

SCIENCE

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HESPEROPITHECUS, THE FIRST ANTHROPOID PRIMATE FOUND IN AMERICA

It is hard to believe that a single small water-worn tooth, 10.5 mm. by 11 mm. in crown diameter, can signalize the arrival of the anthropoid Primates in North America in Pliocene time. We have been eagerly anticipating some discovery of this kind, but were not prepared for such convincing evidence of the close faunal relationship between eastern Asia and western North America as is revealed by this diminutive specimen. The entire credit for the discovery belongs to Mr. Harold J. Cook, consulting geologist, of Agate, Nebraska, who has been contributing for many years to our knowledge of the extinct fauna of Nebraska through both his discoveries and his writings. He wrote to the present author (February 25, 1922):

I have had here, for some little time, a molar tooth from the Upper, or Hipparion phase of the Snake Creek beds, that very closely approaches the human type. It was found associated with the other typical fossils of the Snake Creek, and is mineralized in the same fashion as they are. I sent a brief description of this to Professor Loomis a short time before the Amherst meeting of this year, with a request that it be read at that time, if opportunity offered. The manuscript was returned to me here immediately after the meetings, but with no notation as to whether it was read or not, or presented at that time in any fashion.

Inasmuch as you are particularly interested in this problem and, in collaboration with Dr. Gregory and others, are in the best position of any one to accurately determine the relationships of this tooth, if it can be done, I will be glad to send it on to you, should you care to examine and study it. Whatever it is, it is certainly a contemporary fossil of the Upper Snake Creek horizon, and it agrees far more closely with the anthropoid-human molar, than that of any other mammal known.

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