

HISTORY OF MARSHALL COUNTY

I. PRE-HISTORIC AGE.

Indications of the beginning of the first animal life in the territory now composing Marshall County is found in the discovery of numerous bones of the mastodon. In June, 1874, Mr. Oscar L. Bland, while bathing in a pool in Deep creek, on the farm of his father, Alexander Bland, in the northeast corner of Walnut township, Marshall county, Ind., found a very large tooth, whose weight at that time, including the debris connected with it, was about eight pounds. Further search was made, and within a few feet another tooth, about the same size, was found. Further examination of the banks of the stream was made, and, some 200 feet farther up, several very fine specimens of the remains of what must have been a very large animal, were found. The "find" naturally created quite an excitement in the neighborhood, which extended all over the country, and many exaggerated descriptions of the relics and the supposed size of the animal were made by newspaper correspondents and others. In December 1874, a correspondent of the Warsaw Northern Indianian had the following in relation to it.

Mr. Alexander Bland has discovered on his farm near Bourbon a great number of large bones of an unknown animal, that, according to careful measurement, was certainly a huge old monster, the largest ever known. Several of the teeth are in a partial state of preservation and weigh over eight pounds each, and several of the ribs are almost like the ribs of a mammoth man-of-war ship in size, the other bones being proportionately large. One of the officers of the Academy of Sciences of Chicago came here to investigate the remains, and pronounced the animal to have been over sixty feet tall and of proportionate length! The bones are to be carefully collected and sent to the Academy Museum in the city, as of rare value to antiquarians.

Of course the above statement was exaggerated beyond all reason, as neither sacred nor profane history gives any account of any living thing one-fifth the height or length indicated. But it had the effect of calling the attention of the people to it, and hundreds visited the residence of Mr. Bland and made an examination of the relics and locality where they were found, and numerous letters were received making inquiry in regard to them.

The specimens found consisted of two teeth almost exactly alike, each weighing six pounds. They were eight inches long, seven inches high from point of root to upper surface, and four inches wide, and contained five

divisions or separate grinders. The preservation was perfect, both as to the teeth and the enamel. The enamel was composed of a mixture of black, white and brownish gray. The third tooth was four and a half inches long, three and a half inches wide, three inches high, the roots having been broken off. Its weight was about two pounds. There were four sections of the vertebrae, all in a perfect state of preservation. Their measurement was about thirteen inches across at bottom part, eight inches at upper part, two and a half inches thick, twelve inches from top to bottom, and weighed four and three-fourths pounds each. The section of the skull measured twenty-one inches in length by thirteen inches in width, was about one inch thick and had about 100 brain cells. It was a grayish color, having much the appearance of the first coat of plaster on a building. One tusk was found in a splendid state of preservation. Since it came in contact with the air, portions of it have dissolved and fallen off. It was about nine feet long and about twenty inches in circumference where it joined the head. A section of the shoulder blade was also found. It measured eight inches in thickness and fourteen inches in width, and weighed thirty-six pounds. The outer extremity had been broken off, so that it was impossible to say what its length originally was. Two ribs were also found, one of which measured two and three-fourths feet in length the other, somewhat smaller. About 100 pieces of various sizes were found, a description of which is impossible. The place where they were found is low, marshy ground, on the east bank of Deep creek. All the specimens, except two of the teeth, were found in a wet place, where a branch had run into the creek, and about four feet under ground, near and under the roots of a beech tree four and a half feet in circumference. The earth under and surrounding the tree is made entirely of drift, and has undoubtedly accumulated and the tree has grown since the animal mired down and died. There is no doubt but the remains are those of a mastodon, probably about eleven feet high, seventeen feet long and about sixteen feet in circumference. They inhabited this country so long ago that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary certainly long prior to the Christian era.

The geological position of the remains of the mastodon has long been and still is a subject of dispute among geologists; in a few instances they are said to have been found below the drift in the Pliocene, and even in the Miocene; but they have generally been obtained from the post Pliocene or alluvial formations, at a depth of from five to ten feet in lacustrine deposits, bogs and beds of infusorial earth. Some have thought that the mastodons became extinct since the advent of man upon the earth, like the *dinornis* and the dodo; according to Lyell, the period of their destruction, though geologically modern, must have been many thousand years ago. The same causes probably acted in their extinction as in the case of the fossil elephant perhaps partly climatic changes, but more probably some great convulsion on the surface of the globe at an epoch anterior to man. According to Owen, the mastodons were elephants with molars less complex in structure and adapted for coarser vegetable food, ranging in time from the Miocene to the upper Pliocene, and in space throughout the tropical and temperate latitudes. The transition from the mastodon to the elephant type of dentition is very gradual.

