

SWOSU History Club Tours the Dead Sea Scrolls

03.09.2007

Twenty-four students, faculty, alumni and children joined the Southwestern Oklahoma State University History Club on a recent trip to Kansas City, Mo., to tour the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition.

The group also visited the expanded National World War I Museum.

John Hayden, professor in the SWOSU Department of Social Sciences and faculty sponsor of the History Club, said the Dead Sea Scrolls tour provided a rare chance to see portions of one of the most significant archaeological finds of the 20th century. Discovered in caves near the Dead Sea soon after World War II, the scrolls feature some of the oldest surviving texts of the Old Testament.

The exhibition also included other items discovered in the caves such as pottery and a variety of ancient Roman coins. All of the material dates to Second Century BC to First Century AD.

Hayden said there is even a lice comb on display, and scientists hope to examine the shells of lice on the comb to gain insight into the DNA of humans from the era.

“Short of traveling to Israel where the scrolls and all of this related material is housed, this exhibit is the best opportunity for Americans to check out this great discovery,” Hayden said.

The group also spent time at the recently opened National World War I Museum. The displays are creatively arranged, and there are interactive exhibits available along with excellent short films.

The trip was financed in part by a grant from the SWOSU Student Allocations Committee. Hayden said the SWOSU History Club was enormously grateful to have been able to use student activity funds for the trip.