THE ELK IN EARLY WISCONSIN

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The elk (*Cervus canadensis canadensis*) was once a common animal in Wisconsin and there is reason to believe that it occurred throughout the state. At present there are records of its presence in 50 of the 71 counties. Remains are still being found so that there is a strong probability that many of the gaps in the range will be filled. The elk ate grasses and sedges to a greater extent than the other members of the deer family. On the Great Plains it was formerly found intermingled with buffalo. In Wisconsin the elk was most numerous in the open woodlands, oak openings, and at the border of grassland and forest. There habitats prevailed in the southern and western parts of the state.

Radisson\(^2\) was in northwestern Wisconsin in 1661–62 and mentions "staggs" among the animals killed. A few years later Allouez\(^2\) found "large and small stags [deer]" abundant at the mouth of the Wolf River, Winnebago County. During Le Seur's voyage up the Mississippi in 1700, an elk was killed on the Black River, La Crosse County. The account reads: "On the 10th, [September] at daybreak, they heard a stag whistle on the other side of the river; a Canadian crossed in a little Sciou (Sioux) canoe that he had found. He soon after returned with the body of the animal, which is easy to kill in the rutting season, that is from the beginning of September to the end of August [October]. During that season the hunters make a little whistle of the first bit of wood or cane, and when they hear a stag whistle, they answer; the animal supposing it to be another stag that whistles comes to them, and they kill it without any difficulty."\(^3\) Subsequently Le Seur passed the mouth of a river so abounding in elk and other large game that it was called Bon Secours, this being the present day Chippewa River.

Jonathan Carver\(^4\) arrived at Lake Pepin on November 1, 1766. The land on the Wisconsin side was described as covered with grass and a few groves of trees near which large droves of elk and deer were frequently seen feeding. The following year he ascended the Chippewa River and mentions that for a distance of sixty miles the banks contained fine meadows on which were seen larger droves of elk and buffalo than he had found elsewhere. Capt. Goddard, who accompanied Carver, wrote on May 29, 1767: "This is a fine river . . .; there is plenty of animals,
such as stag, deer, bear and buffalos, of which we killed every
day one sort or other.”

Information on the early status of the elk in southeastern Wis-
consin is scanty. Fonda carried the mail from Green Bay to Chi-
cago the winter of 1827-28. The third day out of Milwaukee he
came to a prairie where some resident Indians were starving
even though the country teemed with elk and other game. There
is no subsequent mention of a live elk. Lapham (1846) wrote
that “horns of the elk are still occasionally found scattered over
the prairies.”

Elk appear to have disappeared from southwestern Wisconsin
prior to 1840. Hoffman⁸ was at Prairie du Chien in February,
1834. The army officers at the fort maintained dogs especially to
run elk which abounded at a distance “over the river.” The latter
could have been either the Wisconsin or the Mississippi. Smith⁹
was in the lead region in 1837 and was informed that elk were
still to be found along the shores of the Wisconsin. A decade later
this animal was stated by McLeod¹⁰ to be extinct.

Schoolcraft¹¹ was at Rice Lake, Barron County, in August,
1831. In this area, described as prairie, elk and deer were com-
mon. The tracks of these animals were also abundant on the sand
bars at the mouth of the Chippewa. Brunson, in 1843, traveled
by team from Prairie du Chien to La Pointe, a good indication of
the openness of the country. In describing the route from Black
River Falls to Chippewa Falls, he stated that it was largely
through prairie where, “The elk and deer tracks were very
numerous. Some of the company saw elk but we killed none.”¹²

In 1837, Davis¹³ assisted in the survey for a railroad to run
from Portage to Chippewa Falls. Numerous shed elk antlers
were noted along the line. No elk were seen and he suggests that
there may have been none at that time.

The most extensive account of the elk in Wisconsin is con-
tained in the following paragraph from Copley: “The elk is to be
found in the west, on the neutral ground lying between the Sioux
and Ojibway nations; at the head waters of the Wisconsin; in
the northern parts of Michigan, and near the Chippewa, St.
Croix, Rum and Red rivers. This is one of the noblest looking
animals in our country. When on the run, its head is held high,
its back curved, on which its horns appear to rest. At one time,
in 1837, I saw a drove of five hundred; and a more animating
sight I never beheld. I shot one, and being at that time a prisoner
at the foot of Lake Pepin, and wishing to be generous to my
enemies, I took it to the chief of the tribe that held me. Soon
after I was liberated, and with my cousin Johnson permitted to
depart.”¹⁴
Bunnell came to La Crosse in 1842 and mentions frequently the hunting of elk, especially along the Trempealeau River. Regarding distribution he wrote: "Elk were also abundant there [mouth of the Chippewa River] in the Mississippi bottoms, on the prairie, and in the oak thickets below and east of Eau Claire, extending their range over the headwaters of all the streams south of the pine-belt as far as Black river. The writer saw a band of sixty elk, in 1845, on a prairie about eight miles below Eau Clair, two of which were killed by William Richmond and myself."\(^{15}\)

**EXTINCTION.** The elk, being a large, unwary animal, was extirpated quite early on the prairies. It persisted longest in the western part of the state where it had learned to adapt itself to woodlands. Small droves were pursued with persistence by hunters with the knowledge that the majority of the elk could be killed.

