

Elephant-Sized Memories Linger

In Montgomery County, Illinois

Imagine you are landowner Curtis Hopwood walking along your creekbank north of Fillmore in December 1979. Suddenly you spot something smooth and bonelike—almost like a human skull poking from the creekbank...Curtis called the Illinois State Museum. A research team confirmed it was a bone—of a mastodont—a relative of the modern elephant. William Stone, worked to preserve more than memories for display and archives at the Illinois State Museum at the time of the primary Hopwood activities (January - June 1980). Stone stands with the discovery specimen, the left femur of a mastodont, *Mammot americanum*, after its preparation. The view shows the posterior side of the femur (the part you would have seen if you were walking behind the mastodont, rather than it walking toward you). Specimen currently on exhibit in the Changes exhibition, Illinois State Museum in Springfield.



Close up of the left tusk of the Hopwood Farm (Fillmore in Montgomery County) mastodont, in a depression at the top of the whitish marl, just beneath gray clay.

Note the tusk tip is gently dipping while the base (the part nearest the viewer) of the tusk also occurs in a depression. Tusk currently on display in the Changes exhibition, Illinois State Museum, Springfield.