



Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum, Inc.
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Curator's Corner Jamie Clemons

Indiana's Prehistoric Mammals

Can you imagine a world where large, woolly elephants roamed, or a woolly rhinoceros munched on the scrub? How about a horse the size of a dog running around, or a sloth as tall as a man ambling about? Me either! But, those are exactly the type of animals that roamed around our home over 10,000 years ago.

For those of you interested in geology, I've included an insert of the geologic time scale. We are living in the Holocene epoch, during the Quaternary period of the Cenozoic era, which includes the last 65 million years. That's a LOT of time! (Please see pages 3-4 for some interesting timelines.)

This time has seen the final extinction of the age of dinosaurs and the rise of the Age of Mammals. During the Pliocene epoch, the glaciation of the Northern Hemisphere began and mammals became abundant. The Pleistocene epoch saw the greatest glaciation of the Northern Hemisphere. This time also saw the first humans enter North America. About 12,000 years ago, most of the large land

mammals began to become extinct.

The kind of animals we are talking about include, but are certainly not limited to, dire wolves, long-nosed peccaries, flat-headed peccaries, saber-toothed cats, giant short-faced bears, various horse varieties, woolly rhinoceros, and the American mastodons, all of which were extinct by approximately 8000 BC. The giant ground sloths were extinct by 11000 BC, while the Columbian mammoth extinct dates vary widely between 5800-2000 BC. The landscape was a great place for these animals to thrive during the last ice age. Forests gave way to grasslands which supported the majority of the animals.

Most of us know about the saber-toothed cats, the mastodons, and the mammoths. But, what about the other animals? Giant ground sloths ate primarily scrub plants and tree leaves. At the time, they were huge. A grown man only measuring up to an adult sloth's knee when standing up. Dire wolves resembled our modern-day grey wolf, but much bulkier, and weighed

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Prehistoric Beasts Invade Museum!

**Come in to see
 the teeth of some
 impressive extinct
 animals that lived
 in our area!**



MAURICIO ANTON/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/Science Photo Library

around 200 pounds! Both the long-nosed peccary and the flat-headed peccary resembled our modern-day peccaries. The giant short-faced bear resembled a grizzly bear and was around the same size as a polar bear. Only one giant short-faced bear skeleton has been found in Indiana, and it was unearthed south of Rochester and west of Nyona Lake on Chet Williams' farm. It now resides in the Field Museum in Chicago. The Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis has a cast of the skeleton on display. The three-toed horse seemed to be the most populous horse species in this area. It was roughly

Continued on page 3....

Collection Curiosities

Prehistoric Beasts

The museum is proud to be in possession of some excellent specimens of prehistoric mammals. We have, on display, teeth from two mastodons, a mammoth tooth, and teeth from a three-toed horse. If you look, there is a huge difference in the shape of the teeth between the mastodon and the mammoth due to the differences of their diets. Mastodons fed primarily on scrub, while mammoths fed primarily on grasses.



Mastodon tooth



Mammoth tooth



Left to right: Columbian mammoth (largest), African elephant (medium), and American mastodon (smallest) as compared to 6' male human

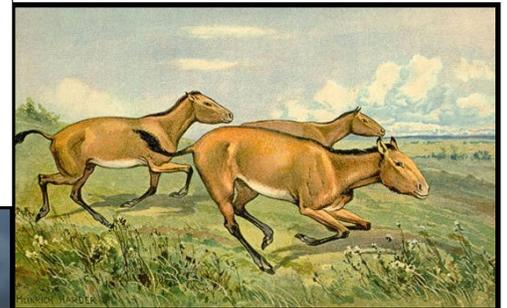
Did You Know...?

The variety of fauna during the last ice age is as impressive as the variety of dinosaurs and present-day fauna. Here's a picture and brief look at a few of the more well-known animals.

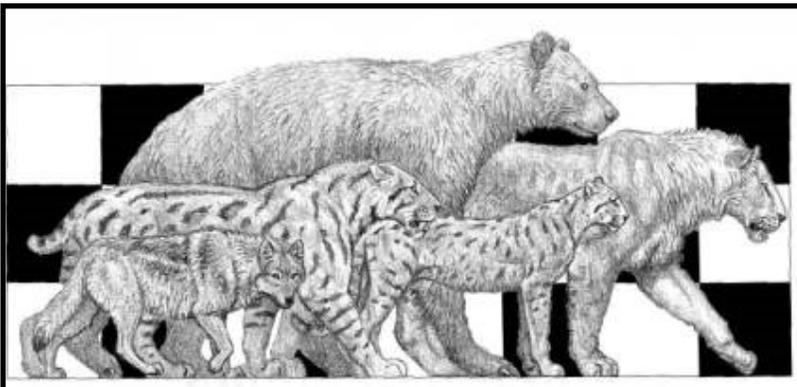


The long-nosed and flat-headed peccary both looked similar to the modern collared peccary pictured above. Collard peccaries live in Arizona, Texas, and Central America. It is believed their diets were very similar to modern peccaries and pigs. This means they were omnivores, just like humans!