In November, 1866, a band of twelve old and young elk crossed a road in which two hunters were standing, about fifteen miles west of Menomonie, Dunn County.\(^{16}\) When a dog seized one of the young, the adult elk came to the rescue giving the hunters an opportunity to shoot nine of them. Three elk escaped.

The elk may not have become until 1868. Early in January of this year two hunters from Stevens Point hunted west of town, across the Wisconsin River, and returned with a "buck" that weighed 573 pounds and had antlers with a spread of six feet.\(^{17}\) Only an elk would fit these data.

Strong\(^{18}\) reported in 1883 that elk were to be found very rarely in northern and central Wisconsin. It is very doubtful if they persisted to this date. In the spring of 1886, six elk killed in the "Lake Superior regions" were shipped through Chetek.\(^{19}\) It is highly probable that they were killed in Minnesota.

**PLEISTOCENE ELK.** An extinct species of elk, *Cervus whitneyi*, found in a crevice while mining for lead at Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, was described by Allen\(^{20}\) in 1876.

The University collection contains the radius of an elk, UMZ 12,707, found at Boyd in 1937, and donated by George B. Lane of Bloomer. This specimen, identified by U.S. National Museum, was overlain by five to six feet of peat and six feet of marl, and may be Pleistocene.

On November 13, 1953, through the courtesy of Professor W. F. Read, Lawrence College, I received the fossilized basal portion of an elk antler. It was found in the bed of a creek in northeastern Columbia County by Luzern Livingstone, of Madison, at an unknown date. This is a massive antler and measures nine inches in circumference between the bez and trez tines.
Since it was not found in a specific geological formation, its age is not determinable.

INTRODUCTIONS. An illustrated article by Reese describes the attempts to restore the elk to the Wisconsin fauna. In 1913 a carload of elk from Yellowstone Park was shipped to Trout Lake. The sole survivors were two females. Later a bull elk was obtained and the herd increased slowly in the enclosure provided for it. A second carload of elk, all young, consisting of 32 cows and eight bulls, was obtained from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in February, 1917. Although the animals arrived in good condition, 14 died during the winter. In August, 1932, the 15 elk remaining were released from the enclosure. They were not known to have ranged out of Vilas and Oneida Counties. At the present time not over two elk survive due to shooting by hunters and other causes.

RECENT ELK REMAINS. Bones of elk are seldom found, but the antlers have been discovered in considerable numbers. Due to their porosity, antlers on the uplands soon disintegrate. The process is hastened by gnawing by rodents. At the present time antlers are found only in stream beds, lake bottoms, and marshes, in or around boggy springs, and in Indian burials. Where waters have a high alkalinity, due to "lime," destruction of the bones and antlers by decay is much slower than in acid waters. Elk were drowned frequently by breaking through the thin ice. Miring, either accidental or from stampeding by wolves and Indians, appears to have been a more frequent cause of death.

The Indians sometimes threw antlers into sacred springs and, hung the heads or antlers in the crotch of a small tree as propitiatory offerings. In 1859 the Wisconsin Historical Society received two specimens of elk antlers embedded in oaks, one from a white oak cut in Sauk County, and the other from a bur oak from Walworth County. About 40 years ago the Society gave the Forest Products Laboratory at Madison a specimen embedded in a white oak and this is still in their possession. The section of this tree shows approximately 95 annual rings and is 14.5 inches in diameter. If it is the specimen found in Sauk County in 1857, the tree began life about 1760, and it is probable that the antler was hung in it 10 to 15 years later.

RECORDS. The distribution of elk as shown by the literature and the discovery of antlers is shown on the accompanying map. The range of the elk in the state was strikingly like that of the buffalo, showing that the elk was also predominantly a prairie animal. The records by counties are given below.
Adams. Two hunters, L. S. Crain and J. Haggerty, killed an elk on the Roche-a-cri River in November, 1855.¹ Being too large to transport, it was sold for $10.00. An elk horn four feet in length was found in the county under a windfall in 1890.²

¹Milwaukee Daily Wisconsin, Dec. 11, 1855. ²Grand (Wisconsin) Rapids Reporter, April 24, 1890.

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**Figure 1.** Records of Elk in Wisconsin.

