



Footprints in Stone: Fossil Traces of Coal-Age Tetrapods

By Ronald J. Buta, David C. Kopaska-Merkel

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Language: English . Brand New Book. The Steven C. Minkin (Union Chapel) Paleozoic Footprint Site ranks among the most important fossil sites in the world today, and Footprints in Stone recounts the accidental revelation of its existence and detailed findings about its fossil record. Currently 2,500 miles from the equator and more than 250 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico, the Minkin site was a swampy tropical forest adjacent to a tidal flat during the Coal Age or Carboniferous Period more than 300 million years ago. That fecund strand of sand and mud at the ocean's edge teemed with the earth's earliest reptiles as well as amphibians, fish, horseshoe crabs, spiders, jumping insects, and other fascinating organisms. Unlike dinosaurs and other large animals whose sturdy bodies left hard fossil records, most of these small, soft-bodied creatures left no concrete remains. But they did leave something else. Preserved in the site's coal beds along with insect wings and beautifully textured patterns of primeval plants are their footprints, fossilized animal tracks from which modern paleontologists can glean many valuable insights...

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