

A TOY-SHOP FOR BOYS: VIEWS OF CHARLES FREDERICK HARTT AND HIS PUPILS ABOUT BRAZILIAN NATURE.

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The first part of the title of this paper, extracted from a Cornell University's newspaper announcing one more trip to Brazil of its professor Charles Frederick Hartt (1840-1878), is a clear metaphor of the strong interest Brazilian nature has attracted throughout time. This work analyzes the views of Brazilian nature and geosciences expressed in the books, letters and reports of C. F. Hartt and his North American students who accompanied him in several expeditions to Brazil, namely Orville Derby, John Branner and Richard Rathbun. All of the three worked with Hartt in the Geological Commission of Brazil - GCB (1875-1877), an institution founded following the pattern developed in geological surveys in North America. With Hartt's death in 1878 and the demise of the GCB by Brazilian government, most of the North Americans returned to their homeland, except Derby, who founded two other institutions following the same model: the Geographical and Geological Commission of São Paulo (1886) and the Geological and Mineralogical Survey of Brazil (1907). The authors argue that their different perception of geological sciences supported their believes of how these sciences should develop in Brazil, that conflicted with that of the governmental agencies for which they were working. Both men were taking a long-term view of building the scientific understanding first, and only when this base was firmly established to them move on to the more practical exploitation, but the governmental agencies wanted fast, tangible economic results.