Ashland. Jackson states that he has examined antlers from the county.¹


Barron. Schoolcraft, as previously mentioned, found elk tracks numerous at Rice Lake in 1831. Government surveyors in 1852–53 found a herd of five elk near the present site of Prairie Farm.¹
Hoy² reported elk on Hay River in 1863. This stream flows through Barron and Dunn Counties.


Bayfield. An antler was found near Bayfield by William Cadotte.¹

¹Wis. Cons. Bull., 2 (6), (June, 1937) 38.

Brown. Brayton,¹ writing in 1882, stated on the authority of B. H. Van Vleck that elk were still to be found in the vicinity of Green Bay. The accuracy of this statement is doubtful, especially from the following: "An elk horn was found in digging the water-works trench on Webster Avenue. . . . It was in the old swamp . . . and embedded about six feet in the ground. . . . The memory of the oldest inhabitant (and there are some who have lived here 70 years or more) does not go back to the time when elk roamed in these forests."² Only one antler and no bones were found.

Under date of July 23, 1953, H. V. Bloemen, Conservation Department Warden, wrote that about 1900 his father while seineing at the mouth of Ashwaubanong Creek, which enters the Fox River about a mile below DePere, brought up a part of an elk antler with a large piece of the skull attached. About 1930, while a student at Lawrence College, he gave the antler to Dr. Rufus Bagg. The specimen cannot now be located.


Buffalo. Cooke gives a good account of the abundance of elk in 1856. The Sioux crossed the Mississippi to hunt in the county on account of the abundance of game. Regarding the winter of 1856–57 with its deep snow, he wrote: "During the winter we often saw elk cross the valley, always led by a bull elk. . . . He would take a few jumps and stop, the cows would follow, jumping into the bull’s tracks. Then he would move on a little ways and again stop, then the cows would follow as before."¹ Harvey Brown killed a few elk during this winter.²

The Indians in the fall of 1857 killed three or four elk in the vicinity of Elk Creek.³ This stream flows into the Buffalo River in the northeastern corner of the county. In 1858 a party of hunters from Lancaster killed an elk on Beef (Buffalo) River.⁴ Kessinger,⁵ writing in 1888, stated that elk were once common but were now extinct. Mr. Jacob Bream, of Cream, informed Cory⁶ that in 1870 he found a pair of antlers attached to the skull in Township 22, Range 11, West.

Burnett. There is no definite record. Curott had a trading post on the Yellow River the winter of 1803-04. In the translation of his journal elk are mentioned several times. This is incorrect for the MS reads original, the French for moose. His haunche of Manichinisse may mean elk, but I have been unable to find an Indian or French-Canadian word to support this suggestion.

In October, 1877, a party of hunters camped in the Town of Waubeek, Pepin County, en route to the Yellow River where they expected to get elk.\footnote{Curot, Michel. Journal, 1803-04. Wis. Hist. Colls., 20 (1911) 396. Durand Times Oct. 11, 1877.}

Chippewa. Elk Creek rises in the Town of Howard. Joseph Roberts came to Chippewa Falls in the spring of 1840 when deer and elk were plentiful.\footnote{Chippewa Falls Herald, Nov. 26, 1880. Eau Claire Leader, Jan. 6, 1923. Chippewa Falls Herald, July 3, 1874. Chippewa Falls Herald, Nov. 16, 1888.} H. A. Town settled in the Town of Wheaton in 1857.\footnote{La Crosse Republican, Aug. 23; Milwaukee (d) Sentinel, Sept. 1, 1854.} In March, 1862, a drove of about a dozen elk appeared for the first time in years. Neighbors, mounted on horses, wantonly slaughtered them.

A writer mentions that elk were extinct in 1874, but that eight years previously he found their tracks numerous in the northern parts of Chippewa and Dunn Counties.\footnote{Clark. An elk weighing 450 pounds dressed was killed on Halls River, 20 miles above Black River Falls, by Isaac S. Mason on August 9, 1854. This would place the locality in southwestern Clark County. The antlers were stated to weigh 43.5 pounds.} Two hunters are stated to have found two large elk, and wounded one of them, in the Town of Arthur in November, 1888.\footnote{Clark.} It is doubtful if elk persisted to this date.

Clark. An elk weighing 450 pounds dressed was killed on Halls River, 20 miles above Black River Falls, by Isaac S. Mason on August 9, 1854. This would place the locality in southwestern Clark County. The antlers were stated to weigh 43.5 pounds.

Columbia. Numerous remains of elk were found in Swan Lake about 25 years ago while dredging for marl. About five years ago some boys brought to Elmer A. Werner, Pardeeville, the antlers of an elk, part of the skull containing a few teeth, and some of the other bones. Only the antlers were preserved and these I have seen. The outside measurement of one antler was 44.75 inches.