Three-toed horses and camels roamed the entire North American continent. They fed on grasses, leaves, and fruit. The three-toed horse was the size of a medium to large-sized dog. The camel was about a fifth larger than modern-day camels.



Museum's three-toed horse teeth



Left to right: Dire wolf, saber-toothed cat, short-faced bear, cheetah-like cat (*Miracinonyx* sp.), American lion. The dire wolf's size was similar to a modern-day grey wolf. All were primarily carnivores.



There were two types of giant ground sloths that lived in North America: the Harlan and the Jefferson. The Harlan ground sloth is thought to have been an herbivore that grazed primarily on grasses and sedges. The Jefferson ground sloth was a browser that primarily ate leaves, twigs and possibly nuts.



This is a fun, kid-friendly geologic timeline. It seems to be modeled after the Game of Life.

Quotable Quotes

It's a lovely experience walking around a museum by yourself.

~Brad Pitt

"Even if you can't afford to travel the world, you can take your children to the museum, zoo, or local park. And don't be afraid to take them to grown-up spots. Eating out in a restaurant teaches children how to be quiet and polite and gives them the pleasure of knowing you trust them to behave.

~Kimora Lee Simmons

Recent Donations

Amanda Torres (Wabash Railway and NY Central Railway waybills); Suzie Yeager (playbills from Enchanted Hills and Wawasee High School, Syracuse Rubber ash tray, "Sounds of Hope 1981" record, *Calvary UMC directory (1992)*, *Historical Sketch of St. Andrew UMC 1976-77*); Richard D. Rollins (robin's nest); Bill Pipp (Cable family Civil War era portraits, colored photos, reading glasses, powder horn); Avon Bushong (1930s newspapers); David Alan Riddle (wooden yoke, Chinese Gardens oil painting); Cindy Brady (Syracuse Junior High yearbooks 1971-1976); George D. Weybright family (Remington-Rand typewriter with metal stand).

"Dinosaurs are the jumper cables to the human mind. Kids can't curb their enthusiasm when they're in a hall of dinosaurs and mammoths and mammoth hunters and trilobites and giant fish that could chomp up a shark. These natural objects in motion and context make kids want to read; you can't stop them from reading and thinking."

~Robert T. Bakker

Visiting Exhibits

The visiting exhibit display cases are in need of visiting exhibits!

Do you have an interesting collection? Call us at the museum, or come in, and inquire if we would be interested in putting together an exhibit of your collection. The museum, while specializing in Syracuse and the surrounding area's history, often displays temporary exhibits from

around the world. These items include stamps, coins, dominoes, wooden cups, dolls, hats, and comic books. Exhibits typically last four to eight weeks. Items are tagged, labeled, and documented in order to return them to the proper owner after the exhibit is concluded. All items exhibited in secure display cases. Thank you, in advance!

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

~Pablo Picasso





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Find us on Facebook! There's always something interesting, even if it's just the daily "National Day Of..." posting!

Museum Christmas Gifts

The museum has put together a **Wish List** of items we need or would like to have. Some of these items include a flat-screen tv, a wall mount for the tv, DVD/VCR combo, and various office supplies. There's an item on the wish list to fit every budget! For a more detailed list, please contact the museum.

Is it time to renew your membership? Yearly membership dues for the 2016 year are due, and can often be forgotten. If you are not a Lifetime member, you should receive a renewal form in this newsletter edition.

Many Lifetime members continue to give to help support the museum. If you are a Lifetime member, we have included an easy donation form within this newsletter for your convenience for such donations.

Looking for a **unique gift** for someone? The museum sells: books, postcards, keychains, and a newly reprinted 1915 local newspaper. Unique gift items include Betty Harkless Appenzeller prints and postcards. Gift bundles are also available. Come in and see what we can do to help fulfill your Christmas gift list!

We thank you for your support and hope you will continue to support us in the future.

