

STATE HAS MANY EXTINGUISHED LAKES GEOLOGISTS SAY

Although Michigan has more than 5,000 lakes at the present time the number of extinct lakes in the state may be several. James T. Veatch, of Michigan State College, said before the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, meeting at the University of Michigan.

The aggregate surface area of the water in existing lakes, he also said, was in the past probably more than double the present area.

"The theory that lakes are doomed to disappear in the course of geological time is generally accepted by geologists and physiographers," he said. "The probable causes for the recession of shore lines and the extinction of lakes Mr. Veatch said as: changes in climate, natural drainage by streams, filling by aquatic vegetation, accumulation of silt, and subsidence of land, including streams or washed from the slopes of this enclosing basins, and by artificial drainage and clearing of land for agricultural use.

Filling by aquatic vegetation is

the most common single cause of lake extinction, Mr. Veatch points out. Filling in all stages of completion may be observed, at the present time, he said, and destruction of lakes from this cause was perhaps quite as common in the past, since very old organisms and forest swamps were found in basins which are evidently supplied by bodies of water.

"No very apparent difference exists between the age of the land surface and the proportional number of extinct lakes and amount of filling," Mr. Veatch reported. "The southern part of the state presumably is older than the northern part, since the ice retreated earlier there, but from inspection of soil maps throughout the state no great differences are apparent."

"There appears to be no uniformity of survival or mortality," he continued, "since living lakes exhibiting little or no recession and an apparent young state of development, may be closely associated with extinct ones, in the same topographic and geological environment."

A few instances of new lakes have also been noted, he said. For example, a small lake in the northern part of Marquette County is so recent that some of the pine trees which formerly grew in the dry basin are still standing."

Many phases of Michigan agriculture fall naturally into one of the latest definitions of conservation, the "wisest use of our natural resources for the greatest number of people for the greatest length of time." In a national survey, however, it is deduced that after only a century of extensive cultivation, this country has destroyed, seriously damaged or threatened with destruction an area equal to all the land which we normally harvest crops.

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