J. W. Jamieson, Pardeeville, has fragments of two antlers found in Swan Lake about 15 years ago. These measure 31 and 37 inches, respectively. M. G. Cornford, Randolph, has the basal fragments of two antlers, found in a tamarack swamp, Town of
Courtland, which I have seen. They measure 24.5 and 17.5 inches.

Crawford. There are several references to the abundance of elk along the Kickapoo River in the 1850’s.¹

¹Lancaster Herald, Sept. 25, 1849; Milwaukee Wisconsin, June 20, 1850; Milwaukee Advertiser, Jan. 14, 1852; Prairie du Chien Courier; Milwaukee (w) Wisconsin Nov. 26, 1856.

Dane. There is no reliable record of a live elk having been seen in the county. H. A. Tenney, who came to Madison in 1846, merely states that the elk found a home here.¹ Nathan Crampton, who settled in Madison in 1847, informed Willis E. Barber² that he had stood for hours watching herds of elk and deer gather in the evening on the present site of the University campus. On April 26, 1942, I consulted Dr. Samuel Chase on this statement. He said that Crampton was fundamentally honest but confused in his knowledge. He doubted the statement and gave as evidence that his grandfather, Jonathan Larkin, settled at Lake Wingra in 1842, and that no elk were present at that time.

In 1891, A. Waterman, while cleaning out a spring on his farm in the Town of Rutland, near Stoughton, found a pair of antlers attached to the skull.³ An antler four feet in length was recovered from a spring on the Ephraim Baker farm, Town of Bristol, in 1894.⁴ On May 14, 1939, I examined part of an antler that was found in the small bay at the southwestern corner of Fish Lake, Town of Roxbury. There is a part of an antler 21 inches in length at the Nevin Fish Hatchery and presented by Otis Bersing. The latter informed me that it was found by a local resident in 1917 in the Town of Rutland while excavations were being made on Badfish Creek, near County Trunk A, about three miles southeast of Oregon. While digging a trench in the Town of Vermont in 1886, an antler weighing 14 pounds was found.⁵

Numerous remains of elk were found at Lake Wingra in excavating the lagoons at Wingra Park, and in dredging for the Lake Forest real estate development.⁶ One antler, UMZ 4324, was found in 1906 or 1907. On July 16, 1953, through the generosity of Mrs. John Russell, a fine pair of elk antlers attached to the skull was obtained for the University. This find was made in Lake Wingra by her brother William Priebe. Subsequent search of the local papers revealed that the discovery was made in July, 1918.⁷ The entire skeleton was present. Mrs. Russell informed me that subsequent to removal of the antlers, Priebe returned to secure some of the bones but could not locate the place. Length of antlers, 51 inches; spread 47.5 inches; weight with skull, 34.5 pounds.
Harold Longua has informed me that in 1928, while seining for carp in the "widespread" of the Cherokee Marsh (Yahara River) he brought up a large elk antler. I have a section of an antler, 19 inches in length, donated by Art Amundsen, Nevin Fish Hatchery. It was found about 40 years ago by William Anderson on Straavoldson's Marsh, Section 16, Town of Dunkirk.

Dodge. It is stated by Charles Mortimer that a fine elk was seen in the Town of Ashippun in the spring of 1846; also a pair of antlers was unearthed in plowing a piece of marshy ground in the fall of 1897.¹

The University Museum has a pair of antlers, UMZ 4325, originally donated to the Wisconsin Historical Society by Mrs. Emma House, Reeseville. There are no further data.

In cleaning the Vita, or Ackerman, Spring at Beaver Dam many elk and deer antlers were found.²

On October 6, 1953, the University received from V. C. Hamilton, Fox Lake, two elk antlers found in Fox Lake by C. M. Sager about 50 years ago. The antlers represent two elk as they differ considerably. A. Amundsen has informed me that two antlers were found in Fox Lake in 1935 while seining for rough fish.

Douglas. Elk, deer, and moose were mentioned in 1855 as attractions for tourists.³ Sergeant William Glader stated that in this year there was little to eat at Superior except elk and fish.⁴

Dunn. A pioneer wrote in 1884 that herds of elk formerly roamed the "Big Woods" that covered the western part of the county; that the elk made its best speed while trotting and was ungainly when forced into a gallop.⁵ Gilbert⁶ had a mill on the Menomonie River in 1843 and obtained elk meat from the Indians. In August, 1855, Harvey Lesure saw a herd of twelve elk near the present site of Colfax.⁷

Elk, by 1855, had become uncommon. Albert Quilling came to the Iron Creek District in June, 1855.⁸ There were only a few elk, but shed antlers could be found in the groves and prairies. He states that in the vicinity of Elk Mound a Mr. Ramsey found two bull elk with locked horns and he killed the one that re-
mained alive. Eugene Wiggins came to the county in May, 1855, and never saw more than one drove of elk. In the fall of 1857, Cartwright came upon the tracks of twelve to fifteen elk and pursued them all day without success. Near the Eau Galle River, in December, 1858, he pursued seven elk. One was wounded and found dead the next day.

