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# Detroit debuts the display of thirty-six mummies



October 10, 1:55 PM Detroit Headlines Examiner Rebecca Kelley

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One of the mummies on display.

Today, Oct. 10, is the United States debut for the "Accidental Mummies of Guanajuato" exhibition at the Detroit Science Center.

Thirty-six mummies are on loan from Guanajuato's museum in Mexico. This project will be the first time mummies have been shown in the U.S.

It was more than a century ago when during a cholera outbreak around the mining town of Guanajuato, Mexico in 1833 when people were buried in a cemetery there.

These mummies were discovered in the cemetery in 1865 because the law required relatives to pay a municipal grave tax in order to keep the bodies in the cemetery.

When the relatives could not pay this tax, they only had five years to pay the cost of the burial. If it wasn't paid, people were pulled out and relatives lost the right to the burial place and the bodies were disinterred.

Ninety percent of the bodies in the cemetery were disinterred because relatives could not pay the tax, however only 2 percent of them were naturally mummified because they were stored in a building.

The mummies appeared to have dried through a combination of high heat and low humidity

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associated with the town's mountainout, mile-high location 200 miles northwest of Mexico City.

The Guanajuato mummies that were accidently mummified, are said to be some of the strangest ones ever placed on display. Some are clothed and some aren't. There is a mother and a baby who died during a caesarean section and one according to a legend, is a woman who was said to have been buried alive.

However, parents and educators should be mindful that some young kids may be frightened by the exhibition.

Detroit Science Center, 5020 John R St., Detroit  
The "Accidental Mummies of Guanajuato" will run from Oct. 10 to April 11, 2011  
Adult Tickets - \$24.95, Senior Tickets - \$22.95  
For more information (313) 577-8400 or www.sciencedetroit.org

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