

Muskox Skull Found at Grandview, Man.

by Watson Crossley, Grandview

The finding of a skull of the modern species of muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*) in a gravel deposit at Grandview is the first recorded finding of a skull of these animals in the prairie provinces, according to authorities at the Museums in Winnipeg and Regina. Of interest also is the fact that the gravel deposit in which the find was made is very near to the western shoreline of glacial Lake Agassiz, which may be an important factor in determining the probable age of the skull.

Apparently the muskoxen during the glaciated period were forced as far south as Kentucky. As the ice front retreated to the north and vegetation became re-established, they would follow the retreating ice until they reached their present range, north of Churchill.

Grandview is located in a valley that extends some miles west to the height of land connecting the Duck and Riding Mountains. During the period when the glacial lake was at its highest, this valley obviously formed a bay in the lake. The western boundary of the ancient lake has been recognized at an altitude of 1400 feet in the so-called "Herman Beaches" extending around the foot of the hills. As the lake cut deeper outlets south into the Mississippi drainage system, the level of the lake continued to drop. At a point 20 miles east of Grandview, where Highway No. 10 runs north through the village of Ashville, the lake level became stabilized for a considerable period allowing the well-defined "Campbell Beaches" to be formed at an altitude of 1100 feet. As the lake dropped to this level, the rivers draining the hills to the west continued to deposit gravel at the mouth of these rivers in the actual lake. As the lake kept dropping a new deposit would form further east. Further study may determine the origin and probable age of this deposit.

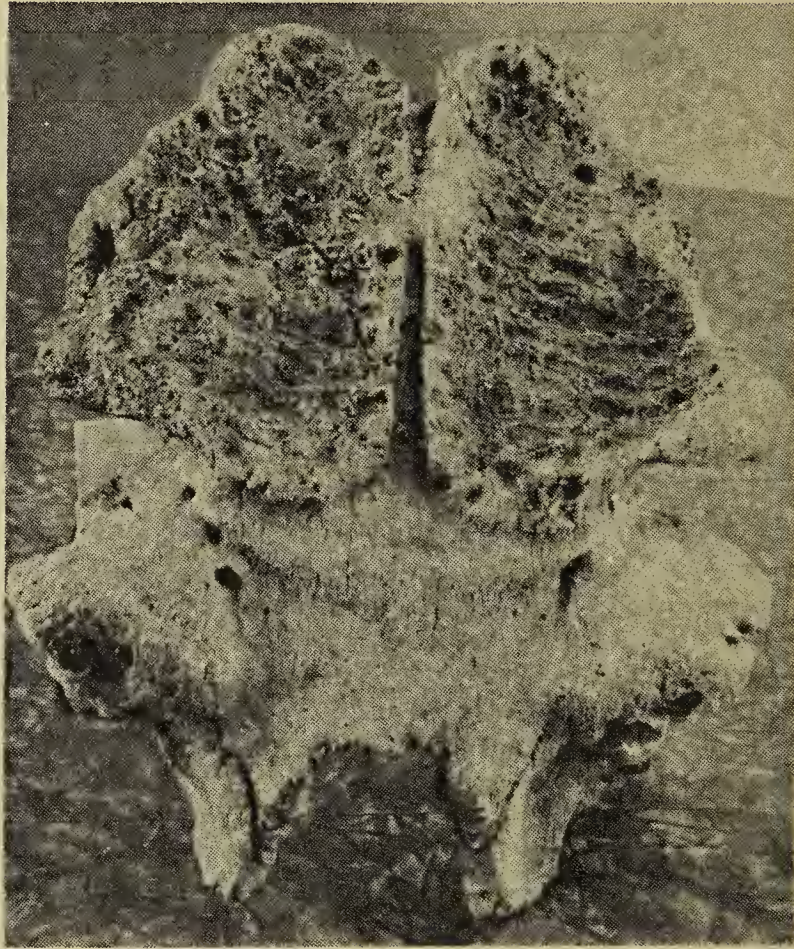


Photo by W. Crossley
Muskox Skull

It seems to a layman and an amateur that there are some indications that the gravel deposit where the fossil was found was laid down by the Valley River when it was still emptying into Lake Agassiz at this point which has an altitude of 1350 feet, some 50 feet below the greatest height of the lake. I understand the latest additions to the "Campbell Beaches" are considered by some geologists to be 11,000 years old. If further study of the deposit should verify that it was laid down in Lake Agassiz well before the formation of the "Campbell Beaches", it would pretty well determine that the age of the skull was older than that date. However, someone better qualified than I am will have to determine that.

Regardless of its age, the find is of interest. The skull itself is in fair state of preservation, being readily identifiable from photographs submitted to the Museums. At the present time it is in my small museum on the farm north of Grandview.