An elk killed in the Menomonicie woods in February, 1860, by K. Freeman, was brought to Sparta and shipped to Fond du Lac. John Bailey, who came to Knapp in 1862, spent much of his time hunting deer and elk. Two elk were killed by a Menomonicie hunter in November, 1864. The last elk were killed in 1866.

Bartlett mentions seeing several good specimens of elk antlers found in Elk Creek in the southeastern part of the county. An antler measuring four feet and five inches was found in the creek in 1879.

Eau Claire. Ivory Livermore came to the Town of Otter Creek in 1856 and he saw many elk. His father killed two or three from a herd of sixteen. An elk was killed in 1857 a few miles west of Eau Claire. On January 1, 1858, a herd of 60 elk was seen in the Town of Bridge Creek. This herd was pursued on the 2nd by three men, among them the noted hunters J. F. Stone and Charles Buckman. Late in the afternoon, they caught up with the elk on the Buffalo River, about three miles below Osseo, Trempealeau County, and killed four of them. The pursuit was continued the following day and four additional animals killed.

Nine elk were killed from a drove in the Town of Bridge Creek in January, 1860. The four elk subsequently exposed for sale in the Milwaukee market and stated to have been killed in Eau Claire County, were probably from this lot.

Fond du Lac. It was stated in 1860 that elk were common a "few years ago". While excavating at Lake de Neveu, Town of Empire, in 1867, the antlers and skeleton of an elk were found. Among the bones was a flint arrowhead. In 1875 a pair of antlers was found in a spring in the Town of Oakfield.

On July 17, 1953, the boys at the Boy Scout Camp on Long Lake, Town of Osceola, while swimming, found an antler and
several bones of an elk. Prof. R. A. McCabe and I went to Long Lake on July 30 to investigate the site. The remains were found close to the pier in 5 feet of water and about 100 feet from the shore which is a high bank. The antler measured 47.5 inches. Subsequently the other antler and most of the bones were recovered. These are now in the University collection. Clyde T. Smith, Acting Area Coordinator, Kettle Moraine State Forest, informed me that Long Lake was originally largely marsh, and was converted to a lake by a dam constructed about 70 years ago.


Grant. Hollman1 settled at Platteville in 1828 and at that time elk and other game were to be found in “astonishing quantities”. The MS of his autobiography was written in 1870.

1Hollman, F. C. Auto-biography of Frederick G. Hollman. Platteville. n.d., p. 3.

Green. An elk antler was found in 1877 on an uncultivated piece of ground near Brodhead.1 Old settlers stated that it was about 40 years since elk occurred in the neighborhood.

1Brodhead Independent: Madison State Journal, May 1, 1877, 1.

Green Lake. Dart1 came to the county in 1840 when elk were still to be found on Willow River, and at times around Green Lake. Shed antlers were found often. Bones of elk were found in a “sacred” spring near the Fox River.2 Leroy C. Hansen, of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, has informed that some years ago, while seining for rough fish, he found a pair of elk antlers in the Fox River at Princeton.


Iowa. In 1861, while prospecting near Dodgeville, J. A. Hamilton sunk a shaft eight feet deep.1 On removing some rock he found a complete elk antler that became crumbly on exposure. I have the basal part of an antler donated by Henry Wagner, Mineral Point. It was found by him on August 2, 1953, in the Rock Branch of the Pecatonica River, Town of Mineral Point. The antler with the above data was brought to me by Cleveland P. Grant.

1Dodgeville Advocate: Madison Argus & Democrat, Aug. 6, 1861, 1.

Iron. Jackson1 states that he has examined antlers of elk found in this county.


Jackson. On January 31, 1857, fifteen elk were killed out of a drove of thirty.1 The locality is not stated.

1Black River Falls Banner: Janesville Democratic Standard, March 2, 1857.
Jefferson. Excavations at ancient Aztalan yielded fragments of antlers and several scapulæ of elk. The latter, perforated with a square hole, were used to remove the "bark" in the preparation of fibers.

A pair of "gigantic elk horns" was brought up from the bottom of Rock Lake by a fisherman in 1875. Hough mentions a perfect pair of antlers found near Palmyra in 1895. According to Hawkins, the elk had disappeared from Faville Grove Prairie prior to settlement. He saw two antlers that had been plowed up and had heard of others being found.

Mr. Omar Huebner has written me that in plowing a piece of low ground, about 1918, he uncovered a single elk antler about four feet in length. He has about 15 inches of the basal portion of the beam, the remainder being too decomposed for preservation. It was found 100 yards south of U. S. Highway 16, Section 17, Town of Ixonia.

