

FOSSIL LEAF

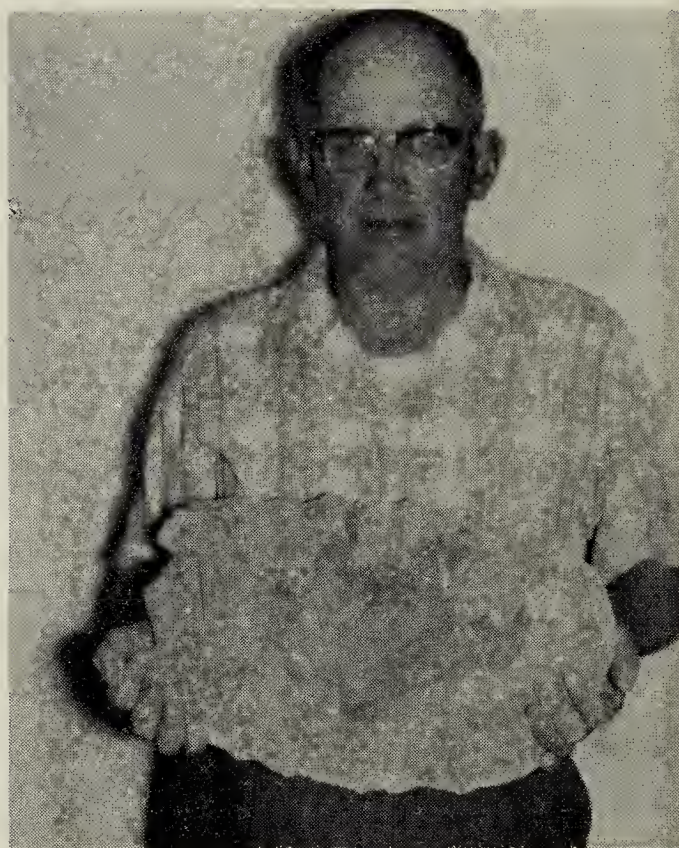
by **W. A. Gordon**, University of Saskatchewan, Regina

Between sixty and seventy million years ago, a forested, warm temperate, freshwater swamp covered southern Saskatchewan and the adjoining parts of North Dakota and Montana. The specimen in the photograph provides part of the evidence for that swamp.

The specimen is believed to have been picked up from a lignite strip mining operation in North Dakota in 1968. It probably came from a mixed series of Paleocene age sands, clays, and lignite beds which in North Dakota are known as the Fort Union group and in Saskatchewan as the Ravenscrag Formation. These rocks are the principal commercial source of lignite in the Estevan area and in North Dakota. Fossils which have been found in these beds include crocodiles, crocodile-like reptiles, and turtles, as well as a variety of freshwater snails. A large flora is known, including alder, ash, cedar, elm, dogwood, fig, magnolia, oak, sequoia, sycamore, and walnut. The specimen in question is a large, fairly complete, sycamore-like leaf.

The forests and swamps of Ravenscrag (Fort Union) time were brought to an end by a gentle uplift of the

plains region during the Eocene. This brought about a period of erosion instead of deposition. This is shown by the fact that later sediments in the area rest upon Ravenscrag (Fort Union) beds in an unconformable manner.



Theodore J. Binek, of Dickinson, North Dakota holding a fossil sycamore leaf.

Junior Naturalists

Edited by **Joyce Deutscher**, 7200 6th Ave., Regina

NATURE HOBBIES

by **Helene White**, Red Deer, Alberta

Here is an interesting hobby to wile away the long winter hours—make a collection of little people and animals to display different kinds of wood. The miniature men and animals shown in the illustration are less than three inches tall, but if you are making these wood carvings as toys for little children, you may want to make them somewhat larger.

The easiest figure to start with is the Christ Child lying in the manger hay. To make this figure, saw the wood to the length desired, then mark the face and cut down to the wood, removing the bark. The beardless shepherd boy with his crook is made in the same way, with arms glued on. For an easier fit, a longitudinal cut at the top of the arm (as shown in the inset) will help. To have hands, make two of these cuts (see illustra-