The Mound Builders.

Since the days of the mastodon there are traces of the Mound Builders, who are supposed to antedate the American Indian. Several years ago the writer examined two mounds situated close together, located on what was called the "Burr Oak Flats," a short distance north from Maxinkuckee Lake. Digging a considerable distance into them, nothing unusual was found. The tops of the mounds arose to a height of about six feet above the surface of the ground on which they were situated, which was a level country all about, showing plainly that the mounds had been built for some purpose by human hands, but as they were composed of solid earth with nothing in them to indicate the object of their building it is difficult to conjecture what they were for. A mile or so farther west from these mounds there was also quite a large mound which seemed from the digging that had been done in and about it to have been the subject of investigation. But in that, so far as is known, nothing that would indicate what it was built for has been discovered. On the west side of Maxinkuckee lake, on what is known as "Long Point," was in the early days quite a large sized mound, which many curious investigators had dug into from time to time.

Whether these mounds were the work of the Mound Builders or not is not known only as a matter of conjecture. They were here, however, long before the Indians came to this part of the country, as trees and shrubbery grew on some of them and were of considerable size when they came. These mounds were supposed to have been intended as burial places for the dead, as, in excavating in some of them, human bones were found as well as tools and implements of stone, pottery, iron and copper. In digging into the mound on Long Point, Lake Maxinkuckee, a quarter of a century ago, human bones were found, also charcoal, stone arrow points and other Indian trinkets, indicating beyond a doubt that it was the burial place of Mound Builders or of Indians of a later period who made use of it for that purpose.

The Buffalo.

When most of the Indians found their way here is not positively known probably not until after the passage of the ordinance of 1787, establishing the Northwest Territory. At that time and prior thereto the face of the country was quite different from what it is at present. A great deal of country now covered with timber was then open prairie. A few miles west of this county was the beginning of a boundless prairie that extended westward to the Rocky Mountains. Buffalo were numerous on the prairies of the Kankakee, and frequently many of them strayed over into this region, and occasionally still farther east. As they lived on wild grass they preferred a prairie country, and therefore their regular runways were on the prairies farther west.

A pioneer who settled in a very early dry on Aubenaube's prairie, a short distance southwest of Maxinkuckee Lake, said:

"When we came to this country we settled on the prairie. There were the remains of beaver dams from a hundred yards to almost a mile long, and one over that length at Beaver lake. There were also round holes in the prairie covered with grass, that the Indians said were once buffalo wallows. Deep paths were worn in the solid prairies, the Indians said were

made by the tramp of the buffalo. We found some remains of the heads and horns of buffalo, and the Indians then here said there were plenty of buffalo in their fathers' time many years before that."

A little paper published in the region of the Wabash seventy years ago contained an account of the killing of the last buffalo that was probably ever in this section of the country. The story was as follows: "A young Miami Indian, who had never seen a buffalo, was riding along on his pony one day at a point between where Huntington and Wabash now stand, when he noticed a huge animal, the like of which he had never seen before. At first he was inclined to be scared, but as the animal moved very slowly he took courage and fired at it with his gun, and after several shots succeeded in bringing it down. He looked in wonder and amazement, not knowing what it was, until he brought some other Indians, who pronounced it an old buffalo, in all probability the last of its kind in the state."

The presence of the buffalo in this region is further proved by adopting him as one of the emblems on the state seal. And that leads to the inquiry; does anybody know why this peculiar design for our state seal was adopted? A rampant and ridiculous buffalo, and tail and hoofs up, is kicking away at a hardy pioneer, who has stood for many weary years with an ax uplifted in front of a towering oak, which seems to have been left alone in its glory, the pioneer never making a cut, the scene illumined by the rays of the rising sun that still keeps hanging on the verge of the horizon! The picture is well known, but the history of its adoption as a part of the state seal is shrouded in mystery. It was used by the territorial officers, and as the limits of the territory comprised the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota east of the Mississippi river, the design is not so inappropriate as it would appear at first thought, as buffalo were very numerous at that time in the western portion of the territory. The meaning of the hieroglyphics on the seal has been freely translated as follows: The scene represents the struggle for the possession of the territory. In the figure of the buffalo, we have the emblem of all the original inhabitants of the forest; the woodcutter is the type of that hardy race of pioneers who cleared the way for that civilization soon to burst in all its glory and splendor over the land, and which is fitly represented by the rising sun!