In 1932 a pair of elk antlers was found deeply buried at Lake Ripley by workmen constructing a bathing beach. They came into possession of Mrs. Ernie Wrolstad, Amherst Junction, Wisconsin. Elmer Herman, Fisheries Supervisor, has informed me that on April 8, 1954, an elk antler was found in this lake in seven feet of water.

Chester J. Skelly, Milton, has informed me that an elk antler found by carp seiners in Lake Koshkonong about ten years ago is now in the possession of Carl Schmeling, Maple Beach, Lake Koshkonong. The brow tine of a small antler, found in July, 1953, on the Faville Grove Prairie, Town of Milford, has been donated by James Zupke, Lake Mills.

Kenosha. In 1896 Otis Baker, Bristol, presented to the Historical Society of Wisconsin an elk antler found at Bristol in 1851. It weighed 22 pounds. This specimen cannot be located.

La Crosse. Bunnell has been previously cited on the abundance of elk when he arrived in 1842. A party of La Crosse hunters under Major Brandenburg killed seven elk on a hunt made in December, 1858.

In a cave in the Town of Barre, there were found in 1873 drawings of an elk and a bodkin seven inches in length, made presumably from the leg bone of this animal.

2 Watertown Democrat, Oct. 7, 1875.
3 Hough, B. Elk horns in Wisconsin, Forest and Stream, 45 (1895) 371.


Lafayette. Elk Grove, Town of Elk Grove, is reputed to have been so named from the former occurrence of elk.\(^1\) Charles Rodolph settled at Fort Hamilton, now Wiota, Town of Wiota, in 1834, at which time there were some elk.\(^2\) On January 16, 1954 Fred Wagner showed me the basal portion of an elk antler, 22 inches in length, loaned by Edward Saalsaa, South Wayne. It was found by him about seven years previously at the junction of Applebranch Creek and Whiteside Creek, Town of Wiota.

\(^2\) Rodolf, C. In *History of Grant County, Wisconsin.* Chicago (1881), p. 800.

Lincoln. On October 19, 1874, Joseph Gordon, wrote from Grandfather Falls, Town of Rock Falls, that he had found an elk antler a mile to the eastward. The antler was received by the editor of the Wausau Wisconsin.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Wausau Wisconsin, Nov. 4, 1874.

Marathon. Cory\(^1\) was informed by Paul Hohnheiser, Wausau, that he had a large pair of antlers, measuring 45 inches in length, found in a lake in that vicinity. An antler was found by N. C. Ewing, Wausau, at the bottom of Lake Go-to-it, Town of Norrie.\(^2\)


Milwaukee. There were no elk at Milwaukee in 1800, according to Le Claire.\(^1\) A pair of elk antlers, said to be the largest ever taken in Wisconsin, was on exhibit in Milwaukee in April, 1857.\(^2\) Their provenance is not stated.

Hough\(^3\) mentions seeing a skull and antlers in the taxidermy shop of Carl E. Akeley in Milwaukee. They were found at Hales Corners, about 18 miles from the city. About 1889 the Public Museum received from F. Miller part of an antler found four feet below the surface at Miller’s Brewery in Wauwatosa.\(^4\)


Oneida. Arthur A. Oehmcke, Wisconsin Conservation Department, has informed me of the discovery of elk antlers at the edge of a cedar swamp, Sec. 32, T38N, R4E, northwest of Willow Lake. In 1914 or 1915, Ed Wilson, a trapper, found an elk antler that is now in the possession of Charles Talbot who has a resort south of Willow Lake. Mr. Talbot, in 1921 or 1922, in the same swamp found “parts of three or four antler sets” that were so weathered as to crumble on handling.
Outagamie. On September 6, 1898, Charles Millard found part of an elk antler in the bank of the Embarrass River 3.5 feet below the surface of the ground.¹

¹ New London Press, Sept. 8, 1898.

Ozaukee. Philip Schlegel, West Bend, has in his collection the basal half of an antler found in a swamp in Section 20, Town of Mequon. He stated that about 50 years ago some boys, while skating on the clear ice of one of the small lakes in the central part of the county, discovered a pair of antlers. The latter were taken to a saloon in Newburg.

Pepin. Statements on the abundance of elk along the Chippewa River by the early writers have been cited previously. A drove of elk in 1844 nearly capsized the canoe of Bunnell² in Buffalo Channel (Beef Slough). Later he killed one elk out of a drove of sixty.

² Bunnell, L. H. Winona and its environs. (1897) p. 54.

Pierce. Elk were quite common in the 1850’s. In the winter of 1855–56, John McLaughlin, Town of Trimbelle, killed five elk that were sold for 7 to 10 cents per pound.³ He is stated to have killed several elk the winter of 1856–57 while camped in the Rush River Valley, Town of El Paso.⁴ In February, 1857, elk were stated to be “comparatively plenty” and that several were killed along the Trimbelle and Rush Rivers.⁵ Wise saw many deer and elk tracks along the Rush River.⁶

A white oak was cut in 1866 four miles below Prescott that contained imbedded in it, eight feet from the ground, a pair of elk antlers.⁷ The latter had a “spread of four feet from tip to tip.”


