

World's first geologic map is displayed

October 7 2005

The world's first geologic map -- an 1815, hand-tinted, 10-foot-by-6-foot chart -- has gone on display at the Buffalo and Erie County (N.Y.) Public Library.

"If geology were a religion, this map would be its bible," said Robert Jacobi, University of Buffalo professor of geology.

The map -- often called "The Map that Changed the World" -- isn't only for geologists, said University of Buffalo planetary volcanologist Tracy Gregg. "This map directly addresses the relationship of people to the natural world. It directly influenced the industrial revolution, geology, biology and evolution. It forced people to think about our place in the universe."

The hand-drawn map was created by canal surveyor William Smith in 1815, based on his travels across Great Britain on foot and on horseback.

Smith was the first to recognize and record the fact that rocks on the Earth's surface told the stories of the rocks and minerals that exist below the surface.

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Citation: World's first geologic map is displayed (2005, October 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-10-world-geologic.html>

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