid-1800s. The grey box, measuring 7 1/2 inches by 12 inches, has a dome-shaped lid. Inside is a lower chamber for ice or warm coals to keep food cold or hot. The upper chamber is where food was placed. Through the middle of the upper and lower chambers is a hole for inserting a bottled drink. There is a clasp to lock it shut.

Life intervened and Brown gave up the research, until a couple of weeks ago. "As luck would have it, or God or the stars, I just happened to look at the box and went on the Internet to try another search of W. Parker Foulke," Brown recounted recently. He came across information on The Academy of Natural Sciences' current exhibit "Hadrosaurus foulkii: The Dinosaur That Changed the World." And everything just clicked.

It turns out that the lunch box belonged to William Parker Foulke, the Philadelphia lawyer and amateur geologist who in 1858 unearthed what turned out to be dinosaur bones in Haddonfield, N.J., and brought them to the attention of Dr. Joseph Leidy of the Academy.

The bones belonged to the most complete dinosaur skeleton in the world, and the Academy, in 1868, became the first museum to display a fully mounted dinosaur. Leidy named the dinosaur after Foulke. The museum's current exhibit commemorates the historic events.

"The coincidences are pretty incredible. Little did I know, but with my Quaker teaching background and my mother being at a Quaker retirement community called The Foulkeways (in Gwynedd, outside of Philadelphia) and this lunch box being owned by a very prominent Quaker (Foulke)—well, it just seems the stars have aligned," said Brown, who runs a customs ceramics business called Quaker Arts.

In early April he called the Academy's Barbara Ceiga, the exhibit developer, and offered to lend the lunch box for display until the exhibit closes May 3. "I was delighted to accept it!" Ceiga said with a twinkle.

"Far out! That is so cool!" was Bruce Foulke's reaction when he learned a possession of his cousin, many generations removed, had turned up. "I wonder if there were any crumbs in it."

Foulke, a Montgomery County resident and president and CEO of American Heritage Federal Credit Union, said the Foulke family is rich in history and gets together for reunions. His family donated the land on which The Foulkeways was built, and he is featured in a video in the Academy's *Hadrosaurus foulkii* exhibit talking about his famous ancestor. He hopes to borrow the lunch box later this year to add to a display of family items at the retirement home.

For now, visitors to Philadelphia's natural history museum can see the suddenly famous lunch box resting prominently alongside the real dinosaur bones that belonged to *Hadrosaurus foulkii.* "It's really neat to have that lunch box there. It really personalizes the whole exhibit," Foulke said.

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The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3-12, seniors, college students and military personnel, and free for Members and children under 3. There is an additional \$2 entry fee for "Butterflies!"

Founded in 1812, The Academy of Natural Sciences is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.