Polk. Elk were stated to be plentiful at Balsam Lake in 1855.¹ Excavation in a bed of marl near Osceola, yielded a few bones of elk and caribou.² It is not known if these were Recent.


Portage. It is highly probable that the ‘buck’ weighing 573 pounds, shot in 1868, was an elk.¹

¹ Stevens Point Lumberman, Jan. 10, 1868.

Price. No definite record. There is an Elk Lake at Phillips draining through Elk River into the South Fork of the Flambeau. The origin of the name is unknown. It is stated on the editorial page of the Prairie du Chien Courier of June 11, 1878, that
some "large elk" and bears were being killed on the Flambeau River near Butternut Lake. The editor had an article describing the Butternut area in the May 21 issue of this paper and did not mention elk among the game animals.

Racine. West\(^1\) wrote in 1903 that elk antlers were found frequently in spring holes and marshes.

\(^1\) West, G. A. *Wis. Archeol.*, 3 (1), (Oct., 1903) 7.

Rock. The winter of 1858–59, Jeremiah Dame, Town of Harmony, cut down a white oak 20 inches in diameter that contained an elk antler imbedded in it four to five feet from the ground.\(^1\) A crew seining rough fish at the southern end of Lake Koshkonong in 1837 brought up a large pair of antlers between Thiebeau and Bingham Points.\(^2\) A part of an elk antler found in a marsh on the Knutson farm near Orfordville in 1951 was identified by Prof. W. H. Burt, University of Michigan, as that of an elk.\(^3\) I have been informed by Ray Roberts, Brooklyn, that about 1949 he found an antler in a marsh on his farm 1.5 miles east of Union, Town of Union.


Saint Croix. Elk were stated to be plentiful on the St. Croix River in 1850\(^4\) and in the environs of Hudson in 1855.\(^5\) In the late fall of 1866, J. Hurd and Elias Grimes, Town of Richmond, came upon a drove of 12 elk in the "Big Woods" in the eastern part of the county. Of this drove nine were killed and two were wounded.\(^6\) The hunters remarked on the ease with which the elk were killed. Hallock\(^7\) listed elk among the game of the county in 1877. This was probably incorrect.

\(^4\) Milwaukee (d) *Wisconsin*, April 15, 1850. \(^5\) *Hudson Star*, Aug. 8, 1855. \(^6\) *Hudson Star and Times*, Dec. 5, 1866. \(^7\) Hallock, C. *The sportsman's gazetteer*. (1877) p. 177.

Sauk. The elk antler embedded in a white oak has been previously described.\(^2\) Canfield\(^3\) came to the county in 1842 and followed its natural history closely. He states that only one or two elk were killed by white men. T. J. Morgans\(^4\) settled in the Town of Franklin in 1848, Section 32, where he saw an elk killed. Dr. F. D. Hulbert, Reedsburg, has stated that the Indians killed a bull elk in the Town of Washington in 1850, at which time elk were scarce in Wisconsin.\(^5\) According to Cole,\(^6\) the last elk was killed by John Cooper in the Town of Franklin in 1854. Elk antlers were found quite frequently by the early settlers.\(^7\) The so-called deer effigy in the Town of Troy, with its backward sweep of the antlers, is far more suggestive of an elk.\(^8\)

\(^2\) Baraboo *Republic*, Jan. 31, 1857. \(^3\) Canfield, W. H. *A catalogue of the indigenous animals of Sauk County*. (1870) p. 39. \(^4\) T. J. Morgans. *Seventh annual meet-
Sawyer. On July 28, 1953, Ernest Swift, Director of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, wrote to me that about 1905 Peter Larson found an elk antler in Mosquito Brook, about three miles northeast of Hayward.

Sheboygan. In 1901 William Schwartz sent to the Milwaukee Public Museum a large pair of antlers found in Elkhart Lake about 32 years previously.1 William Kuhlmeny an old resident of the Town of Plymouth, had elk antlers in his collections.2 The bones of “bear, elk and deer” have been found at the Indian village sites on the shore of Lake Michigan south of the mouth of the Black River, Town of Wilson.3 The Potawatomi, Simon Kaquados, stated that formerly there were many elk at Elkhart Lake.4

Trempealeau. “Elk were found in great abundance along the whole length of the Trempealeau River.”1 Eight elk were killed January 2 and 3, 1858, along the Buffalo River in the northern part of the county.2 In 1862 one elk was killed out of a drove of ten in the northern part of the county.3 Pursuit of the others was abandoned on account of a severe storm.

