

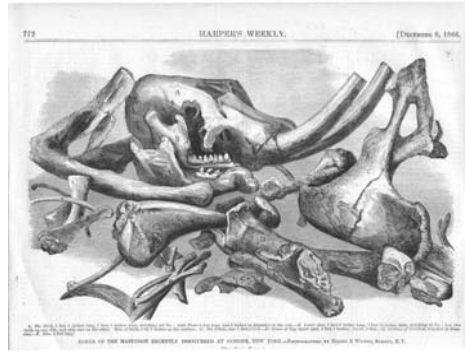
## THE DISCOVERY

“In the month of September, 1866 the workmen engaged in excavations for the foundation of a new mill to be erected by Harmony Mill Company, of Cohoes, N.Y., discovered the lower jaw of a mastodon with a single foot bone, resting upon a projection of rock between two depressions or concave walls of small pot-holes, in the margin of what afterward proved to be a larger pot-hole.”



Harmony Mill #3, today standing on the discovery site of the bones

“Several thousand of loads of muck and peaty soil with trunks and branches of decayed trees had been removed previous to coming to the level where the jaw was found. . . .”



Engraving of the discovered bones from *Harper's Weekly* December 8, 1866

“The discovery of the jaw with a single bone in such a position led to the inference that other parts of the skeleton would be found at the bottom of the pot-hole, could it be reached, and the progress of the excavation was watched with great interest. After considerable delay, the excavation was resumed and the peaty earth was removed from the eastern and central part of the pot-hole, which later proved to be the deepest portion. In the bottom of this cavity, lying upon a bed of clay, broken slate, gravel and water-worn pebbles, and covered with river ooze and vegetable soil, lay the principal parts of the mastodon skeleton . . . the head, with tusks unbroken and undisturbed, was directed to the eastward. . . .” according to a report by Professor James Hall, the New York State Geologist.

## IN THE HEADLINES

This event became the talk of the town and was quite vividly described in one issue of the *Cohoes Cataract* newspaper on September 29<sup>th</sup>:

“Assuredly there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed in our philosophy! Those who during the present generation, have trod the earth of Cohoes have never taken onto their wildest imaginings the strange things that were concealed beneath the surface. But the late excavations made



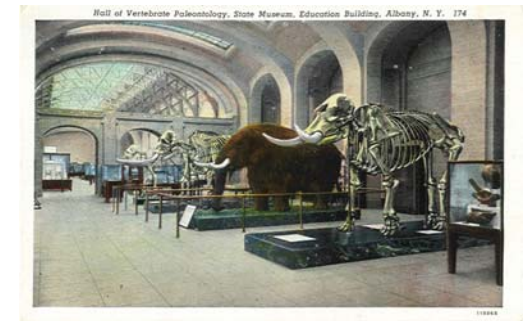
Photo of excavation for Mill #3 construction

by the Harmony Company have brought to light the fact that a huge mastodon once dwelt where our village now stands, in a an age that has been followed by the mightiest convulsions and upheavals. Fifty feet below the surface the jaw of this monster has been found, and has created in our village such a sensation as few events ever excited. The jaw is somewhat decayed and flaky but the teeth are in excellent preservation.”

## ON THE MOVE

After two-thirds of the bones were recovered, the mastodont's skeleton was displayed in the offices of the Harmony Mills Company. Later it was exhibited at the Troy County Fair and at various other places. The State of New York purchased the mastodont bones for \$2,000.

In 1867 the almost complete skeleton was assembled and displayed at the State Cabinet of Natural History on State Street in Albany; it was later on exhibit in the museum in the State Education Building. When the museum was moved to its current location on Madison Avenue in Albany, the bones were put into storage.



Museum in the State Education Building, Albany, NY

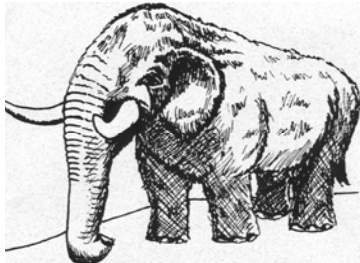
Today the conserved and reassembled Cohoes Mastodont stands in the museum's main lobby, enriched by an in-depth interactive station featuring interviews with leading scientists studying this magnificent specimen.

## MASTODONT FACTS



The Cohoes mastodont was a young male who stood about 8 feet, 5 inches tall. His tusks are 4 feet, 6 inches long. His spine is 15 feet long and he weighed between 5 and 6 tons. The mastodont is named for its teeth. In Latin, *Mast* means nipple and *Dont* means teeth. The scientific name for this creature is *Mammuth americanum*.

Mastodonts ranged in size from 6 to 10 feet tall and were 15 feet long from the base of trunk to root of tail. They weighed between 4 and 6 tons, and had a life span of 60 years. They lived in



North America – from Alaska to Central Mexico. They fed on shrubs, herbs and trees and had few predators besides the saber-toothed cat and early humans.

## *Spindle City Historic Society Membership Application*

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional Membership	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Membership	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Membership	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$15.00

*We have great plans for our home  
in the Cohoes Visitor's Center!  
Please help if you can  
with an additional donation  
to support our upcoming programs.*

\$5.00  \$10.00  other

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Mail completed form with  
membership fee, payable to  
Spindle City Historic Society, to:

June Cherniak, Treasurer,  
415 Vliet Boulevard  
Cohoes, NY 12047

## **The Spindle City Historic Society**

is a group of individuals who...

...promote and assist with original  
historical research;

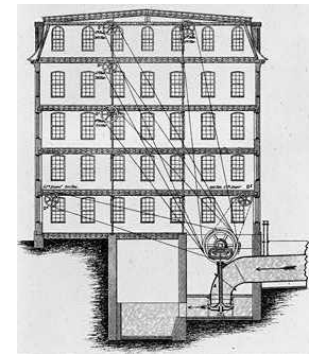
...advance a greater understanding  
of the history of the State of New  
York, particularly of Cohoes and  
its surrounding area;

...gather, preserve, display, and  
make available for study artifacts,  
relics, books, manuscripts,  
papers, photographs, and other  
records and material relating to the  
history of Cohoes and the Capital  
Region;

...encourage and author signs that  
mark places of historic interest;  
and,

...advocate for the  
maintenance of the historical  
character of Cohoes by  
encouraging preservation and  
restoration of its physical  
structures.

# A GUIDE TO THE COHOES MASTODONT



**Spindle City Historic  
Society**

518-237-7999

and

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