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BRIEF NOTE

McGILL MASTODON FOUND IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY¹

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During the channelizing of Glady Creek in Champaign County, Ohio in August 1978, some remnants of a mastodon (*Mammul americanum*) were dredged up and deposited on an adjacent corn field. These remains were brought by the property owner, Mr. Ned McGill, to the Ohio Historical Society for identification.

The mastodon site is located in the Mad River Valley approximately 7 miles NW of Urbana in the central portion of the Northville (7.5 min) quadrangle; NE quarter of Sec. 11, Concord Tp., Champaign County, Ohio (40°0'1' 30" N latitude 83° 45' W longitude). The site appears to have been a large kettle lake. The area is bordered on the NE by kames and on the E and W by 2 small remnant ponds (Sayres Ponds), which probably were once a part of the larger lake. The area where the mastodon remains were found appears to be near the center of the lake bed. The first bones had been dredged up by a backhoe from the creek bank and creek bottom, deposited on the adjacent field, and spread out with a

blade before anyone was aware of their presence. Consequently, their exact original location was not known.

On 12 September 1978, prior to excavating, 2 test trenches were dug at the

TABLE 1

List of Mastodon Bones Found.

- 35 skull fragments excluding those below
- Maxilla fragment with 2 molars (r)
- Maxilla fragment with 1 molar (l)
- Occipital condyle (l)
- ½ in. x 10 in. sq. ivory
- Femur without head and proximal epiphysis (r)
- Epiphysis (l)
- Femur (l) with head, epiphysis and damaged neck
- Trochanter major epiphyseal plate (l)
- Patella (l)
- Tibia, whole (l)
- Humeral epiphysis proximal (l)
- Phalanx #3 center toe (r)
- Thoracic vertebra without plates
- Sacrum without plates
- Epiphyseal plate, anterior
- Epiphyseal plate, posterior
- Caudal vertebrae 2, incomplete
- Rib fragments, 9
- Ribs, 4
- Dorsal epiphysis rib, 2
- Unidentifiable cancellous bone specimen

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north and south ends of the prospective site. The top unit consisted of rich looking black muck 43 cm (17 in) deep and included the plow zone. The second unit was iron stained and contained many small rootlets and fossils. This unit measured 84 cm (33 in) in depth. The lower unit was a gray marl with fewer rootlets and fossils and of considerable depth. We dug 43 cm (17 in) of this layer and probed an additional 122 cm (48 in) without reaching the bedrock. The bones were presumed to be contained in the marl layers. Total trench depth was 292 cm (67 inches or 5 ft 7 in).

A salvage excavation was made on 18 September 1978 by a crew from The Ohio Historical Society. A trench 13.35 m (40 ft) long and approximately 2.47 m (8 ft) wide and 2.47 m (8 ft) deep was excavated by a backhoe in an attempt to locate additional mastodon remains. This excavation produced a first rib, the sacrum, an epiphyseal plate, skull fragments, and, on the opposite bank of Gladly Creek below the water level, a toe bone (table 1). These finds were widely scattered in the excavation and appeared to have been previously disturbed, possibly by channelizing of Gladly Creek in the 1930's or 1940's. No wood samples for radio carbon dating were found in the marl. A number of other bones were found scattered in the field, but all proved to be recent wild or domestic animals.

James L. Murphy of The Ohio Historical Society analyzed samples of mollusks from the marl and characterized them as "commonly occurring in late Pleistocene marls and compatible with small lake or pond environment" (Murphy, personal communication, 1978) (tables 2 and 3). Percentages are omit-

ted from the tables because of the small number of samples collected.

TABLE 2

Mollusks Sorted from Marl in Test Trench.

	No.
GASTROPODS	
<i>Valvata sincera</i> Say	2
<i>Valvata tricarinata</i> Say	225
<i>Amnicola lustrica</i> Pilsbry	102
<i>Fossaria obrussa decampi</i> (Streng)	3
<i>Gyraulus parvus</i> (Say)	73
<i>Helisoma anceps striatum</i> (Baker)	3
<i>Helisoma campanulatum</i> (Say)	5
<i>Promenetus exacuus</i> (Say)	5
<i>Physa gyrina hildrethiana</i> (Lea)	18
BIVALVIA	
<i>Sphaerium lacustre</i> (Muller)	1
<i>Pisidium</i> sp.	20

TABLE 3

Mollusks from Field, Mixed Fossil and Recent Specimens.

	No.
GASTROPODS	
* <i>Anguispira alternata</i> (Say)	19
* <i>Mesodon clausens</i> (Say)	17
<i>Gastrocopta armifera</i> (Say)	1
<i>Valvata sincera</i> Say	8
<i>Valvata tricarinata</i> Say	9
<i>Campeloma decisum</i> (Say)	16
<i>Amnicola lustrica</i> Pilsbry	11
<i>Stagnicola palustris</i> (Muller)	3
<i>Fossaria obrussa decampi</i> (Streng)	4
<i>Gyraulus parvus</i> (Say)	4
<i>Helisoma anceps striatum</i> (Baker)	22
<i>Helisoma campanulatum</i> (Say)	17
<i>Promenetus exacuus</i> (Say)	2
<i>Physa gyrina hildrethiana</i> (Lea)	6
BIVALVIA	
<i>Anodonta</i> sp.	1
<i>Sphaerium</i> sp.	1
<i>Pisidium</i> sp.	9

An asterisk (*) indicates that the specimens are definitely Recent.