Vernon. A hunting party in the spring of 1850 killed an elk at the head of the Bad Axe River.1 Ole Espe, Viroqua, has written to me that about 1920 he found an elk antler in a stream near Viroqua, Town of Jefferson.

Walworth. Elkhorn is stated to have derived its name from the finding of a pair of elk antlers in a tree in 1836 by Col. Samuel Phoenix of Delavan.1 A pair embedded in a bur oak in the Town of Spring Prairie was also found in 1857.2 E. B. Warner found a pair of antlers in 1876 in a spring on his place about five miles south of Whitewater.3 A pair of antlers found in an Indian burial at Fontana was contributed to the Geneva Lake Historical Society.4 The elk teeth found in a similar grave at Lake Geneva were evidently part of a necklace.5

Hollister wrote in 1908 that sections of antlers were still found occasionally in the county, frequently in marshy ground, and that a fine pair was recovered from Delavan Lake a few years
A pair was also found in this lake in 1939 by a state crew in removing rough fish.

Washington. An antler was found near Hartford in 1855. T. Baldwin made an unpublished archeological report (Hist. Soc. of Wis.) in which he stated that an elk antler was removed in 1936 from Green Lake, Town of Farmington. Philip Schlegel, West Bend, has a large collection of horns and antlers. He has the basal end, 13 inches in length, of an antler found on the surface of a swamp, Section 19, Town of Trenton; also a fragment 10.5 inches in length, with skull containing teeth attached, found in a spring hole on Gov. Phillips Farm, Town of Hartford. Other finds to his knowledge are: a set of antlers from Silver Lake, Town of West Bend; a set from Big Cedar Lake, Town of West Bend; and two sets from the Town of Hartford, one being found in Pike Lake, and the other in a swamp on the edge of Pike Lake.

Waukesha. The Milwaukee Public Museum has a set of antlers plowed up on the farm of Frank Clark in the Town of Pewaukee. Walter C. Pelzer has sent me a photograph of a splendid set of antlers, attached to the skull, found in a spring hole on the Ryan Farms, Route 1, Pewaukee, the summer of 1953. Some bones were found also. Dr. Frank W. Lehmann has written to me that about fifty years ago William Marquandt found the entire skeleton of an elk in Lake Keesus, Town of Merton.

Waupaca. On January 12, 1941, Guy Mumbrue, Waupaca, wrote to me that his father was a persistent hunter. About 1870 his dog routed an elk with a "big spread of horns" from a swamp five miles northeast of Pine River, Town of Dayton. The animal may have been in Waushara County. He failed to get a shot. He also stated that in the 1850's, N. W. Nourse, an old hunter saw a large bull elk on a large, nearly bald hill, about eight miles south of Waupaca.

Waushara. Mrs. F. N. Hamerstrom has informed me that Frank Ingalls, who lives on the Roche-a-cri River, southwest of Plainfield, has a pair of elk antlers that he found in this stream.

H. J. Kent has described two fragments of antlers found in a marl deposit at Spring Lake, Town of Marion, that he considered "fossilized." The University has from this deposit a cervical
vertebra, UMZ 14,435, identified by Dr. D. Dwight Davis, Chicago Natural History Museum, as from a *Cervus*, probably *canadensis*. According to Kent, “other large fossils” found by Dana Spees in a marl pit west of Wautoma crumbled soon after exposure.


**Winnebago.** In 1887, George Cross, a farmer living on Ball Prairie, presented Mayor Dale of Oshkosh, a pair of elk antlers found about thirty years previously and about twelve miles from the city.¹

The Oshkosh Museum has several whole antlers and fragments which I inspected in 1942. At that time A. P. Kannenberg of the Museum, and George Overton, Lake Butte des Morts, considered remains of elk common, particularly at Indian camp sites.

Part of an antler was found at Lasley Point on the eastern shore of Lake Winneconne, Town of Winneconne, during archeological excavations.² Other finds have been recorded.³ During excavation of the burials at the Reigh site on Lake Butte des Morts, T18N, R16E, Section 7, a project of the Archeological Survey, two axes made of elk antlers were found July 15 and 19, 1953. The site has been identified as Glacial Kame culture, about 1000 A.D. This type of artifact was previously unknown for Wisconsin. Mary Jane Overton, Route 4, Oshkosh, has fragments of two elk antlers found by her father, George Overton, in a refuse pit, 30 inches deep, in a gravel pit, T19N, R15E, NW¼ Section 3, in 1925. There were ashes and charcoal at the bottom of the pit.


**Wood.** The statement made in 1875 that elk had been discovered in the county is probably an error.¹

¹ Milwaukee *Commercial Times*, Sept. 28, 1875, 2.

REFERENCES

17. Stevens Point Lumberman, Jan. 10, 1868.