

PALEONTOLOGICAL NOTES

A TERTIARY PROBOSCIDIAN FROM LOUISIANA

ANDREW A. ARATA
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
TULANE UNIVERSITY

Terrestrial Tertiary vertebrate remains are very scarce in the lower Gulf Coastal Plain, except in Florida. This report of a Miocene (?) gomphotherid is but the second such report from Louisiana; the only other is the unique recovery of a Paleocene condylarth in an oil well core from Caddo Parish at a depth of 2460 feet (Simpson, 1932).

A specimen located recently in the United States National Museum is unquestionably proboscidian, and seems referable to the Gomphotheriinae. The specimen (USNM 16644) consists of the juxtaposed distal tips of the lower incisors (Figure 1). It compares favorably with the same elements of *Gomphotherium* or *Serridentinus* (of Simpson, 1945), especially the latter as illustrated by Osborn (1936). Late Tertiary gomphotherids are common in western United States and are known from the Pliocene of Florida (Osborn, 1936; Ray, 1957).

The correspondence in the U. S. National Museum associated with this specimen contains the following pertinent excerpt from a letter of Mr. Carl L. Hilderbrand, the collector: "I work for a construction co., and while on duty, I found this object and several pieces of petrified bones, which the scraper shattered to pieces. This object was found 4½ miles south-east of Leesville [Vernon Parish], Louisiana, 21 feet 9 tenths below the surface of the ground, embodied in light colored, sticky clay." The date of July, 1941, suggests that this may have been collected during construction of facilities at the U. S. Army installation at Fort Polk, which presently lies within the Kisatchie National Forest.

The importance of this specimen lies in its site of collection, as terrestrial Tertiary localities are not known within an extensive area surrounding this site. Unfortunately the stratum from which this specimen was recovered cannot be determined accurately at this late date. Vernon Parish, Louisiana, has extensive Miocene deposits, however,

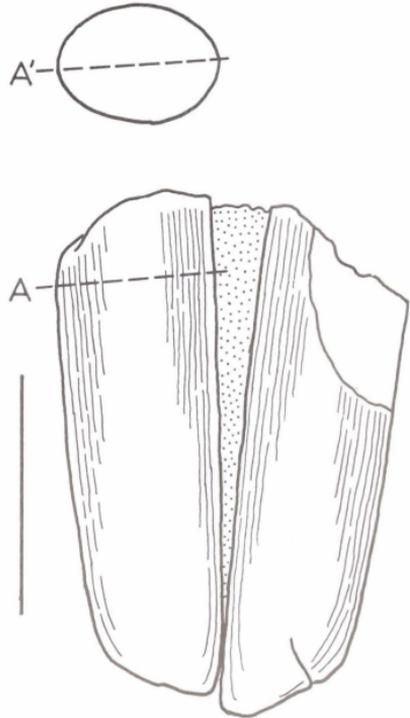


Figure 1. Distal tips of the lower tusks of a Miocene(?) gomphothere collected in Vernon Parish, Louisiana (USNM 16644). Vertical scale = 50 mm.

most of which are poorly consolidated fluvatile and brackish water sediments. Any of a series of these deposits, especially the Williamson Creek, Castor Creek, and Blounts Creek members of the Fleming formation (U. Miocene) are probable sources of this specimen and likely areas for future prospecting. Though no Pliocene faunas have been reported, some of the strata referred to the Fleming may be of that age (Welch, 1942).

I would like to thank Dr. Clayton E. Ray, U. S. National Museum, for permission to report on this specimen. This work was supported in part by funds from the National Science Foundation (GB 2458).

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May 27, 1966