

## Mastodons in Wisconsin



Until about 9,000 years ago huge elephant like creatures roamed what is now Wisconsin. We know this because many bones and sometimes complete skeletons have been unearthed in this state. In 1897 the Dosch family of Boaz, in Richland County, discovered the nearly complete skeletal remains of a Mastodon. A member of the State Legislature, Frank Burnham arranged for the state to buy it for \$50.00. In 1962, Harris Palmer, a geology professor at U.W. Platteville discovered that two quartzite spear points had been discovered with the skeleton. He realized that this was not only the site of a Mastodon skeleton, but also the place where humans had killed and butchered it. The spear points were from rock found 80 miles north of Boaz.

Near Kenosha, many Mammoth and Mastodon skeletons have been discovered bearing the marks of human butchering some 12,000 years ago. In June 1923 The La Crosse Tribune reported the discovery

of the remains of a Mastodon at Chipmunk Coulee, eight miles southeast of La Crosse. The beast was 18 feet long, 11 ½ feet tall and wide enough at the shoulders to “equal the width of an ordinary garage door”. The Paleo-Indians who hunted these massive creatures put modern “big game” hunters to shame, and with far more primitive weapons.

In July of 1898, Harry Anderson of Anderson’s Mill’s near Werley found a bony object protruding from the ground. Excavation revealed a Mastodon tusk nine feet four inches long with a circumference of 25 inches. Over a hundred Fennimore residents scoured the area searching out more skeletal remains. The State Historical Society dispatched a representative who purchased the skeleton.

Remains still are found occasionally. In July of 2009, DNR employee Cale Severson, while repairing flood damage to a Grant County trout stream, found a Mastodon Molar 8 ½ inches long. The Boaz Mastodon is on display at the University of Wisconsin Geology Museum.

