

EARTH SCIENCE

FROM FLAT EARTH TO PLANETARY TECTONICS

A postcard franked with a stamp showing a map of the distribution of continents and oceans in the Tertiary Period.

The map is repeated, enlarged, on the postcard. The latitude-longitude grid shown is the modern day position.

Postmark is dated on the first day of issue

ALFRED WEGENER 1880-1930
THEORIE DER KONTINENTALVERSCHIEBUNG



Note the position of the coast of west Africa and eastern coast of South America.

The postmark of Berlin shows Alfred Wagner in his hooded parka.

The Arctic explorer proposed the Theory of Continental Drift. This theory forms the basis of much of modern Geology and the new Science of Plate Tectonics.

Purpose: This open class exhibit follows the development of Earth Science and the theory of Continental Drift. Alfred Wegener, the German scientist, was the first to use the term. The theory evolved, over time, into the modern Science of Plate Tectonics.

Treatment: The advancement of Geology through the age of discovery, scientific mapping of the planet, geologic mapping and the realization that the Earth's surface is in constant motion revolutionized Earth Science. The life history of Alfred Wegener and his Earth theory is followed. His struggles to convert the skeptics is chronically examined. Vindication came, after his untimely death in 1930, with the advancement of Geophysics in the 1960s. Wegener's genius was the recognition that all the factors, geodesy, geology, geophysics, seismicity, biology, paleontology, chemistry and paleoclimatology must all contribute towards the understanding of Earth processes and history.

Research / knowledge: The exhibitor is a graduate Earth Scientist.

Significance: To human beings, nothing holds more significance than our home planet Earth. Understanding the Earth and Earth processes is important to life and prosperity.

References: Wegener, A., 1928, The origin of continents and oceans, English translation of the fourth German edition by Biram, J., Dover Publications, New York, 246 p.

Oliver, J., 1990, Plate Tectonics: The discovery, the lesson and the opportunity, in The Restless Earth, 24th Nobel Conference, Harper & Row, p.1-15 .